Conference proceedings for

affective encounters

rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies

EDITED BY ANU KOIVUNEN & SUSANNA PAASONEN

Anu Koivunen & Susanna Paasonen (eds)

Conference proceedings for

affective encounters

rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies

University of Turku
School of Art, Literature and Music
Media Studies
Series A, N:o 49
ISBN 951-29-2237-1

E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf]
Media Studies, Turku 2000

Design by Minna Rainio

Published in association with the Finnish Society for Cinema Studies (SETS ry)

Contents

Preface: The Affective Turn?

Anu Koivunen, University of Turku

akoivu@utu.fi

In many disciplines, scholars have introduced affects, emotions and embodied experiences as timely research topics. Six years ago, Kathleen Woodward (1996, p.758) diagnosed an "explosion of academic fascination with the emotions" reviewing new scholarship on emotions as a symptom of and compensation for "the anaesthetization of the emotions in everyday life" (ibid., p.760). Linda Nicholson (1999, p.145ff), again, has argued that "the therapeutic turn" – emotion, instead of reason, as the logic of public life – has effected a democratisation of U.S. culture and politics, whereas Lauren Berlant (1997, pp.3-10) has powerfully critiqued the privatisation of citizenship borne in the Reagan era. In her view, the "nationalist politics of intimacy" has usurped the public sphere as a space for social antagonism and struggle, reducing citizenship to personal acts and values, and reframing nationality as a question of feelings and traumas.

In many accounts of contemporary cultures as obsessed with intimacy and affect, media figures as the key locus of this development. In media studies, the interest in affectivity has been fuelled by many concurrent developments: the focus of media narratives on trauma and survival, the intensity of large-scale media events such as the death of Princess Diana, proliferation of reality genres in television, new media interfaces and the strive for interactivity, innovations in cinema sound and image technology and conjoining changes in aesthetics. Earlier notions of film spectatorship have been criticised for excluding emotion, affect and feeling (Kaplan 1989; Kuhn 1992) and revised with reference to, for instance, phenomenology (Sobchack 1992; Silverman 1996). The multisensory nature of perception has recently been theorised in terms of "haptic" or "tactile" visuality that, according to Laura Marks (2000), invites viewers to respond to the image in "an intimate, embodied way". Furthermore, the affectivity of research itself has emerged as an issue as scholars have reflected upon the politics of emotions in the knowledge production (Shattuc 1994; Pearce 1997; Brunsdon 2000).

Within feminist criticism, the interest in affect has, in a sense, a long history: the conceptual links between woman, body and emotion is a recurrent issue. For critical feminist scholarship, affects appear often as something to be deconstructed -- to be revealed as constructed, as not-natural (Cvetkovich 1992). This approach, however, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (1995) have argued, may run the risk of disregarding the specificities of affects and treating them as a transhistorical Affect to be evaluated as either hegemonic or subversive. Also, the reconceptualisation of the feminist subject as corporeal has generated new kinds of questions concerning affectivity. (See Terada 2000.) How to conceive of embodiment in "the genomic era" when nature has, to quote Sarah Franklin (2000, pp.190--191), lost its axiomatic value as foundation and become "only a trope" and "a receding horizon"? In her keynote address to the 4th European Feminist Research Conference in Bologna, Rosi Braidotti (2000) summarised the challenge for feminist studies: "Politics… has as much to do with the constitution and organization of affectivity, memory and desire as it has with consciousness and resistance. The embodied self, sexuality, memory and the imagination are crucial to the making of political subjectivity."

To explore affective encounters, then, is to investigate a multitude of issues. On the one hand, it is to examine media forms, representations and narratives, cultural framings and meaning-making processes. It is to ask how encounters with dif-

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

ferent media engage senses and affects (emotions, feelings, passions) and, hence, have effects. On the other hand, exploring affective encounters involves inquiring into the gendering, sexualising, classing and racialising of subjects. Affects, in this sense, pose questions about the links between the subjective and the cultural, individual and social, self and other, inside and outside. Hence, studying affective encounters embroils asking how identities are "lived, felt and practiced" (Ahmed et al 2000, p.15) and "how we construct our own histories through memory…how we position ourselves within wider, more public, histories." (Kuhn 1992, p.243.)

***

In September 2001, around 150 scholars and postgraduate students from 14 different countries convened at the University of Turku (Finland) to discuss affects, embodiment and media. Besides linking with the different ongoing discussions described above, the aim of the conference was to enable affective encounters: to provide an interdisciplinary forum of exchange for the participants and to invite productive dialogues – even among unlikely partners: media history and feminist theory; aesthetics and feminist epistemology; studies in media use and theories of the embodied subject; theories of cinematic emotions and the politics of representations; social-constructionist and psychoanalytical approaches to affects and emotions; and finally, constructionist notions of embodiment and cultural study of science. The conference proceedings at hand represent some of these encounters and dialogues. More will follow as affects and embodiment hopefully continue to be -- as Woodward suggested – a "hot topic".

Turku, 28 December 2001

Anu Koivunen
Media Studies, University of Turku
Head of the organising committee

Literature

Ahmed, S.; Kilby, J.; Lury, C.; Mcneil, M. & Skeggs, B. eds, 2000. *Transformations. Thinking Through Feminism*. London, Routledge.

Berlant, L., 1997. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City. Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham, Duke UP.

Braidotti, R., 2000. Between the No Longer and the Not Yet. Nomadic Variations on the Body. [online] Available from: http://www.women.it/quarta/plenary/braidotti.htm. Viewed 28, August 2001.

Brunsdon, C., 2000. *The Feminist, the Housewife, and the Soap Opera*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Cvetkovich, A., 1992. *Mixed Feelings. Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism*. New Brunswick, Rutgers UP.

Franklin, S., 2000. Life Itself. Global Nature and the Genetic Imaginary. In: S. Franklin, C. Lury & J. Stacey. *Global Nature, Global Culture*. London, Sage, pp.188-227.

Kaplan, E.a., 1989. Response: The Spectatrix. *Camera Obscura* 20--21, pp. 194-199.

Kuhn, A., 1992. *Mandy* and possibility. *Screen* 33:3 (Autumn 1992), pp.233-243.

Marks, L., 2000. *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham, Duke UP.

Nicholson, L.,1999. *The Play of Reason. From the Modern to the Postmodern*. Buckingham, Open UP.

Pearce, L.,1997. *Feminism and the Politics of Reading*. London, Arnold.

Sedgwick, E. K. & Frank, A., 1995. Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins. In: E. Kosofsky Sedgwick & A. Frank, eds. *Shame and Its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader*. Durham, Duke UP, pp.1-28.

Shattuc, J., 1994. Having a Good Cry over *The Color Purple*. The Problem of Affect and Imperialism in Feminist Theory. In: J. Bratton, J. Cook & C. Gledhill, eds. *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*. London, BFI, pp. 147-156.

Silverman, K., 1996. *The Threshold of the Visible World*. New York, Routledge.

Sobchack, V., 1992. *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton, Princeton UP.

Terada, R., 2001. *Feeling in Theory. Emotion after the "Death of the Subject"*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP.

Woodward, K., 1996. Global Cooling and Academic Warming: Long-Term Shifts in Emotional Weather. *American Literary History* 8:4 (Winter 1996), pp.759-779.

Communities that Feel: Intensity, Difference and Attachment

Sara Ahmed, Lancaster University

s.ahmed@lancaster.ac.uk

> The depths of Love are rooted and very deep in a real White Nationalist's soul and spirit, no form of 'hate' could even begin to compare. At least not a hate motivated by ungrounded reasoning. It is not hate that makes the average White man look upon a mixed race couple with a scowl on his face and loathing in his heart. It is not hate that makes the White housewife throw down the daily jewspaper in repulsion and anger after reading of yet another child-molester or rapist sentenced by corrupt courts to a couple of short years in prison or parole. It is not hate that makes the White workingclass man curse about the latest boatland of aliens dumped on our shores to be given job preferences over the White citizen who built this land. It is not hate that brings rage into the heart of a White Christian farmer when he reads of billions loaned or given away as 'aid' to foreigners when he can't get the smallest break from an unmerciful government to save his failing farm. Not, it's not hate, It is Love. (Aryan Nations Website)[1]

What role do emotions play in the constitution of the relationship between subjects and communities? How do emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others? In this paper, I want to argue that emotions play a crucial role in the 'surfacing' of individual and collective bodies. Such an argument clearly challenges any assumption that emotions are a private matter, that they simply belong to individuals and that they come from within and *then* move outwards towards others. It suggests that emotions are not simply 'within' or 'without', but that they define the contours of the multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects. My argument will support the position that emotions are crucial to politics, in the sense that subjects must become 'invested' in and attached to the forms of power in order to consent to that power (see Butler 1997; McNay 2000). However, I will also suggest that such attachments are more complex and contingent than has been theorised, and that they crucially depend on the ways in which subject's respond to others within everyday spaces of inhabitance, where bodies both move and dwell.

For instance, in the above narrative on the Aryan Nation's website, the role of emotions, in particular of hate and love, is crucial to the delineation of the bodies of individual subjects and the body of the nation. This forming of subject and nation takes place partly by reading 'others' as the *cause* of the emotional response. What it so significant in such stories is precisely the way that they imagine a subject (the White nationalist, the average White man, the White housewife, the White working man, the White Citizen and the White Christian farmer) that is under threat by imagined others whose proximity threatens, not only to take something away from the subject (jobs, security, wealth and so on), but to take the place of the subject. In other words, the presence of these others is imagined as a threat to the object of love. We might note as well that this emotional reading of others as hateful works to align the imagined subject with rights and the imagined nation with ground. This alignment is affected by the representation of both the rights of the subject and the grounds of the nation as already under threat, as 'failing'. *It is the emotional reading of hate that works to bind the imagined White subject and nation together*. The average white man feels 'fear and loathing'; the White housewife, 'repulsion and anger';

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the White workingman 'curses'; the White Christian farmer feels 'rage'. The passion of these negative attachments to others is re-defined simultaneously as a positive attachment to the imagined subjects brought together through the capitalisation of the signifier, 'White'. It is the love of White, or those that are recognisable as White, which supposedly explains this shared 'communal' visceral response of hate. *Together we hate and this hate is what makes us together.*

This narrative, I would suggest, is far from extraordinary. Indeed, what it shows us is the production of the ordinary. The ordinary is here fantastic. The ordinary white subject is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilisation of hate, as a passionate attachment closely tied to love. The emotion of hate works to animate the ordinary subject, to bring that fantasy to life, precisely by constituting the ordinary as in crisis, and the ordinary person as the *real victim*. The ordinary becomes that which is *already* under threat by the imagined others whose proximity becomes a crime against person as well as place. Hate is *distributed* in such narratives across various figures (in this case, the mixed racial couple, the child-molester or rapist, aliens and foreigners) all of which come to embody the danger of impurity, or the mixing or taking of blood. They threaten to violate the pure bodies; indeed, such bodies can only be imagined as pure by the perpetual re-staging of this fantasy of violation. Given this, emotions such as hate cannot be found in one figure, but work to create the very outline of different figures or objects of hate, a creation that crucially aligns the figures together, and constitutes them as a 'common' threat. Importantly, then, emotion does not *reside* in a given subject or object. Emotions are economic; they circulate between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement.

In this paper, by examining such affective economies, I will argue that emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments. In other words, rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and collective. I will examine how individual and collective bodies (including the imagined bodies of nations and globality) surface in relationship to each other, a surfacing that takes place through affective encounters, such as alignment (bringing into line with another), identification (assuming the image of another), and appropriation (taking the place of another). I will focus on the surfacing of individual, national and global bodies through the mediation of affect, with specific reference to the role of pain and hate.[2] One important implication of my argument will be that differences are not characteristics of bodies – they do not reside positively in bodies - but that they are an effect of inter-corporeal encounters between others.

Materialisation and Intensification

In the first instance, I think we can consider the relationship between movement and attachment implicit in emotion. The word 'emotion' comes in the first instance from Latin, *emovere*, referring to 'to be moved, to be moved out'. So emotions are what move us. But emotions are also about attachments, about what connects us to this or that. The relationship between movement and attachment is instructive. What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Emotion may function as a '*contingent attachment*' to the world (see Sartre 1943: 333, emphasis mine). The word 'contingency' has the same root in Latin as the word 'contact' (Latin: contingere: com-, tangere, to touch). Contingency is linked then to proximity, to getting close enough to both touch another and to be moved by another. So what attaches us, what connects us to this or that place, or to this or that other, *such that we cannot stay removed from this other*, is also what moves us, or what affects us such that we are no longer in the same place. Hence movement does

not cut the body off from the 'where' of its inhabitance, but connects bodies to other bodies – indeed, attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others. The relationship between movement and attachment is contingent, and this suggests that movement may affect different others differently: indeed, as I will argue later, emotions may involve 'being moved' for some precisely by 'fixing' others as 'having' certain characteristics.

Emotions then are bound up with how we inhabit the world 'with' others. Since emotions are in the phenomenological sense always intentional, and are 'directed' towards an object or other (however imaginary), then emotions are precisely about the intimacy of the 'with'; they are about the intimate relationship between selves, objects and others. I want to argue that intensifications of feeling create the very effect of the distinction between inside and outside, or between the individual and the social, that allows the 'with' to be felt in the first place. Take for instance the sensation of pain. The affectivity of pain is crucial to the forming of the body as both a material and lived entity. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud suggests that the ego is 'first and foremost a bodily ego' (1964: 26). Crucially, the formation of the bodily ego is bound up with the surface: 'it is not merely a surface entity, but itself is the projection of a surface' (1964: 26). Freud suggests that the process of establishing the surface depends on the experience of bodily sensations such as pain. Pain is described as a '*thing intermediate between internal and external perceptions* even when its source is in the external world' (Freud 1964: 23, emphasis added). It is through experiences such as pain that we come to have a sense of our skin as bodily surface, as something that keeps us apart from others, but as something that also 'mediates' the relationship between internal or external, or inside and outside.

However, it is not that pain *causes* the forming of the surface. Such a reading would ontologise pain (and indeed sensation more broadly) as that which 'drives' being itself. Rather, it is through the flow of sensations and feelings that *become* conscious as pain and pleasure that different surfaces are established. For example, say I stub my toe on the table. The impression of the table is one of negation; it leaves its trace on the surface of my skin and I respond with the appropriate 'ouch' and move away, swearing. It is through such painful encounters between this body and other objects, including other bodies, *that 'surfaces' are felt as 'being there' in the first place*. To be more precise *the impression of a surface is an effect of such intensifications of feeling*. I become aware of my body as having a surface only in the event of feeling discomfort (prickly sensations, cramps), that become transformed into pain through an act of reading and recognition ('it hurts!'), which is also a judgement ('it is bad!'). This transformation of sensations into an emotion reading might also lead to moving my body away from what I feel has caused the pain. That is, the transformation affected by recognising a sensation as painful (from 'it hurts' to 'it is bad' to 'move away') also involves *the re-constitution of bodily space*. In this instance, having 'felt' the surface as hurtful, I move my toe away from its proximity to the surface of the table. As I move away, the pain begins to recede.[3]

Such an argument suggests an intimate relationship between what Judith Butler has called materialisation – 'the effect of surface, boundary and fixity' (1993: 9) - and what I would call *intensification*. It is through the intensification of feeling that bodies and worlds materialise and take shape, or that the effect of surface, boundary and fixity is produced. What this argument suggests is that feelings are not about the inside getting out or the outside getting in[4], but that they 'affect' the very distinction of inside and outside in the first place. Clearly, to say that feelings are crucial to the forming of surfaces and borders, is also to suggest that what 'makes' those borders also unmakes them. In other words, what separates us from others also connects us to others. This paradox is clear if we think of the skin surface itself, as that which appears to contain us, but as where others *impress* upon us. This contradictory function of skin begins to make sense if we unlearn the assumption that the skin is simply already there, but begin to think of the skin as a surface that is felt only in the

event of being 'impressed upon' in the encounters we have with others.

Furthermore, the affecting of borders and surfaces involves the over-determination of sense perception, emotion and judgement. It is through the recognition or interpretation of sensations, which are responses to the impressions of objects and others, and the transformation of such sensations into emotions and judgements, that bodily surfaces become re-aligned and re-animated. Such an argument suggests that sensations are mediated, however immediately that seem to impress upon us. Not only do we read such feelings, but also how the feelings feel in the first place may be tied to a past history of readings, in the sense that the process of *recognition* (of this feeling, or that feeling) is bound up with what we *already know*. Furthermore, to be touched a certain way, or to be moved a certain way by an encounter with an other, may involve a reading, not only of the encounter*, but of the other that is encountered as having certain characteristics*. If we feel another hurts us, then we may project that reading onto the other, such that *it* becomes hurtful, or is read as *the impression of the negative.* In other words, the 'it hurts' becomes, 'you hurt me', which might become, 'you are hurtful'. These affective responses are readings that not only create the borders between selves and others, but also 'give' others meaning and value in the very of apparent separation, a giving which temporarily fixes an other, through the movement engendered by the emotional response itself.[5] Such emotional responses are clearly mediated: materialisation takes place through the 'mediation' or reading of affect, which may function in this way as readings of the bodies of others.

Affective Economies

Emotions then do not reside positively in the body of the individual or in the social. It is through emotions, that bodies come to surface or appear in the first place. Indeed, I would argue that what characterises emotionality as such is precisely this lack of positive residence; the way emotions circulate without inhabiting any particular object, body or sign, although one effect of the circulation might be that some objects, bodies or signs are endowed with emotional meaning and value. Another way of putting this is to think of emotionality as an affective economy: emotions involve relations of displacement and difference, whereby what is 'moved' and what 'moves' is precisely the rippling effect of intensification.

Clearly such an approach borrows from psychoanalysis, which is also a theory of the subject as lacking positive residence, a lack of being most commonly articulated as 'the unconscious'. In his paper on the unconscious, Freud introduces the notion of unconscious emotions, where an affective impulse is perceived but misconstrued, and which becomes attached to another idea (1964: 177). What is repressed from consciousness is not the feeling as such, but the idea to which the feeling may have been first (but provisionally) connected. While we may not seek to use the terms of this analysis, which imply a correspondence between a feeling and an idea (as if both of these could exist in a singular form), these reflections are nevertheless suggestive. Psychoanalysis allows us to see that emotionality involves movements or associations *whereby 'feelings' takes us across different levels of signification, not all of which can be admitted in the present*. This is what I would call the rippling effect of emotionality; it moves sideways (through 'sticky' associations between signs, figures and objects) as well as forwards and backwards (repression always leaves its trace in the present – hence 'what sticks' is also bound up with the 'absent presence' of historicity).

Indeed, insofar as psychoanalysis offers us a theory of the subject as lacking in the present, then it offers us a theory of emotion as economy, as involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive meaning or value. We need only think of psychoanalysis as a way of *reading affect by reading across signs*, as performed by Freud in his reading of dreams, as well as in his reading of hysteri-

cal bodies. And indeed Lacan's positing of a relationship between language and the unconscious in *Ecrits* is precisely about the economic nature of both affect and meaning: they slide across signifiers, never halting in one or the other, although they may be temporarily fixed or stuck (1977: 154). Furthermore, the sliding of the signifier, and hence of meaning and affect, leads to movements outwards and away from the signifier, given the numerous contexts or histories to which each signifier in a chain may be attached: 'There is in effect no signifying chain that does not have, as if attached to the punctuation of each of its units, a whole articulation of relevant contexts suspended "vertically" as it were from that point' (Lacan 1977: 154). Henceforth, it is the impossibility of finding meaning or affect within a sign that engenders the movement and attachment of signification itself, understood in economic terms, as relationships of difference and displacement without positive value.

However, where this notion of affective economy involves a departure from psychoanalysis is precisely in my refusal to identify this economy as a psychic one (although neither is it not a psychic one): that is, I refuse to return these relationships of difference and displacement always to the signifier of 'the subject'. This is not only clear in Freud's work, but also in Lacan's perpetual return to 'the subject' as the proper scene of absence and loss (see Ahmed 1998: 97-98). As Laplanche and Pontalis argue, if Lacan defines 'the subject' as 'the locus of the signifier', then it is in 'a theory of the subject that the locus of the signifier settles' (1992: 65). This constitution of the subject as 'settlement', even if what settles is precisely lacking, means that the suspended contexts of the signifier are de-limited by the contours of the subject. In contrast, in my account of affective economies, emotions do not inhabit any-body or any-thing, meaning that 'the subject' is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin and destination. This is extremely important: it suggests that the sideways, forwards and backwards movement of affective economies is not contained within the contours of a subject, but moves across or between subjects, objects, signs and others, which themselves are not locatable or found within the present. The unconscious is hence not the unconscious of a subject, but the failure of presence – or the failure 'to be' in the present - that constitutes the relationality of subject, objects, signs and others.

As we have seen, emotions are not inherent in a sign or body; its affect are clustering effects, which involve attaching signs to histories that surround bodies but do not reside in them. In other words, emotions are in circulation; never quite fixed in a sign or body. But this circulation is not free; emotions also stick and resist being unstuck. So emotions *become attached* to signs and bodies, a process of attachment that is crucial to the very forming of the surfaces of bodies and worlds. We can see from this definition that it is not simply the body of the individual body that surfaces through affective encounters. We could also ask: how do the circulation of emotions allow us to understand the materialisation of collective bodies, for example the 'body of the nation'? We have already seen how hate slides across different figures and constitutes them as a 'common threat' in what we can call 'hate speech'.[6] But the slippery work of emotion cannot allow us to presume any opposition between extremist discourses and the 'ordinary' work of reproducing the nation (and indeed, the relationship that I have posited between the 'ordinary' and intensification goes some way to undoing any such opposition). I now want to take as an example William Hague's (the previous Leader of the Conservative Party in the UK) speeches on asylum seekers, made last year between April and June 2000. He has since repeated these speeches, using the same words and narratives. During this period, other speeches were in circulation that became 'stuck' or 'attached' to the 'asylum seekers' speech through this temporal proximity, but also through the repetition with a difference, of some *sticky words* and language. In the case of the asylum speeches, Hague's narrative is somewhat predictable. Words are used life 'flood' and 'swamped' which work to create associations between asylum and the loss of control and hence work by mobilising fear, or the anxiety of being overwhelmed by the actual or potential proximity

of others. Typically, Hague differentiates between those others who are welcome and those who are not by differentiating between genuine and bogus asylum seekers. Partly, this works to enable the national subject to imagine its own generosity in welcoming some others. The nation is hospitable as it allows those genuine ones to stay. And yet at the same time, it constructs some others as already hateful (as bogus) in order to define the limits or the *conditions* of this hospitality.[7]

The construction of the bogus asylum seeker as a figure of hate also involves a narrative of uncertainty and crisis, but an uncertainty and crisis that *makes that figure do more work*. How can we tell the difference between a bogus and a genuine asylum seeker? According to the logic of this discourse, it is always possible that we might not be able to tell the difference and that they may pass, in both senses of the term, their way into our community. Such a possibility commands the nation's right and will to keep looking, and justifies violent forms of intrusion into the bodies of others. Indeed, the possibility that we might not be able to tell the difference swiftly converts into the possibility that *any* of those incoming bodies may be bogus. *The impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body, allows hate to circulate in an economic sense, working to differentiate some others from other others, a differentiation that is never 'over', as it awaits for others who have not yet arrived.*

But Hague's speeches also work to produces certain affects and effects through its temporal proximity to another speech about Tony Martin, a man sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a 16 year old boy who had attempted to burgle his house, in a rural area of England. Hague uses one sentence, which circulates powerfully. Hague argued (without reference to Martin or asylum seekers) that the law is 'more interested in the rights of criminals than the rights of people who are burgled'. Such a *sentence evokes a history that is not declared* (this is how attachment can operate as a form of speech –what sticks may also be what resists literalisation) and, in doing so, it positions Martin as victim and not as a criminal. The victim of the murder is now the criminal: the crime that did not happen because of the murder (the burglary) takes the place of the murder, as the true crime, and as the real injustice. This reversal of the victim/criminal relationship becomes an implicit defence of the right to kill those who unlawfully enter one's property. Now the coincidence of this speech with the speech about asylum seekers is affective. That is, through its very detachment from a particular object or body, it becomes attached as a form of affect. It works to align some figures or bodies with others and against other others. Here, the figure of the *burglar* collapses into the figure of the *bogus* asylum seeker, whose entry into the nation space becomes 'felt' as an act of theft, as well as intrusion. At the same time, the body of the murderer/victim becomes the body of the nation; the one whose property and well being is under threat by the other, and who has authorisation, as a question of moral duty (protection) to make this other disappear, to will this other out of existence, whatever the means, or whatever that means. Such a narrative of defending the nation against intruders is formed through the relationship between words and sentences: it is symptomatic of how hate circulates, to produces a differentiation between me/us and you/them, whereby the 'you' and 'them' is constituted as the cause or the justification of my/ our feeling of hate. Indeed, we can see how attachment involves a sliding between pain and hate: there is a perceived injury in which the other's (burglar/ bogus) proximity is felt as the violence of negation against both the body of the individual (here, the farmer) and the body of the nation. The bodies surface by 'feeling' these others as the cause of the injury or as a form of intrusion: such a reading becomes a justification for the use of violence against any other whom we identify as one of these others.

In another interesting episode during this period, William Hague went on the Jonathon Dimbleby programme on Apri 28th 2000. Here, William Hague repeated his comments about asylum seekers to a heterogeneous and engaged audience. One Black woman stood up and said she was intimidated by his language of swamped and flooded. Hague used the dictionary as his defence: 'a flood is a flow which is out of

control… I am giving these words their true and full meaning'. We might note here that the meaning given by Hague as true and proper is precisely the meaning that makes these words intimidating ('out of control'). Aside from this, Hague tried to deny the force of those histories of attachment; he attempts to remove or detach himself from what is already attached to those words. It is a denial of how words work to produce ripples that seal the fate of some others, by enclosing them into figures *that we then recognise as the cause of this hate*. The contingent attachment of hate – how it works to connect words with bodies and places through an intensification of feeling – is precisely what makes it difficult to pin down, to locate in a body, object or figure. This difficulty is what makes the emotion of hate work the way that it does; *it is not the impossibility of hate as such, but the mode of its operation, whereby it surfaces in the world made up of other bodies*. In other words, it is the failure of emotions to be located in a body, object or figures which allows emotions to (re)produce or generate the effects that they do.

The Skin of the Community

So far in this paper I have offered an approach to thinking through the role of emotions: first, I have suggested that the process of intensification is crucial to the materialisation of surfaces and boundaries, and second, I have argued that emotions work as an affective economy, involving relationships of difference and displacement. I have argued that this surfacing takes place at the level of the individual body as well as the collective body (for example, the nation). But it would be inadequate and reductive to posit the emergence of the 'I' and the 'we' as analogous. Instead, I want to ask: how do feelings work to *align* individual and collective bodies, including the imagined body of the nation and the globe? That is, how do individual and social bodies surface in relationship to each other?

This alignment, I will suggest does not take place through 'the subject' simply 'inhabiting' the skin of the community, *rather the skin of the community is an effect of the alignment of the subject with some others and against other others*. Difference here is not what belongs to a particular body, but materialises as a relationship between bodies.[8] As I have already suggested, emotions as responses to others do not respond the way that they do because of the inherent characteristics of others: we do not respond with love or hate because others are loveable or hateful. Rather, it is through affective encounters that objects and others are seen as having attributes, or certain characteristics, a seeing which also gives the subject an identity that is apart from others (for example, as the real victim or as the threatened nation). I now want to build on this argument by suggesting that it is through moving towards and away from others or objects that we feel are causing us pleasure or pain, that individual bodies becomes aligned with some others and against other others, a form of alignment that temporarily 'surfaces' as the skin of a community.

Take the following quote from Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, which shows the crucial role of emotion to the formation of social and bodily space:

> The AA subway train to Harlem. I clutch my mother's sleeve, her arms full of shopping bags, christmas-heavy. The wet smell of winter clothes, the train's lurching. My mother spots an almost seat, pushes my little snowsuited body down. On one side of me a man reading a paper. On the other, a woman in a fur hat staring at me. Her mouth twitches as she stares and then her gaze drops down, pulling mine with it. Her leather-gloved hand plucks at the line where my new blue snowpants and her sleek fur coat meet. She jerks her coat close to her. I look. I do not see whatever terrible thing she is seeing on the seat between us - probably a roach. But she has communicated her horror to me. It must be something very bad from the way she's looking, so I pull my snowsuit closer to me away from it, too. When I look up the woman is still staring at me,

> her nose holes and eyes huge. And suddenly I realise there is nothing crawling up the seat between us; it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch. The fur brushes my face as she stands with a shudder and holds on to a strap in the speeding train. Born and bred a New York City child, I quickly slide over to make room for my mother to sit down. No word has been spoken. I'm afraid to say anything to my mother because I don't know what I have done. I look at the side of my snow pants secretly. Is there something on them? Something's going on here I do not understand, but I will never forget it. Her eyes. The flared nostrils. The hate (Lorde 1984: 147-8).

In this encounter Audre Lorde ends with emotion; she ends with 'the hate'. It is an encounter in which some-thing has passed, but something she fails to understand. What passes is hence not spoken; it is not a transparent form of communication. The sense that something is wrong is communicated, not through words, or even sounds that are voiced, but through the body of another, 'her nose holes and eyes huge'. The encounter is played out *on* the body, and is played out *with* the emotions. This bodily encounter, while ending with 'the hate', also ends with the reconstitution of bodily space. The bodies that come together, that almost touch and co-mingle, slide away from each other, becoming re-lived in their apartness. The particular bodies that move apart allow the re-definition of social as well as bodily integrity. The emotion of hate aligns the particular white body with the bodily form of the community – the emotion functions to substantiate the threat of invasion and contamination in the body of a particular other who comes to stand for, and stand in for, the other as such. In other words, the hate encounter aligns, not only the 'I' with the 'we' (the white body, the white nation), but the 'you' with the 'them' (the black body, Black people).

In Audre Lorde's narrative, her perception of the cause of the woman's bodily gestures is a *misperception* that creates an object. The object - the roach - comes to stand for, or stand in for, the cause of 'the hate'. The roach crawls up between them; the roach, as the carrier of dirt, divides the two bodies, forcing them to move apart. Audre pulls her snowsuit, 'away from it too'. But the 'it' that divides them is not the roach. Audre comes to realise that, 'it is me she doesn't want her coach to touch'. What the woman's clothes must not touch, is not a roach that crawls between them, but Audre herself. Audre becomes the 'it' that stands between the possibility of their clothes touching. She becomes the roach - the impossible and phobic object - that threatens to crawl from one to the other: 'I don't know what I have done. I look at the side of my snow pants secretly. Is there something on them?' Here, the circulation of hate brings others and objects into existence; hate slides between different signs and objects whose existence is bound up with the negation of its travel. So Audre becomes the roach that is imagined as the cause of the hate. The transformation of *this* or *that* other into an object of hate is over-determined. It is not simply that any body is hated: particular histories are re-opened in each encounter, such that some bodies are already read as more hateful than other bodies. Histories are bound up with attachments precisely insofar as it is a question of *what sticks*, of what connections are lived as the most intense or intimate, as being closer to the skin. Such an encounter moves us both sideways (the sticky associations between dirt, the roach, the Black body) and forwards and backwards (the histories that are already in place that allow these associations and not others stick, and that allow them to surface in memory and writing).

Importantly the alignment of some bodies with some others and against others take place through the *affecting of movement*; bodies are dis-organised and re-organised as they face others who are already recognised as hated or loved, as giving pain or pleasure. The organisation of social and bodily space creates a border that is transformed into an object, as an effect of this intensification of feeling. So the white woman's refusal to touch the Black child does not simply *stand for* the expulsion

of Blackness from white social space, but *actually re-forms that social space through the re-forming of the apartness of the white body*. The re-forming of bodily and social space involves a process of *making the skin crawl*; the threat posed by the bodies of others to bodily and social integrity is registered on the skin. Or, to be more precise, the skin comes to be felt as a border through reading the impression of one surface upon another as a form of violence, where an other's 'impression' is felt as negation.

However, although the differentiation of others – in this case, the differentation between the white and Black feminine body - through the processes of moving towards and away from those we feel have caused us pain or injury has effects, they effects are temporary and do not solidify into law. Indeed, we can think here about the ambivalence of emotion, by showing that 'positive' and 'negative' are not attributes of emotions, nor of bodies, but that they represent provisional readings and judgements that have powerful effects. Indeed, my reflections on hate have already shown how easily hate becomes converted into love. The ambivalence of emotionality is bound up with the positing of an intimate relation between the 'I' and the 'we'. We have already seen how the 'I' that declares itself as hating an other – who stands for a group of others - comes into existence by also declaring its love for that which is threatened by this imagined other (the nation, the community and so on). We need to investigate the 'we' as the very affect and effect of the attachment itself; such a subject becomes not only attached to a 'we', but the 'we' is what is affected by the very attachment the subject has to itself and to its loved others. Hence in hating an other, this subject is also loving itself; hate structures the emotional life of narcissism as a fantastic investment in the continuation of the image of the self in the faces that together make up the 'we'. The attachment to others seems to be divided as negative and positive (hate and love) precisely through imaging the faces of the community made up of other 'me's', of others that are loved *as if they were me*.

When Freud suggests in *The Ego and the Id* (1964) and *Group Psychology* (1922) that we identify with those we love he went some way to addressing this relationship between subject formation and community. The subject is established by imitating the lost object of love; it is based on a principle of a likeness or resemblance, or of *becoming alike*. However, I would argue that the emotion of love does not pre-exist identification (just as hate does not pre-exist dis-identification); so it is not a question of identifying with those one loves and dis-identifying with those one hates. Rather, it is through forms of identification that align this subject with this other, that the *character* of the loved is produced as 'likeness' in the first place. Thinking of identification as a form of alignment (to bring into line with oneself - the subject as 'bringing into line') also shows us how identifications involve dis-identification or an active 'giving up' other possible identifications (see Butler 1997). That is, by aligning myself with some others, I am also aligning myself against other others. Such a 'giving up' may also produce the character of the hated as 'unlikeness'. What is at stake in the emotional intensities of love and hate, then, is *the production of the effect of likeness and unlikeness as characteristics that are assumed to belong to the bodies of others*. If likeness is an affect and effect of identification, the unlikeness, or difference as a lack (of likeness), becomes an affect of forms of dis-identification that work to read the bodies of others.

This separation of others into bodies that *can be* loved and hated is part of the work of emotion; it does not pre-exist emotion as its ground – 'I love or hate them *because* they are like me, or not like me'. So emotions such as hate can work by providing 'evidence' of the very antagonism they effect; we cite the work that it is doing in producing the characteristics of likeness and unlikeness when we show the reasons for its existence. And hate may be tied up with fear precisely because the fantastic nature of likeness and unlikeness always threatens to be revealed (so the fantasy of the other as unlike myself must be repeated, again and again). We can recognise a link between the production of stereotypes and the emotional labour of hate. As Homi Bhabha has suggested the stereotype is a fixed image of the other

that must be repeated, precisely because it has no origin in the real (1994: 75). This repetition comes with its own risks: it is always possibility that the sign will be repeated with a difference. The question is not about the content of the stereotype (*what* the other is perceived as being): rather the repetition that produces the stereotype works to confirm the difference or 'unlikeness' of the other from the self and community. The very necessity of this reconfirmation exercises the possibility that it seeks to exclude, the possibility that such an other may not exist as 'not me', as lack or negation. The intimate labour of emotion involves the transformation of some others into unlikeness ('not like me') and other others into likeness ('like me'), but this transformation never quite takes form; it is always being worked for or towards.[9]

Feeling the Globe

I now want to relate this discussion of emotion as creating the affects/effects of likeness and unlikeness as characteristics of the bodies of others to a reflection on how the global community may come to be imagined or felt. In other words, it is not just the 'skin' of the individual or national body that surfaces through the intensification of feeling. For example, we could consider the way in which images of globality often involve the representation of the pain of the third world body, which then comes to embody the global, as the impetus for forms of global justice. Take this image of the shared plant used in a conference poster sponsored by *Third World First*).[10] Here, we can see that the painful display of the body of the starving Black child is what compels a movement into global consciousness. In other words, through the appropriation of the pain of third world bodies, the global citizen comes to 'feel their pain as its own pain' as the condition of that citizenship, that consciousness of the vulnerability of all bodies, their potential to be hurt. In other words, through *appropriating the pain of others the subject feels itself to be a global subject*.[11] We might note then that the body of the third world subject is not only already read as 'having' pain, but is *held in place*, in order to allow the global subject to be moved by that pain. This suggests that the global body is produced by the movement of some bodies through the fixing of others, an economy concealed by the discourse of feeling-in-common.

Indeed, cosmopolitanism might demonstrate most powerfully the way in which the globe materialises through this mediation of affect. It is clear in recent scholarship that cosmopolitanism has become a significant possibility, partly as a way of refusing the particularism of emphasising ethnicity or nationhood, as we can see in the work of Martha Nussbaum (1996). Nussbaum calls for a notion of 'world citizen', based on a universal notion of the rights of others as members of the human race. As Nussbaum suggests, 'the life of the cosmopolitan' begins by putting 'rights before country and universal reason before the symbols of national belonging' (1996: 17). It should not take us long to note here how this defence of cosmopolitanism against nationalism involves a substantial rather than simply formalist version of universalism. For in order to define the foundation of the community of world citizens, Nussbaum appeals to universal reason. The presumption of the neutrality of reason as the foundation of the global community works to conceal how reason is already defined as the property of some bodies and not others. Or, to be more generous, it conceals how reason works precisely to universalise from a particular body, with its own histories of production, exchange and consumption. In other words, the apparent disembodiment or detachment of World citizenship conceals how it is shaped by and means entering into a body (both individual and collective) that has already taken a particular rather than universal form.

At the same time, Nussbaum calls into question this World Citizenship as the detachment of a reasonable subject from her or his locality. So she states that the life of the cosmopolitan is still full of allegiance, and therefore, that it does not have to be

'boring, flat or lacking in love' (Nussbaum 1996: 17). She is suggesting here that we can feel close to others who are distant, by identifying ourselves as world or global citizens. Now this is important for the purposes of my argument. For it shows us that globality works as a form of attachment, as a love for those others who are 'with me' and 'like me' insofar as they can be recognised as worldly humans. It hence suggests that love can be the foundation of a global community, a community of others that I love. Such a cosmopolitan identity hence allows others to become members of the community, only insofar as they take form in a way that I recognise as 'like me'. I would suggest this merely shifts ethnocentrism from a local or national to a global level: others become loved as global citizens insofar as they, like me, can give up their local attachments and become part of the new community. In other words, by talking of the global citizen's love as well as its reason, Nussbaum also define the conditions or limits of global hospitality: those bodies/subjects that are not reasonable and worldly cannot be admitted into such a community. Importantly, Nussbaum's argument makes clear that giving up local attachments does not mean a suspension of attachment, as such. Rather, one becomes attached to the form of globality itself; *globality is what would now move one to tears*. Here one can see how 'being moved' is not a suspension of attachment: one can become attached to movement itself as a new logic of identity and community. Such an attachment to movement suggests that the ones who cannot be admitted into the global body, are the one's who remain too attached to the particular, the one's who do not (or perhaps even cannot) move away from home.

In order to dramatise how movement itself becomes the basis for the exclusion of others that materialises the boundaries of the global body, I want to examine the web site of the Global Nomads International called, the *Global Nomads Virtual Village* (www.gnvv.org). I have already reflected on the Global Nomads International in *Strange Encounters*, basing my reflections on their publication, *Strangers At Home* (Smith 1996). I now want to examine more closely how they have used the internet to create the global nomad community described in this publication. The Global Nomads are a non-profit organisation designed to foster a sense of community for those who were brought up 'overseas', especially as children of diplomats or members of the military. This organisation is partly about producing highly mobile, skilled and flexible bodies, whose value in an international economy is based on their ability to see 'beyond the local' and to translate across differences. As Norma McCaig, the founding member of the Organisation puts it, 'In an era when global vision is an imperative, when skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy, and the management of diversity are critical, global nomads are better equipped' (1996: 100). The organisation provides us with a clear example about how the mobility of bodies is required by the forces of global capital; how, that is, mobility works to extend the privileges or reach of some bodies into spaces that are already marked out as having global value.

What is equally important, is how the organisation uses global culture and technologies to create a sense of community. In the web site, *Global Nomads Virtual Village*, it is explained that the purpose of the village is 'To connect to others like us'. Here, the web page allows a form of connection with others whom the user may not know, but is assumed to be alike, because of the shared experience of being away from home, or growing up overseas. Likeness, as we have seen, is a traditional ground for community formation, and is an effect of an economy that is affective. Here, the basis of the differentiation of 'like' from 'unlike' is 'grounded' in movement itself. The community of global nomads, in others words, despite its apparent lack of a shared ground, still grounds itself in a version of identity as self-likeness, an identity that is brought into existence through the ontologising of movement. The 'I' of the global nomad becomes the 'we' of the global nomads through the transformation of mobility into a form of love and likeness. Hence the GNVV site exists to 'span the globe', to 'pass on their legacy', 'to provide a rallying point' and so on. While the

assumption is that the community comes together in the virtual plaza, it is clear that 'other places' are hence simply where the global nomads pass through, providing the pleasure of a difference, that is pleasurable precisely insofar as it is temporary. Other places and possibly other people are points of temporary abode on the global nomad's itinerary. They are hence unlike the global nomad insofar as they are assumed to stay put; indeed, global nomads require others to stay put in order to be differentiated from the locals, and to be 'like each other'.

Clearly then the nomadic can becomes a global identity that is premised on the giving up of home and locality, but which remains grounded in a notion of sameness and belonging. Rather than belonging here or there, global nomads now belong in the imagined space of globality itself. Not only is this identity created through moving across the surfaces of the globe (a movement which creates the effect of surfaces), but it is also created through moving through the web site itself, which describes itself as a virtual village. Global Nomads can send in their own photos of their travels, and can hence participate in the making of the village (http://www.gnvv.org/Plaza/plaza.html). The bodies of global nomads hence become aligned with the globe itself, an alignment that take place through movement, which enables new forms of attachment and belonging. The Global Nomad Virtual Village describes itself as a 'virtual hub' of this new community, which 'celebrates the distinctive global nomadic identity.' The transformation of the global into a form of identity, based on love for those who are 'like me', clearly involves a form of fetishism, a cutting off bodies from grounds, and the creation of virtual grounds to take their place. Not only is global nomadism about the production of a mobile and flexible skilled workforce (or about the bodily capital required by the mobility of global capital), but it also involves forms of *attachment to movement*, such that 'movement' becomes a new ground of membership in a community, and a new way of differentiating *between* others.

We can see that the surfaces and boundaries of the global body materialise through processes of intensification in which the bodies of others are both felt and read as 'like me' or 'not like me'. Globality becomes a form of attachment; *one can be moved precisely by the imagined form of globality itself*. This attachment is contingent; it depends on the proximity to others with whom global nomads identifies and on whom they remain dependent. And we can see that such proximity – as a form of contingency – does not require physical co-presence: the body of the global nomadic community 'surfaces' through the giving up of local attachments (where the screen becomes a substitute for the skin). Indeed, globality itself can be theorised as an affective economy, in the sense that it depends on relationship of difference and displacement without positive value; hence, globality is an effect and affect that depends on the movement and circulation of some bodies, images and objects and not others. Globality in this way 'surfaces' as a felt community through the movement of some bodies, which is afforded by the fixing of others, a 'surfacing' that does not quite take form, as it slides between different bodies and signs.[12]

My argument in this paper has been the emotions are crucial to the way in which the bodies of others 'surface' in relation to other others, a surfacing which produces the very effect of communities, that we can describe as 'felt' as well as imagined and mediated. Crucial processes have been analysed, including identification, appropriation and alignment. But what characterises all of these encounters is also a form of dissonance: if the subject seeks to align itself with the community, that alignment always fails, and the surfacing of bodies does not quite take place. The failure of affect is not, however, a reason for hope or optimism, in and of itself. Rather, as I have suggested, emotions work through the very failure to be located in a given object or in the failure to produce an object – which may include the nation or the globe - as given. Indeed, it is this very failure that allows the community to justify the *conditions of its hospitality*, which may be premised on welcoming only those others are recognisable as alike. This failure may also become the basis of another reading of specific bodily others as the 'cause' of continued hatred, anxiety and fear,

and as the 'reason' for new forms of policing. So, for example, it is in moments of perceived crisis (the crisis of the nation, of the family and so on) that the most conservative forms of politics can prevail. While my argument questions any politics based on notions of transgression (which assumes the failure of categories to be stabilised is a source for political transformations that have already been articulated as a critique of the present), neither should it be read as a politics of despair. For where emotions allows us to become attached to forms of community based on violence against others, they may allow us to become attached to forms of living in which the proximity of others is welcomed *without condition*, a welcoming that does read the failure of recognition as a form of violence or injury (and that does not convert such others into 'unlikeness'). Such a welcoming can only avoid becoming another form of appropriation if we assume that one cannot feel what the other feels, and that one cannot inhabit her body.

Endnotes

[1] The website was accessed on January 4th 2001: http://www.nidlink.com/~aryanvic/index-E.html

[2] This paper is part of a larger project provisionally enititled, Feel Your Way: The Cultural Politics of Emotion, where I will also be examining anger, anxiety, fear, disgust, desire, love and enjoyment, and the slide between these emotions in texts and discourses that circulate within nations and in transnational forms of exchange. My concern will not be with defining a specific logic for each emotion; indeed, I would argue that the naming of an emotion involves a form of catachresis; emotions do not have a referent, but the naming of emotions works to establish boundaries that then come to have a referential function.

[3] Of course, not all pain is an effect of injury, or collisions between the body and the world. For a more detailed analysis of pain encounters, see my 'The Contingency of Pain'.

[4] While the former notion of emotions as 'the inside getting outside' might be familiar, given the psychologising of emotions, the notion of emotions as 'the outside getting in' might seem rather surprising. But this model is clear in some of the early sociological work on emotions. For example, Durkheim considers the rise of emotion in crowds, suggesting that the 'great movements' of feeling, 'do not originate in any of the particular individual consciousness' (1966: 4) but come from 'without'. Here the individual is no longer the origin of feeling; feeling itself comes from without, from the thickness of sociality itself. As Durkheim's later work on religion suggests, such feelings do not remain 'without'; 'this force must also penetrate us and organise itself within us; it becomes an integral part of our being and by that fact is elevated and magnified' (1976: 209). For Durkheim, emotion is not what comes from the individual body, but it is what holds or binds the social body together (Collins 1990: 27). What is notable here is that classical sociology theorises emotion in a similar way to traditional psychology: it assumes the objectivity of the very distinction between inside and outside, and between the individual and the social. Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are instead assumed to come from without and move inward. In contradistinction, I want to argue that emotions work to create the very distinction between the inside and the outside, and that this separation takes place through the very movement engendered by responding to others and objects. What is required is an approach informed both by social theory, psychoanalysis and phenomenology, which would attend to how lived experiences of emotion create the surfaces of the individual and social body, as well as being that which renders these surfaces porous, and open to being re-animated. Rather than locating emotion in the individual or the social, we can see that emotionality – as a responsiveness to and openness towards the worlds of others – involves an interweaving of the personal with social, and the affective with the mediated. Of course, in more recent social and psychological theory, as well as phenomenological approaches, and critical approaches to emotion informed by poststructuralism, emotions have been theorised as interweaving the personal, cultural and the social in complex and over-determined ways (see Kemper 1990; Parkinson 1995; Merleau-Ponty 1998; Denzin 1984; Lutz 1988; Lupton 1998). While my argument is clearly indebted to such rich and diverse literatures, I am also making a stronger and more specific claim here: I want to suggest that it is through the movement of emotions that the very distinction between inside and outside, or the individual and social, is effected or affected in the first place.

[5] Given the emphasis here on the subject's perceptions and readings in the making of objects and others, is this a radical form of subjectivism? It is important for me to indicate here how this argument is not subjectivist, but one that undermines the subjective/objective distinction. I am certainly suggesting that 'nothing' or 'no body' has positive characteristics: affect, meaning, value, as well as matter, 'surface' in relations of difference and displacement. So it is not that a subject 'gives' meaning and value to others. Rather, subjects as well as objects are effects of encounters that involve the mediation of an affect that does not reside anywhere (and it certainly is not locatable within the subject, even when that subject fails to be present). Because we are talking of affect as economic, as I will discuss later, it is impossible to posit an origin, which may seem implicit in my argument that the subject reads and feels the bodies of others. On the other hand, affective encounters, insofar as they open up a history of prior attachments,

do not make something out of nothing: subjects as well as objects 'accrue' characteristics over time (a process which shows precisely how these characteristics are not a positive form of residence) that makes it possible to speak of them as prior to a specific encounter. So my argument that the subject's perception and reading of objects and others is crucial does not necessarily exercise a radical form of subjectivism; it does not posit the subject's consciousness as that which makes the world. The subject both materialises as an effect of intensification and has, in some sense, already materialised given such histories of attachment. The almost subject is also another other for other almost subjects; a sociality premised not on the mutuality of being with others, as I will show, but on the process of differentiation, whereby one is with some others differently than other others.

[6] I explore the relationship between hate, hate speech and hate crime in my article, 'The Organisation of Hate' (forthcoming).

[7] See chapter 5 of Strange Encounters where I provide a critique of Australian multiculturalism as such a narrative of conditional hospitality.

[8] This is a crucial point though I cannot develop it further here (see also Ahmed 2000: 144-145). I am suggesting that the idea that bodies have difference, for example, that bodies are already gendered or racialised in a certain way, is an effect of these process of intensification and materialisation. So this is not to say that there are no gendered and racial bodies: rather it is to see that gender and race are an effect of these processes.

[9] Of course, I am not suggesting that emotions all work through identification and alignment, nor that 'likeness' and 'unlikeness' are always what emotions produce. For example, other parts of my research will examine the pleasures or enjoyment of consuming difference (where difference is not felt as lack, but identity is felt as lacking); though I will also show how such pleasures of consuming difference may remain predicated on prior acts of differentiation between those that consume and those that are consumed, between those that have pleasure and those that give pleasure. Clearly, identity and difference are not opposed: identification can take place through the fetishising of difference, and differentiation can take place through the fetishising of identity. What is specific to my claims here is that both identity and difference are affective; they are effects of the mediation of processes of intensification (= materialisation) that do not occur at an individual level, but work to align bodies in different spatialities and temporalities.

[10] This image appears in Franklin, Stacey and Lury's wonderful book Global Nature, Global Culture (2000). I thank them for bringing the image to my attention. My arguments here concerning the affective construction of the global body may also relate to their emphasis on the global as a performative effect.

[11] For a further discussion of the appropriation of pain in the context of the building of nations - in particular, the appropriation of indigenous pain in the 'healing' of Australia - see 'The Contingency of Pain' (forthcoming). Following on from Scarry (1985), I argue that pain is crucial to the unmaking of the bodies of others, but that that this 'unmaking' can also 'make' the bodies of nations. However, I do not claim from this critique that pain should not matter for collective politics; rather, I argue that we need to find another way of bearing witness to the pain of others, premised on 'being moved' by that which one feels that one cannot feel.

[12] It could be argued that recent world events contradict my analysis of the relationship between mobility and the 'feeling' of a global body. The bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11th 2001, which became the justification for a war against Afghanistan arguably, has arguably led to a restriction of the mobility of white bodies given the hyber mobility of terrorist bodies (as well as the hypermobility of biological forms of terror such as Anthrax), bodies that immediately get coded as Asian, Arab or Muslim. We can certainly reflect on this creation of a new global discourse of fear and insecurity, but we can only do so critically by avoiding any simply presumption that fear is an unmediated response that brings all bodies together against a marked terrorist other. I would agree that the hyper mobility of the bodies of terrorists is felt to de-limit the mobility of white Western bodies, particularly in the United States. However, this would miss the point. The mobility of Asian and Muslim bodies is what is restricted by the globalisation of the fear of some bodies and not others: white bodies claim vulnerability as a condition precisely as a way of appropriating danger and constituting it as their own, an appropriation that has led to forms of violence directed against the bodies of marked others. The possibility that the terrorist by pass (us) by, and pass into the community hence becomes a justification of a restriction on any bodies that appear 'like them', whereby their 'unlikeness' from us is presumed by the demand for 'our own security', and yet already negated by the very insecurity required in order to justify the intensification of forms of surveillance.

Literature

Ahmed, S. (1998). *Differences that Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism*, Cambridge University Press.

--------(2000). *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, London: Routledge.

--------(forthcoming). 'The Organisation of Hate', *Law and Critique*

--------(forthcoming). 'The Contingency of Pain', *Parallax*

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1997). *The Psychic Life of Power*, Stanford University Press.

Collins, R. (1990). 'Stratification, Emotional Energy and the Transient Emotions' in T. Kemper (ed), *Research Agenda in the Sociology of Emotions*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Denzin, N. (1984). *On Understanding Emotion*, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Durkheim, E. (1966) *Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: Free Press.

--------(1976). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. J.W.Swan, London: George Allen and Unwin.

Franklin, S., Lury, C. and Stacey, J. (2000). *Global Nature, Global Culture*, London: Sage.

Freud, S. (1922). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. J. Strachey, London: International Psychoanalytical Press.

--------(1964). 'The Ego and the Id'*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol 19., trans J.Strachey, London: The Hogarth Press.

--------(1964) 'The Unconscious'*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol 15., trans. J.Strachey, London: The Hogarth Press.

Goldberg, D.T. (1995). 'Hate or Power' in R.K.Whillock and D. Slayden (eds), *Hate Speech*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kemper, T.D. (1990). *Research Agenda in the Sociology of Emotions*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits: A Selection,* trans. A.Sheridan, London: Tavistock.

Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.B. (1992). *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. D.Nicholson-Smith, London: Karnac Books.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Freedom, California: The Crossing Press.

Lupton, D. (1998). *The Emotional Self: A SocioCultural Explanation*, London: Sage Publications.

Lutz, C. (1988). *Unnatural Emotions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M (1998). *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C.Smitt, London: Routledge.

McNay, L. (2000). *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Nussbaum, M. (1996) 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism' in M. Nussbaum (ed), *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Rosga, A. (1999). 'Policing the State', *The Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law*, 1: 145-174.

Sartre, J-P (1996). *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H.E.Barnes, London: Routledge.

Scarry, E. (1985). *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, C.D. (ed) (1996). *Strangers at Home: Essays on the Long Term Impact of Living Overseas and Coming 'Home' to a Strange Land*, New York: Aletheia Publications

Architecture as Interface: Forming and Informing Spaces and Subjects

Ana Paula Baltazar, University College London

Ana.santos@ucl.ac.uk

'the interior of sculpture' – Helio Passos, Brazil, 1995.

Abstract

Generally, architecture is an artificial construct, which is designed a priori (predetermined). The architect's design has among its determinants the prediction of potential user's behaviour, which is represented as a static space for limited interaction. In this paper I question the limit of representation, the limit of prediction and the limit of staticism in architecture in order to include emergence of subject's desire into the built space. As an interface for social reconciliation, architecture can be reworked as a dynamic place in both real and virtual spaces. Architecture is then a 'problem-worrying' strategy for social relations towards the unexpected, beyond representation. I propose the fusion of architecture and information and communication technology (ICT) as a third space (real and virtual) where subjects make and unmake themselves through emergence of space. As a dynamic embodied collective, depending on subject's interaction to emerge, architecture will be forming and informing space and subject simultaneously.

Introduction

I am an architect from Brazil doing a PhD[1] at the Bartlett (UCL) focusing the relationship of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and architecture beyond representation. When I say 'beyond representation', I mean the use of ICT beyond mere design tool, focusing on its interactive qualities. I am investigating the potential of ICT pointing to a new stage in architecture, privileging interactivity. When I started questioning representation as a mode of production, wishing to understand the potential of computers beyond representation as a new mode of production, automatically I faced a greater problem, which is to define what exactly can replace the current mode of production: what is it that will replace 'representation'.

Some valuable investigations of product and process can be taken from the arts: 'the interior of sculpture' by the Brazilian artist Helio Passos, is an example of creating

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the product (in this case the sculpture) using which is often present only in the process. In this work the usually ephemeral and supporting materials, which are used in the process of production of sculpture, such as cleaning clothes and wire, are externalised becoming the product itself. The sculpture is almost ephemeral, not rigid nor stable. This flexible 'void' invites us to think of 'difference', to think of the elements indispensable to the process of making a sculpture that usually are not 'represented' in the product. It proposes an inversion that can help us think architectural process beyond representation, showing its process as a product. Andrew Benjamin (2001) points to some clues with regards to the process of design in architecture, which he calls 'diagram': for him, the drawings are part of an open process, a process of production of architecture, and they become 'representation' when there is a rupture, an interruption in this open process. The problem is that the product of the architect in the modern tradition is not the building itself, but its representation. Thus, the process of production of architecture, its diagram, is always interrupted; it always becomes 'representation'. This rupture brought about by representation is not merely an interruption in the architect's design process, it defines the moment when the dynamics of the process ends and presupposes the predetermination of user's patterns of behaviour, which is turned into a static element, something representable.

I then realised that I was in fact looking for a means to guarantee the continuity of the process of production of architecture (the open process), looking for something that would be able to avoid representation. To investigate representation was no longer related only to technology of production but also to content, meaning, that is, what is represented in terms of human behaviour. Then, I started to look for critiques of representation outside architecture, in an attempt to understand the content of representation (not only representation as technology). It was then that I came across Dorothea Olkowski's book 'Gilles Deleuze and the ruin of representation' (1999) whose first chapter 'women, representation and power', presents the idea of 'difference' from a feminist perspective. This book introduced me to a completely new approach to representation.[2] The feminist perspective of difference became a clear picture of what I was looking for: to avoid representation as the statisation of equality (predetermining patterns of behaviour) and replace it by the continuous movement of difference (keeping the process open). It was needed to learn more and try to understand the feminist critique in general; I realised that this critique was not only clear with regards to representation but also with regards to embodiment and subjectivity, which were also points to discuss in my thesis in relation to architecture and technology.

In order to have a general idea of feminist theories, I found a book whose introduction caught me: the editors, Sandra Kempe and Judith Squires, stated in the very first pages that rigid classifications of feminist theories lead to polarise perspectives and rigidify conflicts, and that the intention of their book was to introduce contemporary feminist theories as 'feminisms' (in plural) according to 'issues' rather than 'perspectives'. This book is 'Feminisms', an Oxford Readers published in 1997. They grouped feminist theories written by women in six issues: academies, epistemologies, subjectivities, sexualities, visualities and technologies. When I was reading the introduction I expected to see the issue 'spatialities', but it was not there. Going through some of the extracts published in 'Feminisms' I realised that actually it is all about 'spatiality' if we consider that, from the radical feminist activism to the precise and focused academic critiques, everything points to social space, the space of women in society, culture, politics, the space of women in interpreting and naming things; however, none of the texts in that book discuss the physical space itself.

I am reading the feminist critique as a perspective of accepting differences, a perspective of dynamics and a perspective of being inclusive rather than exclusive, as opposed to patriarchal perspective, although, without becoming patriarchal by radically opposing to it and taking its place. I am drawing upon Julia Kristeva's Women's Time (1989a), when she sees the feminist struggle as a historical and political trilogy

that is summarised by Toril Moi (1997, p.249) as follows:
"1. Women demand equal access to the symbolic order. Liberal feminism. Equality.
2. Women reject the male symbolic order in the name difference. Radical feminism. Femininity extolled.
3. Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical. (This is Kristeva's own position.)"

These three positions are simultaneous and non-exclusive, acknowledging the political reality of feminism, but by 'deconstructing' sexual difference Kristeva points further: beyond claims of equality, beyond the risk of an inverted sexism, her argument challenges the notion of identity, transforming our awareness of the very nature of the feminist struggle. There is a need to stick to the first two positions in order to construct the meaning of femininity, although, without fixing it in an opposite and extreme relation to patriarchy.

'socially fragmented man' – Helio Passos, Brazil, 1995.

Accepting difference, being dynamic and not excluding, is not only an issue to favour women. Male dominance and the circles of exclusion, whose boundaries are generally formed by women, are not fragmenting only women's identity. It can not be seen as a huge circle that includes all men inside keeping all women outside (as it was the case of the first wave feminism, at the end of the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century, claiming general women's rights such as suffrage). The penetration of women in the male circle can be seen in many different sub-circles of exclusion, and this multiplicity of circles of exclusion leads to male fragmentation. The fragmentation of the male body can be seen in the work 'socially fragmented man' by Helio Passos. This fragmentation is a result of the trap men find themselves by their own imposition of dominance and control. Their identity is always fragmented once men are supposed to fit their own systems of collective classification and representation. The equality proposed by social, cultural and political systems of representation excludes any entire human being, be it male or female. It is an obvious failure of the patriarchal dominance, in which the attempts at creating patterns of equality lead to an inevitable fragmentation of identity.

Returning to the question of spatiality, I am arguing here that the physical space, more precisely architecture, is a powerful interface, it is a means for 'engaging the senses' from a feminist perspective into the production of identity. I like to think of interface as the intermediary between the self and the world. According to Martin Heidegger in his chapter 'being-in-the-world in general as the basic state of dasein' (1962, pp. 78–90), human being is actually 'being-in-the-world', not merely 'being'.

This definition echoes Plato's Timaeus, where he proposes three elements to explain world's cosmology: first there is the intelligible, the eternal, the self or the soul; then there is the sensible, that which becomes, the body; and finally there is the third element, which Plato describes as a "perplex and obscure concept" (Plato, p.47), that is 'chora', the recipient, the space, which receives both the self and the body. The very nature of 'chora' is to be present, to become according to what it receives, but at the same time transforming what it receives. The fact of being in the world means that we are selves embodied in biological bodies, which are socially, culturally, and politically transformed by its embodiment in the world, in this 'chora', which is never the same.

The trilogy self-body-space is very useful to understand the potential of interface. The first level interface, or the first embodiment of the self, is the biological (flesh and bone) body, which specifically defines its sex, and more generally, its appearance. Male or female is the first becoming of the self, and in this very first moment it disregards any social, cultural or political consequence of it. As soon as the embodied self come to be, the process of construction of identity start taking place. The socio-cultural environment shapes this process. This environment is the second level interface or second embodiment, and I am arguing that both architecture and ICT are the recipients, the interfaces between the embodied self and the world. It must be clear that I am considering the first embodiment as the one we never get rid of while we are alive, in other words, we are never disembodied, everything we feel is reflected in our body. Although, there is a need to work the potential of the second level embodiment, the second level interface, in order to start a process of freeing the embodied self to work his identity. That is, I am proposing to think architecture and ICT as interfaces beyond fixed patterns of socio-cultural representation, where the embodied self would cease fragmenting its identity to fit pre established models and would participate in the dynamics of differentiation.

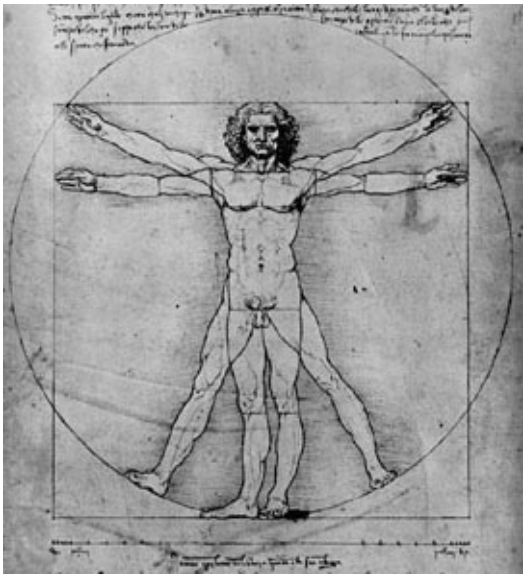
Fusing architecture and ICT ('cyberarchitecture') makes possible to create an emergent space, a space that depends on user interaction in order to be complete, and by doing so, the user is no longer interacting with a predetermined environment. Thus, not only the space gains a new dimension beyond patriarchal model of dominance and control, but also the embodied self receives the impact of this open space. Instead of fragmenting the identity in order to fit in the static space, the subject will interfere within the space in order to bring the space to its needs. This interference implies that the subject should take a position, and this positioning is also related to the feminist struggle. I am thinking of Toril Moi's definition of female, feminine and feminism (1997, p.247), in which she associates female with the body's nature, feminine with the cultural transformation of the embodied self, and feminism with political position. I am not claiming that cyberarchitecture will have a direct impact in culture (as Sadie Plant says, it is not possible to 'design culture'),[3] but that it will require the user to have a position, to take decision, instead of accepting a ready-to-use space, and this automatically changes the process of construction of identity, and indicates a possible change in culture (which is by no means designed, predetermined or predictable). We can see this cycle having a two-way impact: the user 'creates' the space and the space transforms the user simultaneously.

The human/machine approach, both in architecture and computers, is replaced by the human/content approach. In this way, information is not disembodied,[4] it is assumed only to exist when it is in-forming the self,[5] out of the body it is just data. It is the end of architecture as a machine to live and of the computer as a machine to inform, indicating the potential of working with both as cyberarchitecture: as a human/content interface that enables an inverse process of construction of identity than that of patriarchy, this time celebrating difference and dynamics. This process of construction of identity can be understood within the shift from cultural embodied practice to political ideology. In other words, I am arguing that our habits are embodied from our cultural environment most of the times without an ideological filter. That

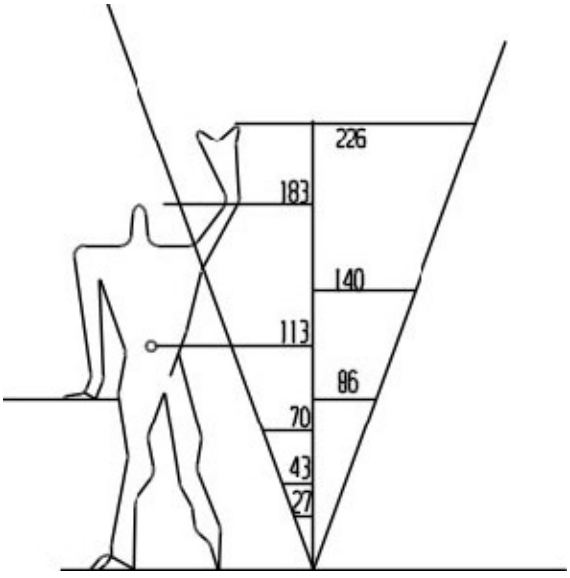
is, we absorb from the environment most of our habitual cultural practices and this predetermined practices lead the process of construction of our identity without our active participation.[6] By acknowledging the way space works as embodied practice, I am arguing that it is possible the production of a 'new' space that does not impose their ways on people but requires people to participate, to take position.

In this case, the consideration of the feminist perspective in space is an essential investigation, once feminism questions the patriarchal model, and offers a solid basis for the foundation of a new spatial model. The feminist reading I am doing can be paralleled to Carol Gilligan's (1997), when she describes the different voice characterised not by 'gender' but by 'theme', and she presents the contrasts between male and female voices in order to "highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex." (Gilligan 1997, p.146). The two modes of thought I am referring to with regards to space are: architecture as predetermined, static and represented space (which is the current modern tradition); and the potential of architecture as the space of difference, emergent at each and every interaction, the space of desire (which I am arguing to be the new tradition, fusing architecture and ICT).[7] The modern tradition of architecture is concerned with the patriarchal spatialisation, the male voice, while the potential emergent space, the space of difference, is related to the female voice.[8]

The modern tradition of architecture developed "a "scientific" theory of architecture that allowed for the objectification of form" (Pérez-Gómez 1992, p.xiv), and also the objectification of the subject, whose body is literally objectified through its geometrical fragmentation and representation. The male representation is present in both product and process. Male dominance is represented through the objectification and control of the product. In the process, the extreme objectification of form can be perceived in the many attempts to produce architecture following only rational rules (examples of these are the attempts to computer generate architecture by means of a syntax system, genetic algorithm and shape grammar). The objectification of the subject can be seen through the representation of human behaviour as the basis of the 'functionality' of the building, and also through the systems of proportions developed around the ideal male figure.



Vitruvian man – Leonardo da Vinci



Modulor – Le Corbusier

Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man and Le Corbusier's Modulor are examples of the geometrical fragmentation through male dominance leading to rupture and representation of an ideal identity. In Le Corbusier's Modulor, the ideal man is 1.83 metre tall, and it does not only excludes women, as it also excludes the majority of men. I am not arguing that proportion is evil, I am just arguing against the way it has been

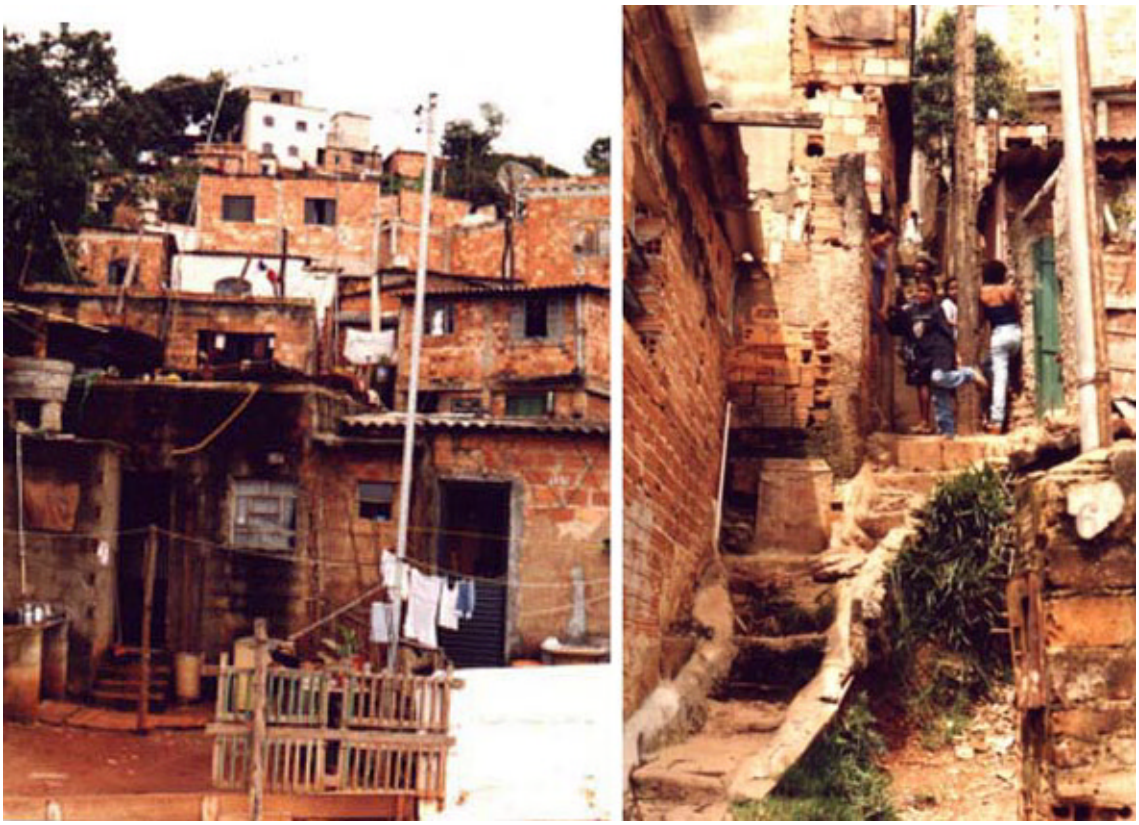
developed in the modern tradition, the way it was made central and rationalised, as if there were a universal truth controllable by systems of dominance, as if architecture were the spatialisation of this truth and control disregarding any intuitive aspect of design.[9] I am arguing against the patriarchal interpretation of ancient traditions (even if they are themselves patriarchal) and the consequent patriarchal foundation of the modern one.

However, it is already acknowledged today, "in the awake of modernism, ... the failures of instrumental theories and functionalism to generate meaningful architecture" (Pérez-Gómez 1992, p.xv). Then, it is a good time to think of architecture as a space which is not controlled by the architect, which is not a representation of a fulfilled desire, a space which is alive, a space that is an event rather than a substance, a present space as a link between past and future, and above all, a space that takes the 'other' in consideration, that accommodates difference and potentialise individual desire. Drawing upon Socrates (Plato 1999), desire is desire of something we do not have, and once we have it, we cease desiring it. In order to keep desire alive a new strategy is needed: instead of a desired space (the representation of desire) architecture becomes a space of desire (expressing the potential of desiring); instead of problem-solving, architecture shifts to a problem-worrying strategy.[10] Shifting from problem-solving to problem-worrying in architecture means to investigate the possibilities of embodiment (the second embodiment: the embodiment of the body in space) beyond practices by habit, towards the potential of creating a dynamic space, a space receptive to difference. In this way, a new approach to subjectivity is needed, one that does not fragment the subject by representing it by means of rationality in three dimensions. A sensible approach to subjectivity is required, the one that acknowledges pleasure, its dynamics and its individual character, privileging the subjective dimensions of time and behaviour. As opposed to patriarchal manifestations of spatiality, there is the potential feminist space.

If we remember Socrates in the Symposium (Plato 1999, pp.734–735), he spoke of love through the words of Diotima, the wise woman that he once met and who presented him with a sensible concept of love. In order to speak about love, in order to not only rationalise and praise love as an end in itself, Socrates speaks not as his other male fellows, but he brings a female perspective to the dialogue. Love, as desire, is of something, and as such, it is not 'good' in itself, it is wanting for good, it searches for good. In this dialogue, the other speakers had already spoken of love as an end in itself, as good, opposed to evil. However, Socrates takes a female perspective to show that not necessarily what is not good must be evil. And love is neither good nor evil, it does not fit in the rational alteration of the opposites, but it is located in the interval between the two opposites. Therefore, love, as desire, is not something that can be represented in a patriarchal perspective of rational dominance and control. Then, returning to our architectural investigation, the feminine approach to desire is needed in order to bring it into space as a means rather than an end in itself. It is not a problem to be 'solved' in architecture, we can only wonder about it, we can just worry about it. It is up to whom interacts within the space to transform it and be transformed by it.

The problem-worrying strategy, the dynamic space, the desiring space, is already present in some spatial examples, such as the 'favelas' in Brazil and the acclaimed Fresh Water Pavilion in The Netherlands.

'Favela' is an illegal urban settlement, generally translated as 'slum' or 'shantytown'. However, the meaning of 'favela' in Brazil differs slightly from the actual meaning of slum and shantytown. Slum means an area of the city or even a house which is in a very bad condition and which is very poor. Shantytown refers to an area in or near a town where very poor people live in small and roughly built huts made from thin sheets of wood, plastic, etc. The phenomenon of 'favela' can sometimes meet the meaning of slum or shantytown, but in fact is characterised neither by bad condition nor by roughly built and almost temporary accommodation. The main fea



'favela' in Belo Horizonte, Brazil – photos by Patricia Gouthier, 2001

ture of a 'favela' is the fact that it is a piece of land which is illegally appropriated due to a specific reason. This illegal appropriation is in most of cases consequence of poverty, but its main cause is the attempt of inclusion of the excluded. Nowadays it is a very complex social, cultural and political phenomenon, but in the history of Brazil, which is very recent, it is easy to identify the roots of such phenomenon. Some of the big Brazilian cities, such as Belo Horizonte, are just near 100 years old. When this city was 'founded' (it was a designed city) it offered place for an elite to live in accompanied by their workers. As the city grew, there was a need for more workers, and also many informal activities started taking place. This growth was not designed, and as the model of the city was very rigid, there is even a contour avenue supposed to fix its spatial limit, it was not prepared to accommodate the ones who were not programmed to be there. It is a model of exclusion imposed by space. However, many workers from near by towns and villas were needed there or even could find better chances there. They would travel daily at first, and then they would look for accommodation in the city for the weekdays, and probably a permanent accommodation in the near future. As the city was not flexible enough to cope with this demand, there was no way to accommodate all the new people arriving. The 'favela' is born in response to this rigid and exclusive city model, in order to accommodate those workers and those looking for work in the new growing city.

The 'favela' is then an example of a modern spatial attempt of inclusion, focusing on difference and the dynamic possibility of growth in order to accommodate the ones that are excluded from the planned city. Although the reason of being of the 'favela' is related to the need to 'solve' a spatial problem, its developments are strongly committed to the problem-worrying strategy. Two points should be noted: first the purpose of this settlement, and second the form of this settlement. With regards to its purpose, it is an attempt of inclusion.[11] In this way, the purpose of the 'favela' is not free from the system of dominance, once it is created in order to enlarge the space of inclusiveness of the city. With regards to its formal manifestation, it ends up as an unprecedented artificial settlement in the modern tradition. It is a dynamic space; it is alive, spontaneous, constantly growing, constantly in transformation. It is formally non-representational, although, it is created in order to achieve the patterns

of living in the city. Its formality is a consequence of a non-planned, non-rational settlement, giving place to a more sensible manifestation, even if not intended, but by the lack of predictions. The difference of the lack of prediction in 'favelas' and the lack of prediction in the city is that in the case of 'favelas' it results in a dynamic and inclusive space, whilst in the city it is a consequence of exclusive planning and ends up as an static and exclusive space.

The 'favela' is a space of conflict, be it related to its insertion in the city, be it internal to its structure. Its founding reason is patriarchal although the formal result ends up as an antidote to patriarchy. In one hand, there is the wish to be included under the same patriarchal system of representation, but, on the other hand, they do not belong to the same class of representation, and they end up transgressing the patriarchal organisation through the need to accommodate difference. Thus, the formal result is born from spontaneous manifestation, it is not designed, but the reason why it takes place and its consequent developments proves to be highly hierarchical and controlling. Nowadays, favela is not only a space of workers anymore. Now that the settlements are 'legal', many of them were legalised by the city's authorities, the struggle takes a different dimension. The question now is to invert the power relation. The revised 'favela' became 'controlled' by socially excluded men leading to the development of this space as a space of violence, of social illegality (such as drug dealing, traffic of guns). In this transformation, I believe the 'favela' is loosing its best features, establishing its own system of dominance, based on the same patriarchal model of the city, in opposition to it.[12] It is developing towards rigidness, staticism, and instead of becoming a space of desire it is becoming a space of fear.

Nevertheless, the richness of the 'favela' as an example of an open process, of the space of difference, of a dynamic space, can still be clearly seen, although it is not guaranteed to last in a near future, this settlement is originated in a very primitive way and is in process of becoming static. I am not proposing we all move to 'favelas' or that we start to live without planning. My analysis of the 'favela' intends to indicate the formal possibilities of spaces accommodating difference, being dynamic and not entirely predictable, and the possible investigation of such features in planned spaces.

I hope to show with one last example that there is a connection between the mode (or technology) of production of architecture and the way it works with meaning, the way it interfaces content. Although ICT has been used in architecture as a means to give continuity to the current tradition, I am arguing that, as a new technology of production, it introduces a whole new potential to architecture. This new potential regards the easiness of giving up control. Considering the digital space together with the physical space, we not only indicate a new mode of production of architecture as we also create a new possibility for this space to grow in different and unexpected ways. As in the example of the 'favela', the form of space is naturally shaped by dynamics, it accepts difference in a very continuous way. However, once we start predicting, representing, we impose a rupture in the natural process of development, which in the modern tradition can be easily associated with the design process as its mode of production. In order to think of the potential of ICT in architecture, it must be thought of beyond representation, it must be taken as a space in itself (even if a complementary space), which actually it has already become, (the Internet is an example). The Fresh Water Pavilion (conceived by NOX and built in Zeeland, The Netherlands in 1997), is a great example of this potential I am talking about, it joins together physical and digital spaces creating a topological 'emergent' space at each and every interaction.

The Fresh Water Pavilion is a building seized by the concept of the liquid. "It is a liquidising of everything that has traditionally been crystalline and solid in architecture" (Spuybroek 1998, p.50). This liquidising is achieved by joining architecture and ICT, considering both as one entity, rather than separate disciplines. For the purpose

Fresh Water Pavilion – NOX, Zeeland, The Netherlands, 1997

of this text, I will restrict my analysis of this building to one simple but significative aspect of its interactiveness, which is the projection of the grid activated by sensors. The sensors are placed in different locations and are activated by walking through or jumping over; the sensor then calculate the weight, as if it was a stone falling on water, and generates a correspondent wave represented through a wire frame grid, which is projected simultaneously in the environment. In this way, "the interactivity is not only in the geometry: the action moves through the material" (Spuybroek 1998, p.51). The building is dynamic and requires human presence to happen. It is just 'complete' (if we can say that it is ever complete) by interaction, it is perceived as a third space, neither physical nor digital, but a hybrid space. The third space emerges in each interaction, responding differently to different inputs, transforming itself in a potential desiring space. It works as a dynamic interface between the embodied self and the environment; it is a blend between object and subject in a chain of actions. This architecture as present time event is a powerful means to engage the body in its own construction of identity, once the space is not imposing its ways on us.

In this case, the building works as a diagram, an open diagram without interruption of representation: the building is never a static product, it is an open process (it brings the openness of process into the product). Once the subject's behaviour is not represented as the formal and functional determinants of the building, there is an automatic shift from the perspective of exclusion to the perspective of inclusion. I am arguing that by fusing ICT and architecture it is possible to keep the process open, it is possible to accept difference and not to exclude dynamics; it leads to an emergent space, which depends on time and behaviour working together with the three dimensions of space. Visiting the Fresh Water Pavilion[13] means being informed by the building as we inform it; as we interact within this building we are trans-forming the building and being trans-formed by it.[14] This is architecture's mode of production shifting from representation to interaction, guaranteeing the continuity of the process in the product.

Cyberarchitecture (architecture and ICT) starts to fulfil the role of interface, reconciling subject and object beyond representation. This is the potential of architecture as 'chora', the space that is there to receive the subject but at the same time is transformed by the subject and transforms the subject. According to Plato (1929) it is the mother, the one who accepts and loves her children's differences. According to Kristeva (1989b, p.93), 'chora' denotes "an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation..." indicating the uncertain and indeterminate character of 'chora', the ideal second body, the dynamic collective embodiment. In conclusion, cyberarchitecture is a potential alternative to the predeterminism of the modern tradition, fusing architecture and ICT as an interface, as 'chora', forming and informing spaces and subjects simultaneously.

Endnotes

[1] PhD research at The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL), supervised by Professor Philip Tabor since 1998 and also by Dr Jane Rendell more recently, and funded by CAPES, Brazil

[2] Even though Olkowski draws upon Delleuze's theories, the feminist reading of him was entirely new for me

[3] Sadie Plant comment on Manuel de Landa's lecture in the occasion of the 'e-futures: designing for a digital world' conference, 4 June 2001, RIBA, London.

[4] Katherine Hayles offers a great reading of this argument (Hayles 1999).

[5] See Aart Bijl argument in 'Pictures of ourselves', chapter 1 (Bijl 1995, pp.8–40).

[6] Maria Fernández (paper given at the conference 'affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies', Turku, Finland, 15 September 2001) argues that racism is not an ideological question but rather it is an embodied practice. In her view, a three year old child has already embodied racist practices without any idea of that, depending on his cultural environment. I am drawing upon this shift from ideology to embodied practice as a way to reread the construction of identity in relation to the environment. If we consider the current tradition of architecture, in which space has specific functions, we can see the user learning how to deal with space as a habit (an embodied practice), there is no requirement for taking position. If we consider the possibility of space requiring the user to take position, then it would gain the domain of ideological construction of identity, which will be potentialised by space.

[7] I am not arguing that the new tradition is limited to the fusion of architecture and ICT, but my hypothesis is that by fusing them it is a step towards a new potential of space, althoug this space is not limited by its technologies of production, but by the way it deals with them beyond representation and towards interactivity.

[8] These two **themes**, or approaches to space, are neither male only nor female only issues. They concern men and women equally, however, due to the development of different voices in different times and spaces, these themes become associated to male and female simultaneously. But this does not mean that one is a male issue and the other a female issue, this approach is only a tool to achieve balance, to ward of the system of dominance that prevailed for such a long time. It is not a generalisation of sex, but an attempt to step further towards the acknowledgement of individual differenc

[9] Le Corbusier is considered the master of proportions in the modern tradition, although his modulor does not seem to work to many other architects. Some critics argue that this failure is due to the fact that it is a complex system of proportions and should be taken very precisely, which other architects were not able to do. On the contrary, I would argue that other architects were not able to merge intuition with the rational system, and the rational system alone does not guarantee space quality (goodness or beauty). For the suggestion that 'in the case of derivative works, it is perhaps an adherence to "rules" which has lapsed', see Rowe 1976, p.16. For the critic of the application of Le Corbusier's modulor by other architects, see Meiss 1990, p.63. For the argument in favour of the accurate role of proportions as a means to achieve goodness and beauty in space, see Padovan 1999.

[10] Architecture as a problem-worrying strategy is not a new idea. Architecture has always been a means to worry about space and to decide upon it, although this worries are often permeated by the need to transform them into a problem to be solved. It was just in the 60s that a conscient (ideological) discussion of these two strategies took place, and it was brought about by the developments of computer aided design. Anderson 1966). In practice, this shift from problem-solving to problem-worrying is also consciently taking place in architecture, e.g., sustainable buildings and multi-functional spaces. However, the tradition of problem-solving is unavoidable in the current process of design, once the 'representation' is supposed to contain the future building (the building is predetermined in the design, which marks the rupture between the diagram as speculative process and the diagram as representation of the product to be built). Then it is needed to emphasise the potential of problem-worrying as a means for the whole architectural process of production

[11] it can be associated with the first feminist struggle proposed by Kristeva (1989a): the liberal feminism, which seeks equality.

[12] another struggle is taking place in the 'favela', which is related to Kristeva's (1989a) second feminist struggle: the radical feminism, which opposes itself to male dominance instead of accepting it in an attempt to equality

[13] It must be acknowledged that apart from an 'inclusive' use of ICT in this building, it is still very formal. The user is required to 'participate' in order to 'create' the building environment (in order to complete the building), but the current potential of ICT is not fully explored in this space, it is an example of the very beginning of this investigation.

[14] Transformation is used here in the sense of Hans-George Gadamer's 'The relevance of the beautiful' where he states that real aesthetic experience transforms us, and also in the sense of Bruno Latour who uses the separated words trans-form in order to emphasise the dynamics of formation...e...

Literature

Anderson, S., 1966. Problem Solving and Problem Worrying. *In: American Institute of Architects Teachers Seminar*, Bloomfield, June 1966. Michigam: Cranbrook Academy.

Benjamin, A., 2001. Noting the plan: working through Rowe's notation. [unpublished paper presented at the conference] *After the diagram: performative nota-*

tions in architecture, dance, music and film, Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, 11–12 May 2001.

Bijl, A., 1995. *Ourselves and computers, difference in minds and machines*, London: Macmillan.

Gilligan, C., 1997. In a different voice. *In:* S. KEMPE. & J. SQUIRES, ed. *Feminisms*, Oxford Readers, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 146–152.

Hayles, N. K., 1999. *How we became posthuman: virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Heidegger, M., 1967. *Being and time*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell [Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson].

Kempe, S. & Squires, J. [editors], 1997. *Feminisms*, Oxford Readers, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kristeva, J., 1989a. Women's Time. *In:* T. MOI, ed. *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 187–213

Kristeva, J., 1989b. Revolution in poetic language. *In:* T. MOI, ed. *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 87–136.

Meiss, P., 1990. *Elements of architecture: from form to place*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Moi, T., 1997. Feminist, Female, Feminine. *In:* S. KEMPE. & J. SQUIRES, ed. *Feminisms*, Oxford Readers, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 246–250.

Olkowski, D., 1999. *Gilles Deleuze and the ruin of representation*, London: University of California Press.

Padovan, R., 1999. *Proportion: science, philosophy, architectures*, London: E & FN Spon.

Plato, 1929. *Timaeus and Critias*; translated, introduction and notes by A. E. Taylor, London: Methuen & Co.

Plato, 1999. The Symposium. *In:* BOTTON, A.,1999. *The Essential Plato*, The Softback Preview; edited and introduction by A. de Botton, translation Benjamin Jowett [first published in 1871], 731–732.

Pérez-gómez, A., 1992. *Poliphilo or the dark forest revisited: an erotic epiphany of architecture*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Rowe, C., 1976. The mathematics of the ideal villa. *In*: *The mathematics of the ideal villa and other essays*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Spuybroek, L., 1998. Motor Geometry. *In:* S. PERRELLA, ed. *Hypersurface architecture*, Architectural Design Profile 133, London: AD.

Character and Cognition in Modern Pornography

Jennifer Lyon Bell, University of Amsterdam

jennifer@blueartichoke.com

Classical film theorist Christian Metz once said, "A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand." Pornography seems like the perfect example of this paradox, since at first glance it appears painfully simple to understand. Its obvious goal is creating sexual desire in the viewer. However, understanding how pornographic film even begins to do this is surprisingly challenging.

Here is what I am interested in: If the reason to watch pornography is to be "turned on," then what does being "turned on" mean? What are the imaginative and physiological processes that occur when anyone, male or female, watches pornography and gets turned on? To what extent are these processes voluntary or involuntary? And lastly, I am interested in the question I will focus on in this analysis, which is: If pornography's goal is simply to turn on the spectator, then why does so much pornography include character and narrative at all —what is their role in generating the spectator's sexual desire?

One new and potentially fruitful approach is cognitive film theory, which is very much concerned with how film can generate emotion and feeling in the spectator, and parsing out the fine distinctions of emotion and feeling that can take place. In fact, one specific concern of cognitive film theory is not just in explaining "desire" or "pleasure," as classical film theory does, but in detailing other kinds of emotion that a spectator might feel as a result of watching film.

Murray Smith, a cognitive film theorist, is the author of the book *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (1995). In this recent book, Smith puts forth a theory that he believes to be applicable to most genres. He has already applied it successfully to melodrama, suspense, French art film, "Baudelairean" decadent cinema, and horror film, among others. He believes that spectatorial emotion is generated specifically via character in film, though the emotions the spectator feels do not have to match those of the character, as I will explain.

Applying Smith to pornography makes sense for three reasons:

Pornography appears to be designed exclusively to generate spectatorial emotion; Smith's entire interest is in how emotion is generated.

Most pornography, including the most prototypical kind which film scholar Linda Williams focused on in her seminal book on pornography *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'* (1989), includes character and narrative —in fact, quite a bit, as will become clear. It seems logical that these elements are included for some emotion-generating reason, and applying Smith to pornography could help parse out the reason.

In pornography, the characters are experiencing activities that, presumably, the spectators are trying to experience vicariously. Using Smith may help determine the process by which the spectator engages with the character to enable that vicarious experience.

In other analyses (e.g. Bell 2001b), I have explained that pornography engages with character to create sexual desire in three ways: Via the character as a person (a process based on emotion), via the character as a body (a process based on imaginative bodily engagement), and by bypassing the character completely (a process based on physiological arousal). However, in the interests of space, in this analysis I will focus only on the first section —the ways in which pornography contributes to the spectators' sexual desire by creating a character fleshed out with emotions.

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

In summary, then, the goal of this paper will be to understand what role characters and their emotions play in the process of "turning on" the spectator.

Defining pornography

There are dozens of types of filmic pornography: Male narrative mainstream hardcore, female produced-and-directed, glamour (e.g. Ninn and Blake films), compilation, hotel softcore, S/M, "gonzo," amateur, and professional amateur, to name only a few. Most of these are designed for the male spectator, and most are "hardcore"—which means that penile penetration is clearly visible and thus unfaked. However, I want here to focus on what I call "Male narrative mainstream hardcore," the prototypical type of pornography which probably everyone thinks of the minute they hear the word. Incidentally, this is the same genre on which Linda Williams focuses. To borrow her purposefully neutral definition, I will define pornography as "the visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit, usually unfaked, sexual acts with a primary intent of arousing viewers." (Williams 1989, p.30). Notably, this definition centers on the genre's main goal of creating sexual desire in the spectator. Creating other responses (for example, being artistically uplifting) is beside the point. Most readers are familiar with this genre, so I don't want to take too much time defining the genre along all of its aesthetic, formal, and narrative traits, nor the themes and emplotments.

However, in brief, MNMH's basic narrative structure consists of several sexual "scenes," each linked by a narrative. Surprisingly, roughly 25% of the screen time in these films today is taken up with narrative (Bell, 2001b). The question is: If we assume these films "work," then what is the function of this narrative, and the characters within it, in generating sexual desire?

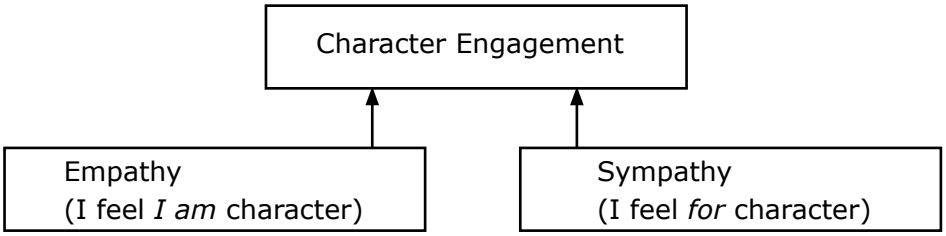
I have chosen MNMH pornography as a test case of sorts. In fact, other analyses which I have done on filmic pornography made for women—such as Candida Royalle's Femme film series —indicates that the effects I talk about here are even stronger in these other genres of pornography that they are in this MNMH genre (Bell 2001a). I feel these effects, then, are generally applicable to a variety of pornography genres and spectators (including different genders, sexual orientations, and so forth.) I find the genre of MNMH pornography, designed mainly for the male spectator, interesting because it seems that character would be completely irrelevant, and yet it is not. Thus, I am treating it here as a boundary case for the role of character in the generation of sexual desire.

"Emotion: Character as personality."

Murray Smith's theory of "engaging with fiction" is very much concerned with how film generates feeling in the spectator.

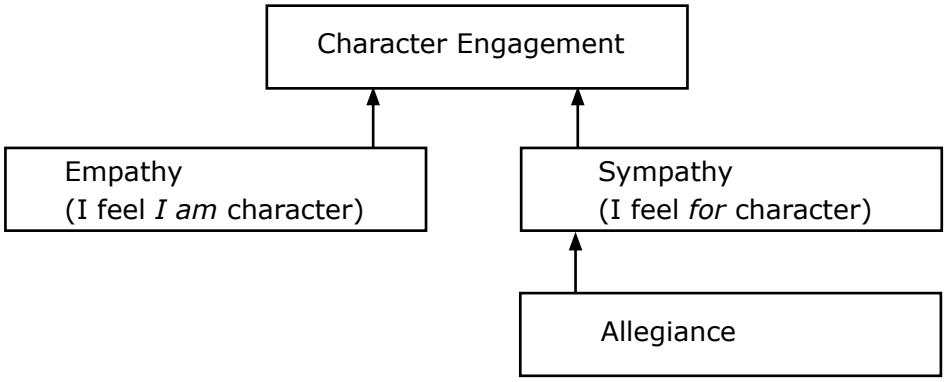
For Smith, characters are absolutely central to an understanding of how emotions and other feelings are generated by film. Smith defines "character" as both the fictional analogue of the human agent, and as a textual construct that (for various reasons) he feels is a particularly salient element of narrative structure. Thus, Smith believes that narratives are made understandable and aesthetically affecting via character. Engaging with fiction, in other words, is driven by Smith's theory of "character engagement," a term he believes is a more nuanced replacement for the word "identification."

There are two important aspects to Smith's theory of emotion that are relevant to my purpose here. One is that the emotions of the spectator do not simply mimic those of the character. The other is how those non-mimicked feelings are generated. Concerning the first, Smith posits a two-branched process, which I would summarize graphically as follows:



In one branch, this mimicry does occur. In other words, feelings in the spectator arise that are the same —or simply diluted versions of —the feelings the character is experiencing. Smith refers to this occasional exact emotional mimicking as "empathy," and unfortunately I don't have time to address empathy in detail here, although it is extremely important in MNMH pornography. But in the more dominant branch of his theory, which serves as the primary structure of character engagement, more often spectatorial emotion arises because of the spectator's feelings *about* certain characters, and this is also important in pornography. In these cases the spectator feels "for" the character without feeling he/she "is" the character. Smith calls this broader emotional structure "sympathy," sympathy being the process by which the spectator constructs an overall imaginary system of different characters and their narrative situations, and comes to feel emotions on that basis. This dual-branched system is one important feature of Smith's theory. How does sympathy contribute in MNMH pornography to the spectator's emotional engagement with the character? In order to understand this, it's necessary to understand how sympathy works, which brings me to the other important feature of Smith's theory.

This other important feature of Smith's theory pertains to his dominant structure, sympathy, and why it generates emotion in the spectator. According to Smith, the reason that sympathy generates character engagement is because the end-goal of the sympathetic process is to generate what he calls the spectator's "allegiance" to a character (as summarized graphically here):



Smith is most well-known for his concept of allegiance, arguably the most controversial part of his theory. It is controversial because he claims that character engagement can only occur when the spectator views that character as relatively moral within the framework of the film. The character need not be moral according to our own personal standards, as long as we can imagine the moral world of the film, in which the character is relatively moral. For example, Smith refers to the film *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986), in which Henry (presumably "evil" within our personal moral frameworks, because he is of course a serial killer) is framed as relatively more moral than Henry's friend Otis, who sexually abuses his own sister, inspiring Henry to rush to Otis' sister's defense. Thus, we feel emotions for Henry, watching Henry's situation, because in part, the text has constructed him as relatively moral, and so we feel <u>for</u> him, even if we don't feel <u>like</u> him. We feel pity for his pathetic life, or hopeful that he will be redeemed by love. According to Smith, this moral evaluation is possible in any film because the film (i.e. the text) also has what some

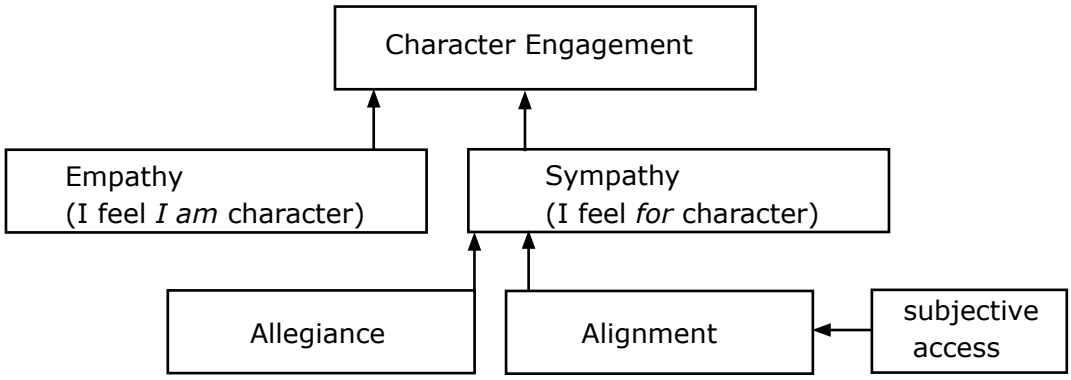
theorists call, borrowing a term from Christopher Butler, a "co-text," a set of internal values and beliefs that form a backdrop to the narrative events (Butler 1984, cited Smith 1995 p.4). The co-text might be more obvious or less obvious—for example, established through a bald intertitle versus through implicit narrative juxtapositions—but it is always present. And according to Smith, allegiance is what enables the spectator to care about the character, thus feeling emotion about their situation.

Smith believes that the more sympathy (and/or empathy) the text encourages, the more "engaged" the spectator feels with the character, and the more emotion the spectator feels. With regard to sympathy, then, the more allegiance a film generates, the more emotion the spectator feels. So, does MNMH pornography construct allegiance? I believe that it does.

It might seem very unlikely that a pornographic film would go to the trouble of ensuring that the characters are portrayed as relatively moral in the story. Yet, this is very frequently the case in MNMH films. For example, many of the pornographic films that Linda Williams discusses seem to take pains to judge the main characters as moral. She notes one particular trend in this area: Many of the films she looked at lionized moral values like spontaneity, energy, and intensity which the protagonists exemplified, in comparison to (the implicit anti-values of) boredom and rigidity. While spontaneity is not the moral value held up in every MNMH film, it seems important that the characters are generally not found to be morally wanting. It seems unlikely that such a consistent phenomenon wouldn't be related to the singular goal of this type of film—generating sexual desire.

Let me give an example of relative morality in one of the porn films I looked at. In the 1991 film *Night Deposit*, the more prominent characters –the ones featured in the most number of sex scenes—are all portrayed as relatively moral compared to the minor characters. The two main male characters are bank robbers, but they are also devoted best friends who wish to hurt no one, and, apparently, simply don't see any harm in stealing from a faceless corporation. The two main female characters are also best friends, confide in one another, and agree to share some of their own money with the bank robbers. According to Smith, the spectator is likely to be more emotionally engaged with the film because the characters are relatively moral. Since this idea is a bit counterintuitive, I invite you to test this concept yourself. Think of a film in which you felt emotionally engaged with a character who seems morally deficient to you. Then consider, Is this character portrayed as truly bad, or are there textual indications of a filmic alternate moral universe in which the character is actually pretty decent? Smith would say there are many films which at first do give the impression of the main character's moral depravity, but tell a different story upon closer inspection. I would argue that the same is true of MNMH pornography, in which the characters, upon close inspection, are relatively moral. Therefore, following Smith, allegiance contributes to erotic engagement in pornography, the way that in other films it contributes to a more general kind of engagement.

There is one other, different, way that Smith says that sympathy contributes to the spectator's engagement with the film. Smith says that the precursor to allegiance is that the spectator must first experience "alignment" with the character:



In general, this means that the spectator must be able to determine where a character is and what he/she is doing/thinking/feeling, which makes sense. For my purposes here, the most important aspect of alignment is what Smith calls *subjective access*. Subjective access refers to the methods by which the spectator gains access to the state of mind of those characters, including their thoughts and feelings.

Is subjective access also present in porn? Yes. First of all, characters actually do think. In fact, many of the plots of MNMH films revolve around mysteries, or other such manipulations which require the characters to purposely deceive one another or reveal prior deceptions. Yet their thoughts are available to the spectator, usually through straightforward dialogue. This thought-access provides some sense of the characters' inner life.

The category of subjective access also includes *emotion*, what the characters are feeling. While there is, perhaps surprisingly, not much sexual emotion in MNMH pornography, there is in fact nonsexual emotion, and it plays an important role. First, there *is* such a thing as sexual emotion —being passionate, horny, longing, titillated, hungry etc. are all considered emotions above and beyond mere genital arousal. It turns out, however, that this type of pornography does not depict very much distinctive sexual emotion. That isn't to say that other pornography genres —also designed to generate sexual desire in the spectator —don't mobilize sexual emotion, such as in Candida Royalle's erotic films. These varied kinds of sexual emotions would also be common in a sexually-themed mainstream film such as *Henry & June* (1990) or *Sirens* (1994) —because these emotions are designed to follow from the combination of character psychology with sexually-themed narrative conflicts which MNMH does not have (e.g. in *Henry & June*, Anaïs's sexual awakening via her mutually supportive and passionate relationship with another writer). However, it would probably be overly generous to ascribe any of these sexual emotions to the type of MNMH films I am discussing here, such as *Night Deposit* and *Body Triple* (1991).

Yet the characters in MNMH pornography do experience nonsexual emotion. They are basic emotions, not nuanced, such as anger, happiness, frustration, greed, and so forth. More importantly, though, these emotions are clearly portrayed and immediately communicated to the spectator (as well as other characters present in the room), usually through unembellished dialogue. In the terms of pioneering cognitive theorist Edward Branigan, who might be more familiar to some readers, this portrayal could also be described as occurring via nonfocalized character-narration (1992, p.86-107). These MNMH characters wear their hearts on their sleeves vis-à-vis the spectator. Concealment of emotion —by simulating some other emotion or attempting to appear neutral —is simply not a feature of this genre the way it might be in a classical film.

For example, when the bank robbers in *Night Deposit* first rob the bank, they are excited at their clean getaway, then pleased with one another, complimenting each other on their fine confident performance in the bank. As they open their sack to count the money, they are surprised and disappointed to discover that they have not gotten the amount of money they hoped for, one of them becomes quite frustrated and angry, and so forth. All of this emotional information is immediately available to the spectator. When combined, this information gives the impression that each character has a personality.

Smith argues that this subjective access enables the moral judgement of allegiance because the spectator can tell how the character really feels about the situations he or she encounters. I agree, and I add that it also serves an erotic function of its own: To reassure the spectator, in the non-sex scenes (which serve as a preamble to sex), that that character's subjectivity is totally accessible to the spectator. In other words, in this sense *the character's personality exists only to demonstrate to the spectator that —should the character feel something during the sex scenes —it will be clear to the spectator*. Furthermore, logically the implication to the spectator is that any sexual feeling the spectator sees in the sex scenes must be "real," since

the character is known to express himself/herself freely. Thus character emotion serves to demonstrate emotional transparency.

Another example of such emotional transparency comes from the film *Body Triple*. In this film, the characters compete in a contest to become the sole inheritors of a dead man's will, and in order to pass the test they must decide which other character(s) they want to spend the rest of their lives with. This plot conceit leads to a great deal of emotional transparency: rich girl Nancy tells various people she has always been in love with the chambermaid Mindy, wife Kate reassures Roger that she's happy her husband is dead, and the videotape of the dead husband allows him to comment freely —and nastily —on his feelings about all of his living relatives and servants.

The emotional transparency of *Night Deposit* and *Body Triple* are not special features of a few pornographic films; rather, these films are indicative of a general psychological effect within the genre of MNMH pornography, which increases spectatorial sexual desire-generation. This emotional transparency heightens subjective access, which heightens alignment, sympathy and then finally heightens the spectator's overall engagement with the film, as well as serving a sexual function of its own.

Applying Smith's terms to pornography, then, it would be fair to describe these films as promoting the spectator's basic alignment with and allegiance to the characters. This roughly translates into saying that these films offer the spectator just enough personality to create a character, and then the film encourages the spectator to care just a little bit about that character. This process helps to mobilize the spectator's own emotions and feelings.

I don't want to overstate, however, the importance of character (and narrative) in MNMH pornography. Obviously, these characters are not nearly as fleshed out as in most genres of film.

Given this truth, one might then ask, "If alignment and allegiance are so important, then why does pornography generate so little?" While the logical answer might be "There's no point in wasting the time doing so, if it's not needed", there might be more complicated factors at work in generating sexual desire with pornography than the director's or producer's wish to do no more than strictly necessary to "get the spectators off." Psychological research has shown that some emotions—particularly nonsexual emotions—can actually derail sexual desire. For example, in one study, subjects were shown different kinds of pornography, and then asked to check off the nonsexual emotions they experienced upon watching, as well as their level of sexual desire. According to the results, respondents who experienced negative nonsexual emotions (e.g. guilt) also tended to report that they did not feel aroused. In other words, if a film presents situations or characters that are in any way bothersome to the spectator, the film risks turning them off. In some cases, even positive emotion can derail desire. For example, a recent study shows that a hardcore—but emotion-laden— Candida Royalle Femme erotic film was experienced as less arousing to all participants, men and women alike, than one in a MNMH style (Pearson 1996).

This "derailing" effect can also be seen in the recent (non-MNMH) arthouse film *Intimacy* (2001). The characters Claire and Jay have sex several times throughout the film, depicted in an extremely explicit way. The first sex scene occurs within the film's initial 5 minutes, when the spectator knows only the basics about each: The characters seem to know each other, they both seem like decent people, and they both want to be having sex. The other sex-occasions are interspersed throughout a plot detailing sadness, infidelity, friendship, desperation, obsession, and a host of other emotions. What I find interesting about the film is that the first sex scene seemed "hotter" than the others, i.e. it generated more spectatorial sexual desire. While there are many differences between the film's first sex scene and the others, the increasingly claustrophobic sensibility of the later sex scenes seems to derive in part from simply knowing too much about the characters and their various prob-

lems. It seems likely that these characters' other unpleasant emotions, while perhaps increasing the overall power of the film's emotional message, interfered with the spectator's ability to generate sexual desire.

In summary, Smith's conception of sympathy, and how it contributes to spectatorial engagement with a film, seems very relevant to MNMH pornography. Specifically, Smith's ideas about the way that allegiance and alignment (especially subjective access) contribute to the spectator's emotional engagement with the film seem quite valid.

However, beyond the demonstration of transparency and morality, I suspect that more nuanced characters may actually detract from a film's ability to generate sexual desire. In this, I believe that pornography differs from other mainstream genres: More "character engagement" is not necessarily better, when the goal is generating sexual desire.

This is only one of the ways in which MNMH pornography creates sexual desire in the spectator. Of course, I am not positing that pornography can't create sexual desire if there is no narrative. The sheer existence of so-called "compilation" pornography, in which narrative and character development are edited out and sex scenes strung together end-to-end, implies that character and narrative are not *essential* to sexual desire. Autonomic reactions and imaginative bodily engagement, which I haven't discussed here, can substitute in part for the lack of character and narrative (Bell 2001b). However, keeping in mind the wide range of pornographic subgenres in which character and narrative are present, I hope that this paper has helped to illuminate the potential importance of character in generating the spectator's sexual desire. Moreover, I hope this analysis can illuminate the role of character in the many other *non*-pornographic filmic genres—such as thrillers and melodrama —in which the spectator's sexual desire is implicated.

Literature

Bell, J.l., 2001a. *Very engaging characters: Sympathy, empathy, and sexually explicit film.* Unpublished manuscript.

———. 2001b. *Engaging the body: The possibilities and limitations of character-based theory in explaining pornography.* Thesis (MA). University of Amsterdam.

Branigan, E., 1992. *Narrative comprehension and film*. London: Routledge, 86-107.

Butler, C., 1984. *Interpretation, deconstruction, and ideology: An introduction to some current issues in literary theory.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4.

Pearson, S.e., 1997 (Dec). Sex Differences in Arousal to Sexually Explicit Films. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section B: The Sciences and Engineering,* Vol. 58/6-B, 3346.

Smith, M., 1995. *Engaging characters: Fiction, emotion, and the cinema*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———, 1999. Gangsters, cannibals, aesthetes, or apparently perverse allegiances. *In* Plantinga, C. And Smith, G., eds. *Passionate views: Film, cognition, and emotion.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 217-238.

Williams, L., 1989. *Hard core: Power, pleasure, and the 'frenzy of the visible'* . Berkeley and Los Angeles CA: University of California Press.

Spaces of Memory: Photographic Practices of Home and Exile

Rosemary Betterton, Lancaster University

r.betterton@lancaster.ac.uk

In this paper, I shall examine two photo-text sequences by the former Yugoslavian artist, Breda Beban. Born 1952 in Zagreb and trained as a painter at Academy of Fine Arts there in early 1970s, she went on to do postgraduate studies in Zagreb & Berlin in early 80s. and began write and direct films and videos with her partner, Hrvoje Horvatic in 1986. They left Croatia when the Civil War broke out in 1991 and became refugees, travelling widely before they settled in London, where Horvatic died suddenly in 1997. These two pieces of work were shown in the UK last year in an exhibition entitled *Still.*

> 1. I Lay on the Bed Waiting for his Heart to Stop Beating, a series of 36 photos taken in various locations between 1991-97, preceded by a written text. Each set shows an unmade bed, a shot of the window, and then a view from the window, The fourth image was made by photographically printing an enlarged detail of the third photograph in 2000.
> 2. The Miracle of Death, series of six photos taken in London in 1998, preceded by a written text.

Images rarely travel unaccompanied: they come with captions or framing texts that produce the context for the work In Breda Beban's photographic sequences, the images are positioned, framed, by the textual narration of her story. Beban is a film and video-maker and her photo-text works are structured like narratives: they are literally a story of an escape, of a journey and of arrivals. However, this narrative is not told with the fluid realism of film, but through the repetitive frozen frames of photography. Whereas lived experience may be said to be filmic, memory is photographic in the way that it stills and separates a moment from the flow of time. And perhaps video, with its ability to freeze-frame, fast-forward and replay, has an even closer likeness to the structures of memory. Beban's photographs operate in a similarly complex way in relation to temporality. The photographs call for narration, but unlike a linear account, the images are re-processed in returns to the past as the site of multiple inscriptions of memory. They enact a tension between the flow of film and the stilled time of a photographic image.

In the series, *I Lay on the Bed Waiting for his Heart to Stop Beating,* we see depictions of different locations in space and time that are minimally captioned with a location and date. The photographs impose structure through the obsessive repetition of sequences: bed, window; view; bed, window; view, which also enacts a movement from inside to outside, from enclosure to the world beyond. I want to suggest that this repetition has at least two meanings, if we understand the photographs as operating within distinct time frames: that of 1991-7 when they were originally taken as personal records, and that of 2000 when Beban put the series together for the exhibition, *Still.* In the first time-frame, the photographs enact a desire to impose order on spaces, objects and details that lack any coherent narrative. These are spaces emptied of time: 'temporarily frozen, yet held up to emotional account.' (Pearce 2000:171). The initial function of the photographs may not have been only as a representation of that experience, but as an act of survival; as psychic containers against breakdown. Taking the photos as a performative act enabled Beban to objectify experiences that threatened to annihilate her as a subject. In the catalogue

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

for *Still,* Adrian Searle comments:

> Going to the window, a daily act, becomes a figuration of disconnectness from one's surroundings, but it is also the first step, (get up and go to the window) of finding, or re-finding one's place in the world.
> (Searle 2000: 3)

The repetitive act of photographing the rooms then, may be seen as a ritual, performative of the sense of bringing into being, or of maintaining, the subject in the world. Searle continues # :

> standing at a window, taking a photograph of what lies outside, reduplicates a sense of exteriority, and of being one whose sense of place is interior, inside the body, inside one' own language, inside oneself, behind the eye that reaches out'
> (Searle 2000:3).

Here, the sense of identity of the exile is internal, as the only place in which it can exist, and the eye that reaches out though the camera becomes, as Cathy Caruth puts it in her recent essay, 'Parting Words', a 'creative act of survival'. (Caruth: 2001:)

The second way of thinking about *repetition* is in relation to the series as a whole, that is, including the fourth detail in each sequence. As Caruth has suggested, in psychoanalytic terms, repetition is linked to structures of trauma:

> to be traumatised is precisely to be possessed by an image or event…The traumatised carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history they cannot entirely possess.'
> (Caruth 1995: 4-5).

Walter Benjamin insisted on the importance of personal memory as a counter to the claims of history. In his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', he argued that history is the narrative of the victorious and thus becomes the dominant ideology of the present; to re-examine the past critically is 'to brush history against the grain' (Benjamin 1969:256). For Benjamin, the documentation of lives that are un-remarked or unrecorded is crucial to understanding how the past lives on in the present or enters into it in 'moments of danger'

> To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it 'the way it was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.
> (Benjamin 1969:255)

For Benjamin, private and 'ordinary' memories, like photographs, function as interventions (jolts, shocks) that disrupt dominant narratives of the present, or as Laura Marks puts it, 'Making history reveal what it was not able to say.' (Marks 2000:29). Marks suggests that intercultural works in film and video are constituted around a particular crisis: the directly political discrepancy between official history and 'private memory' (Marks 2000:60) These works of memory trouble history – unlike nostalgia, they unsettle and disturb official histories: it is the voice of the marginalised, the suppressed or the forgotten that insists on being heard: 'Repressed cultural memories return to destabilise national histories' (Marks 2000:27).

Repressed cultural memories can thus be said to function like trauma, in which Caruth identifies the peculiar temporal structure of 'the belatedness of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced *as it occurs*, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, another time.' (Caruth 1995:8 my

italics). This characteristic of trauma, 'its refusal to be simply located, …its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of a single space and time' (Caruth 1995:9), is marked in Beban's photo- text series by the fourth enlarged detail in the set of four, which functions as 'a now in then' (Darke 2000:40); a cut through time. The images have the grainy quality of shots from security videos homing in on an apparently random detail of an anonymous streetscape and freezing it in the frame. This fourth photograph, unlike the others, was made in retrospect, *after* the event. The temporal sequence of the photographs thus becomes even more complicated. They represent time that is past, time that was present, and the involuntary memory of the future to come. The trauma was *not* originally present in these photographs; it only came later with the subsequent death of Horvatic, whose future absence the photographs would foretell.

In Antonioni's film *Blow Up* (1966), one of the European film-makers whom both Beban and Horvatic admired, a death is revealed in the enlarged detail of a photograph. For Roland Barthes, the unique quality of any photograph is that, unlike other iconic signs, it provokes an awareness of '*having been there*'; the photograph is an illogical conjunction of between the *here-now* and the *there-then.* (Barthes 1981:44). Every photograph bears the trace of its origin, thus all photographs carry the aura of a lost past, something that cannot be recaptured; what he calls a 'third meaning' beyond the semiotic or the symbolic. It is this 'ghost presence' that Barthes suggests haunts the photograph, an 'uncanny doubleness' that has the power to induce anxiety. This anxiety stems from a sense of pain associated with the irreplaceability of the past, but also from a link Barthes makes between the photographic act and trauma. This is the subtext of *Camera Lucida (*1981), his meditation on photography and death, particularly the death of his mother: 'the terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead.' (Barthes 1981:9). But if every photograph hides a death, how do we read the specificity of Beban's photographs in which a death has literally occured?

In a footnote to her analysis of Freud's discussion of the child's game of *fort – da*, Caruth notes that the game has been read as one of mourning: 'The received understanding of the game is that it represents a form of mastery and is thus, not strictly speaking, purely traumatic repetition – unless traumatic repetition is understood as *already* itself a form of mastering.' (Caruth 2001:22 my italics). Yet this is precisely how the repetition in Beban's work operates; it is a mastery of trauma through repetition, that is in itself a form of mourning. This is what, I think constitutes the peculiar temporal and spatial structure of this work. In order 'to master what was never fully grasped in the first place,' (Caruth 2001:10), the photographs had to be re-located in a different temporal and spatial relationship to the past. In this series, the fourth, 'blown up' detail signifies what was there, but hidden in the image all the time.

The evidential status of photographs, what Barthes calls their 'having been there-ness' carries its own affects; these images provide the only evidence of Beban having been there, in those rooms, at those times, with Horvatic. Barthes suggests that the 'punctum' of a photograph is what seizes the eye, interrupts the scene, and pierces the viewer:

> Precisely these marks, these wounds are so many points. This second element which will disturb the studium, I shall therefore call punctum; for punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole – and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me),
> (Barthes 1980:27)

Here the *punctum* is not the incidental frozen detail in the fourth image of the sequence, but the residual sense of presence; of someone having been there, in the

first image of the unmade bed. In her introduction to *Mourning Sex* (1997), Peggy Phelan says that she wants to investigate:

> The possibility that something substantial can be made from the outline after the body has disappeared. My hunch is that the affective outline of what we have lost might bring us closer to the bodies we want still to touch than the restored illustration can. Or at least the hollow of the outline might allow us to understand more deeply why we long to hold bodies that are gone.
> (Phelan 1997:3)

Thus Breda never shows us Horvatic's likeness, only his bodily trace left in the hollow where his head was outlined on the pillow. He is always elsewhere.

In her response to Caruth's 'Parting Words', Peggy Phelan's essay, 'Converging Glances', shifts from 'stories' (narration) to the visible (performance). She suggests that in Freud's account of the child's game of *fort-da,* he is making into words what is actually a pre-linguistic utterance. Rather than narrative, Phelan uses the metaphor of the 'screen': the child's play is, she says, 'a game about seeing', in what is at issue, is the child's fear of being :

> out of sight. This is the traumatic core of all seeing…In every encounter with the limit of the eye's capacity to see, one encounters something that extends beyond the I. Thus the confrontation with optical limitation is also a vivid reminder of the blindness in all encounters.
> (Phelan 2001: 33)

The hollow on the pillow, the closed sheds in the Italian hills, the cardboard box in an empty room; these are psychic landscapes, charged with significance that is only partially accessible to the eye. When I looked at Breda's work for the first time it was like a sensation of a stilling of the heartbeat, a chill in the body. Her title *Still* relates exactly to that sensation, a cut through narrative time - a still from a film or a moment of stasis on a journey or a flight. These are stills from a life attempting to come to terms with death and to move on in 'an act of parting that itself creates and passes on a different history of survival.' (Caruth 2001: 21).

In Barthes' description of the *punctum,* he evokes the 'wound' in the photograph that also he says, 'bruises me, is poignant to me' (Barthes 1981:29) What then is the affective encounter with these works? Not one of pathos; these images are beyond the pathetic. But there is a banality in the cardboard box in the bedroom, in the kitchen, in the study, as well as a sense of still embodied locations. It also has a darkly comic side, bringing to mind the black humour of cremations, misplaced remains and coffin comedies. The box is just a box after all, and we do not *know* what it contains. And yet it touches me, I am fingered by the photograph, arrested by it, and cannot move away. What does it mean to be 'touched' by an image? What does such 'touching' mean?

In a recent essay, 'Trauma and Ineloquence', Lauren Berlant suggests that trauma is 'the literal unsymbolisable mark of pure violence, or its opposite, violence congealed in an intensified representation.' (Berlant 2001:43) Here the box congeals the violence of a death. It becomes a reliquary and the room suffused with light, a shrine; it is a memento, in the sense that Caruth describes it as an attempt to memorialise a life (Caruth 2001). Berlant calls for 'an ethics of critical attention' on the part of the witness to trauma (Berlant 2001: 45), 'challenging you to be transformed by the knowledge of what you cannot feel directly', but as she warns, 'the witness is always belated' (Berlant 2001:44/45). I suggest that Beban calls upon us to be witnesses in this sense, that Caruth also meant when she wrote:

> The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it also a continual leaving of its site. …And, by carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenges us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing precisely of impossibility.
> (Caruth 1995:10).

These photographs articulate a subject mobilised across differing times and spaces, a subject produced through the specific media of still image and written text. These are brought into being as material objects, but offer no access to the 'truth' of a life. They articulate metaphors of relationships that are both spatial and temporal: chronotopes of here & there; now & then, which invoke an idea of reciprocity; of a movement between two beings. As images, they invite the kind of 'dialogic address' that requires attentive forms of listening which Berlant and Caruth invoke. Gayatri Spivak calls for just such attention when she suggests that it is the task of the translator (or here, viewer) to 'surrender to the text', to attend to 'the space outside language', if she is to respond to and be responsible for it: 'Rhetoric must work in the silence between and around words in order to see what works and *how much*.' (my italics) (Spivak 1992:179) While all speech and writing is a form of representation, visual testimony opens up a gap that cannot be entirely filled with knowledge. – it is a space where empathy or understanding are not enough. The ethics of the encounter with Beban's work then is to recognise the limits of their translatability in to our own terms. We see beyond the limits of ourselves and fall silent.

With thanks to colleagues for their helpful comments on this paper: Sara Ahmed, Anne-Marie Fortier, Angela Martin, Kirsten McAllister, Maureen McNeil, Corinna Peniston-Bird, Jules Pidduck and Jackie Stacey.

Literature

Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida, Reflections on Photography,* London: Paladin
Benjamin, W. (1970) *Illuminations,* London: Fontana Press
Berlant, 'Trauma and Ineloquence' in *Cultural Values* Vol.5, No.1
Caruth, C. (1995) (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory,* London: John Hopkins U.P.
Caruth, C (2001) 'Parting Words: Trauma, Testimony and Survival' in *Cultural Values* Vol.5, No.1
Darke, N. (2000) Catalogue essay in *Still,* Site Gallery: Sheffield
Marks, L. (2000) *The Skin of the Film,* Durham & London: Duke U.P
Pearce, L. (ed.) (2000) *Devolving Identities: Feminist Readings in Home and Belonging,* Ashgate Publishing: Aldershot
Phelan, P (2001) 'Converging Glances: A Response to Cathy Caruth's 'Parting words'' in *Cultural Values* Vol.5, No.1
Searle, A. (2000) Catalogue essay in *Still,* Site Gallery: Sheffield
Spivak, G. (1992) 'The Politics of Translation' in Barrett, M. & Phillips, A. (eds.) *Destabilizing Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press

The Body, Animation and The Real: Race, Reality and the Rotoscope in Betty Boop

Joanna Bouldin, University of California

jbouldin@uci.edu

In recent years there has been a proliferation of films that utilize cutting-edge computer animation technology for the creation of remarkably photorealistic effects. These effects have blurred the line between live-action and animation, between fantasy and reality. The worlds imagined in films such as *Forrest Gump*, *The Matrix*, *Tomb Raider* or *Final Fantasy* have fundamentally challenged and forever changed our experience and understanding of our histories, our bodies, and our realities. This paper explores the relationship between the animated and the actual, between cartoons and live-action, and, in particular, the relationship between animated bodies and other bodies that boast more flesh and substance. Although academic and popular discourse tend to place animation squarely in the realm of the imaginary, I will be arguing that animation, to greater or lesser degrees, is always negotiating its place between the real and the really made up. In fact I would argue that the shifting, often ambivalent status of the "real" in animation has a significant impact on how we experience animation and the animated body. In order to illustrate this argument, I will be looking at an example from relatively early in the history of animation: a Fleischer Studio cartoon from 1932 called "Betty Boop's Bamboo Isle." I will be focusing on the Fleischer's use of two particular techniques, rotoscoping and integrated animation/live-action, in order to theorize the manner in which technologies effect the delicate balance between reality and animation in this cartoon. Finally, I will explore the implications of this balance in terms of the construction of race, gender and the body.[1]

There is no denying that the animated image lacks the privileged relationship to the "real" attributed to more automatic processes such as photography. Many theorists have noted the properties of the photographic image which give it this privileged status. In his famous essay, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," Andre Bazin (1971) describes the photographic process as involving a transference of reality from the original object to its copy. In Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes (1980, p.81) makes this material connection or transference even more explicit. He observes:

> The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me... A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium...

What is interesting about these descriptions is the fact that the photographic copy's proximity to the original, and thus to "the real," is described in sensuous and material terms, rather than purely visual or aesthetic terms. The indexicality--the physical contact with the original--is what gives the image its powers, not its verisimilitude.

Although the privileged connection to the "real" attained by live-action is denied to animation, I would suggest that the "real" has not been completely banished. Perhaps, at least to a certain degree, the material and sensuous connection between image and original is maintained in animation, albeit a complicated, morphed and multiplied connection. Rather than relying on the single material body of the original, as with the photograph, I would argue that the animated body is able to draw upon multiple originals--from models to voice actors to the animators themselves.

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

Betty Boop is an excellent example of the material complexity of the animated body. Noting the hybrid nature of Betty's animated physique, Norman Klein observes that the Fleischer animators drew from diverse experiences for their inspiration. He notes the various types of bodies, media, and materialities that coalesce to become Betty Boop. He writes:

> (Her) body was a traced composite--a traced memory--of women (the Fleischer animators) saw along the way. Her garter was like those favored by Hoochie Koochie dancers so popular at burlesque and dance parlors. She slouched her back like a flapper at a speakeasy. Her banjo eyes and her bounce were copied from the moves of vaudeville singer Helen Kane. Her head bobbled like a Coney Island kewpie doll shaking on a spring. (Klein 2000, p. 27)

I would add, however, that animated body is hybrid in yet another way. Not only do animators draw upon multiple references for the creation of the animated body, but the body that we, as viewers, experience is also radically hybrid and multiple. The manner in which we typically consume the animated body--not only through film or television, but through comic books, video games, thrill rides, and happy meals--evokes a hybridized materiality that fuses bodies, media, technologies, and plays with and blends different registers of the "real" and the fantastic. Not unlike the Body without Organs (BwO) theorized by Deleuze and Guattari in Anti-Oedipus (1983) and 1,000 Plateaus (1987), the animated body exists as a complex and constantly shifting assemblage formed from connections with a wide array of cultural phenomenon, biological bodies, technologies, and media. I would argue that the status of the "real" visa vis the animated image is fundamental to our experience of the animated body. Thus, although functioning differently than with live-action, the "real" is an integral part of our experience of animation. Animation may not achieve the indexicality or verisimilitude of live-action, nonetheless real bodies and actual material experiences are an intimate part of our understanding of animated ones.

The complexity of this body--in terms of its materiality and its relationship to the "real"--raises a methodological dilema for animation scholars. Given the complex and unstable status of "real" in animation, how should one perform an analysis of the animated body? Elizabeth Bell's work on Disney provides an important first step towards understanding the complicated layering and accruing of meaning and matter that occurs in the construction of the animated body. In her article, "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies,"(1995) Bell explores the "semiotic layering" of the multitextual iconographies that go into the construction of Disney's women:

> Disney's animated women are pentimentos, paintings layered upon paintings, images drawn on images, in a cultural accumulation of representations...as the painting accrues, with layers of contemporaneous film and popular images of women, live-action models for the characters, and cinematic conventions of representing women, the levels become increasinlgy coded and complex. (Bell 1995, p. 108)

Although Bell's analysis is useful and it begins to address the complicated nexus of images and corporealities that are at play in animation, the problem is that it fundamentally remains an analysis of representation and signification. What I propose, and what I hope will follow, is an approach that deals not only with the "semiotic layering" of images, but with a *somatic layering* of bodies and various registers of materiality. My approach to the study of the animated body is based on the assertion that animation must be theorized in fully material terms. I do not conceptualize animation as a dream-like medium that presents its viewers with ephemeral and ethereal flights of fancy, creatures of the imagination lacking in substance and matter,

but rather as a medium that acquires a thickness and density, a medium that has body.

The 1932 Fleischer Studio short, "Betty Boop's Bamboo Isle" provides an excellent example for exploring the manner in which fantasy, reality and materiality intersect in the animated body. This cartoon begins with a brief segment of live-action footage featuring the Royal Samoan Orchestra and a female dancer named Miri. In the animation that follows Bimbo, a curious boy/dog character and one of the Fleischer's early stars, sets off on an expedition from New York to a remote island in the South Seas. When he reaches his remote destination he discovers and falls in love with Betty, who performs in this episode as an island maiden (with all the signifiying trappings, including a grass skirt, lai, and even slightly tinted skin.) By smearing his face with mud and donning native attire, Bimbo temporarily tricks the "savages" who discover him. Posing as a tribal leader, Bimbo joins the natives in their revelries and has a chance to ogle Betty as she performs a sexy dance on the picturesque island beach. The Fleischer animators used the original live-action footage of Miri to rotoscope (i.e. trace) this dance, thus Betty's body and movements directly mimic the dance the viewer saw moments before performed by the Samoan dancer.

Although the overtly racist images and colonialist narrative of this cartoon would provide rich material for an iconographic or semiotic analysis, in this paper I am going to try a more phenomenologically and materially invested analysis that focues on the Fleischers use of particular techniques and technologies. I will argue that the use of the rotoscope and live-action footage work in conjunction to play with the status of the "real" in this cartoon, and that they ultimately function to lend a kind of corporeal authenticity and carnal density to Betty's racialized body.

The rotoscope is an animation technology invented by Max and Dave Fleischer in 1915 and patented in 1917. Designed to facilitate the production of fluid, lifelike animation, the rotoscope allowed the movements of real actors' bodies to be reproduced in animated form. The rotoscope projects original live-action footage frame-by-frame onto a transparent drawing board, thereby allowing animators to trace each frame of the motion, securing the realism of their animated segments. Rotoscoping, however, often creates a curious aesthetic effect. Commentators rarely fail to identify an uncanny, jarring quality to rotoscoped animation. The rotoscoped body stands out, the "realism" of its form and motion undermining itself, making the rotoscoped body seem unreal and unbelievable within the plastic physics of an animated universe. In her rotoscoped dance scene in "Bamboo Isle," Betty's body seems strangely possessed; she moves differently, she seems to hold herself differently. Although the shifts are subtle, the effect is strangely eerie.

On one level the use of the rotoscope and the original live-action footage functions to control the fantastic nature of the animated body. As Anne Nesbet (1997, p.25) has argued in her comparative study of Disney and Eisenstein, in animation some characters are more metamorphic, or to use Eisenstein's term, more "plasmatic" than others. In an effort to assure the "realism" of Snow White's character, Disney brought in a dancer to act as a model. Nesbet argues that this was done to keep the plasmatic animated body in check. The flesh-and-blood model serves as guardian of realism and as a contrete tie to the viewers' world. Similarly, the rotoscoping of the Samoan dancer in "Betty Boop's Bamboo Isle" functions as a guarantee of the realism or authenticity of the exotic dance that Betty so coquettishly performs for her audience. I would argue, however, that the use of the rotoscope not only ensures that Betty's animated movements appear realistic, but that it actually establishes a significant material connection to the "real" and to an original body. This connection alters the ontology of the animated body and shifts our phenomenological understanding of the animated image.

Michael Taussig's observations on the mimetic faculty in Mimesis and Alterity, are useful for theorizing the nature of the rotoscoped body. Taussig conceives of

mimesis as a two-fold notion that involves imitation, but it also establishes what he calls, a "palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived,"(1993, p. 23) between copy and original. Using the fingerprint as an example, Taussig explains, "the print is in fact a stunning instance of imitation blending so intimately with contact that it becomes impossible to separate image from substance."(1993, p. 53) Like Barthe's photograph, the rotoscope facilitates a transference of reality and materiality from the original body to its animated copy. Like Taussig's fingerprint, the rotoscoped image is not only an imitation but an instance of contact. The indexicality of the rotoscoped image summons the presence of an absent body, in this case the body of the Samoan dancer. Borrowing from the substance of that body, I would suggest that this connection helps to thicken the animated body and bring it in closer proximity to the "real".

This notion of the animated body borrowing from, or appropriating the flesh of an original body is re-affirmed in the language that surrounds animation technologies such as the rotoscope. The very name of the rotoscope's recent 3D incarnation, Motion Capture (known by some in the trade as "Satan's Rotoscope"), implies this kind of relationship animated and real bodies. It is motion "capture," it is "captured performance". "Capture" imparting a sense of a body detained, a human motion snatched from one realm and secreted off into another. The actual body, or at least it's trace, held prisoner by the animated.

Norman Klein has also written about the nature of the rotoscoped body. What is useful about Klein's analysis is that his approach to understanding the animated image acknowledges the sensuously evocative nature of the medium and conceives of animation as having a kind of materiality, a body, a thickness and texture. In an analysis of KoKo the clown, the Fleischer's original star and the very first character to be rotoscoped in 1916, Klein writes:

> Of all the Fleischer characters, Koko was rotoscoped the most often. By 1933, it gave him a phantom presence, too often invaded. Graphically, rotoscoping leaves scars--something too human, a bit too lithe, subtle but plain to see. Koko practically inhabited two bodies at once... Koko was designed to be haunted... (Klein 2000, p. 27)

In this description, Klein clearly identifies the presence of two bodies, the mingling of two corporealities within Koko's animated frame. The rotoscope allows his body to be possessed, haunted, invaded by the "too human" presence of the performer in the original live-action footage.[2]

In addition to rotoscoping, "Bamboo Isle" utilized a technique of combining live-action footage and animation. This particular cartoon is not a very good example of the innovative work the Fleischers' did with integrated live-action/animation. Their *Out of the Inkwell* series, starring Koko, is filled with examples of incredibly self-reflexive films. In these cartoons the little animated clown hops off Max Fleischer's drawing board and out of his animated universe into the live-action world of the studio and beyond. This habit, as Michael Frierson (1993, p.5) has observed, had the effect of disrupting the viewer's understanding of filmic space by collapsing Koko's cartoon world, which the viewer understood as less "real", into the adjacent photographic, live-action world of the Fleischer Studio. This defiant move not only forces the viewer to question her understanding of the "real" space of the studio, but also revise her understanding of the physics and phenomenology of the animated body.

Although the use of live-action footage in "Bamboo Isle" is not as complex as in the Koko films, when used in conjunction with the rotoscoped images a disorienting effect similar to that described by Frierson is achieved. The framing footage of the Royal Samoan Orchestra sets up the realms of the animated and the actual as separate, with distinctly different ontologies existing on different registers of reality. However, the rotoscoped body of Miri as Betty causes a leakage of one realm into

the other. The clear borders between the animated and the actual are revealed to be permeable, allowing two-way traffic from one to the other--a kind of "contaminative logic", to use Alan Cholodenko's term (1991, p.224), in which the real body is infested with the animated, and the animated haunted by the real.

Another important role of the lead-in footage, however, is demonstrative: like an excerpt from an ethnographic documentary, this footage displays Miri (the "authentic" Samoan) as the racialized, ethnographic body in motion. Not only does this footage educate us as to how the ethnographic body moves, but this display then allows the audience the thrill of verifying the authenticity of Betty's performance later in the film. The documentary quality of the photographic image tethers the animated extrapolations of the racialized body onto the "real" body of the Primitive.

What do these observations on the rotoscoped and live-action footage tell us about the construction of racial difference?[3] Although I feel like my research has only taken me to the point of asking this question, rather than answering it, I will hazard at few observations. On one level we see that the live-action footage undergoes a re-coding or anchoring of meaning. Although it is basically performance footage of a popular music group, once it is set in the context of the cartoon's overtly colonialist narrative the footage is re-framed; the status of the performance shifts from the amusing to the anthropological, the status of the body shifts from the Entertainer to the Ethnographic. Once anchored as Ethnographic, the truth value of the lead-in footage solidifies and it attains documentary status.

The idea of the authenticity/truth value associated with the Ethnographic body in film has been explored at length by Fatimah Tobing Rony in her book The Third Eye . Looking at early anthropological films, Rony (1996, p.58) notes how the Ethnographic body, particularly the body in motion, has been consistently coded as Authentic, as closer to nature and the "real" than the urban, white European body. In fact Rony suggests that it is the very presence of the Ethnographic body--a body that serves as a guarantee of the "real"--that lends the Ethnographic film its aura of truth(1996, p.72). For Rony, the legacy of early anthropological cinema extends beyond the arena of science film. She argues that the Ethnographic travels across genre--from science to art to popular culture. Thus, even when the Ethnographic body appears in the context of mass entertainment and the medium of animation, it retains its ability to authenticate and to anchor images to the "real".

I would suggest that the coupling of the Ethnographic body with the ostensibly objective, neutral recording technologies of the cinema creates a kind of doubling of truth value, a surplus of the "real". There is something about this body--with its excess of the "real"--that is irrepressible, that saturates even the fantastic medium of animation. The Ethnographic penetrates the animated body, and it does so via the mimetic technology of the rotoscope. The rotoscope allows the Ethnographic to exceed it's confinement in live-action film and surface in animated form. Whereas the more exaggerated, plasmatic figures of the primitive Other that populate the animated island can only reference images of the Ethnographic, the rotoscoped image, which creates an indexical, material, sensuous connection to the original body, allows the true Ethnographic to materialize in animated form, carrying with it all its powers of authentication and its tie to the "real".

So the question remains, why call upon the presence of the ethnographic body? Why include the rotoscoped dance rather than some fantastic dance only possible by the animated body? To a certain extent I think this choice reflects a general cultural drive to consume the Ethnographic. Rony has called this desire "Fascinating Cannibalism,"(1996, p.10) a term that reflects the mixture of fascination and horror associated with the West's obsessive consumption of images of a Primitive Other--an obsessive consumption that spans a multitude of cultural forms, from ethnographic films to horror flicks, from World Fair expositions to natural history museums.

However, this choice is also very much tied to the viewer and her/his libidinal investment in the erotic experience of the animated body. The ethnographic fram-

ing provides a legitimate excuse for Betty's topless performance. It's not smut, it's anthropology! However this framing does more than provide a socially acceptable excuse for her dance. It also re-creates one of the most common scenarios in the genre of Ethnographic film: the dance of the indigenous woman, her naked body revealed to the hungry gaze of the colonial camera. Historically this body has been constructed as exotic, primitive, and unquestionably available for the viewer's erotic consumption.

In the case of this cartoon, the spectatorial pleasure in the erotic experience of the racialized female body is heightened by the phenomenological shift in the viewer's understanding of this body initiated by the rotoscope. The rotoscope and live-action framing work to tweak the ontological and material status of Betty's body, to bestow upon her a kind of corporeal authenticity and carnal density. The indexical and material connection established between Betty and Miri brings the eroticized and available Ethnographic body in closer proximity to the animated body. The libidinal draw of Betty Boop's already hyper-sexualized animated body is magnified and transformed when she can also invoke the real flesh of the Primitive.

Although I have only been able to set forth a preliminary analysis of how the fluctuating status of the "real" works in the construction of race in this cartoon, I hope I have at least demonstrated the critical value of this question and this methodological approach to the study of animation. In this paper I have suggested that animation is constantly negotiating its place between the real and the fantastic, between the animated and the actual, and this relationship is fundamental to our experience of the animated body. As such, I would argue that this dynamic symbolic, material, phenomenolgical and ontological relationship is an element that must be considered in any politically invested analysis of the construction of race, gender, or other cultural/corporeal identities in animation. In the case of "Betty Boop's Bamboo Isle"(1932), I have suggested that the Fleischer's use of the rotoscope and live-action footage facilitates an ontological and phenomenological shift in the status of Betty's body. Their use of these technologies and techniques encourages a collapsing of the "real", the Ethnographic, and the animated. Sutured to the real body of the Samoan dancer through the live-action and rotoscoping, we experience the authentic flesh of Betty's animated body.

Endnotes

[1] In the larger project of my dissertation the use of the terms "the real" and "reality" will be problematized, and placed in context of discourse on the real.

[2] Dave Fleischer, Max Fleischer's brother and the producer of most of the Fleischer shorts, was the original live-action performer for KoKo.

[3] Another avenue for approaching this question is through the concept of blackface. Scott Bukatman (2000) has argued that, especially in the context of Jewish identification with black performance styles, rotoscoping can be seen as another example in a long history of cinematic minstrelsy. According to his argument, the rotoscoped images of Calloway exemplify the "exclusionary emulation" that is the logic of blackface: an appropriative identification in which blackface becomes a form of cross-dressing that allows a simultaneous participation in and containment of the "black experience." According to Michael Rogin (1996), blackface minstrelsy joined structural domination with cultural desire in order to turn Europeans into Americans. Through this form of racial masquerade, settlers and ethnics were moved into the melting pot through the exclusion of racial groups.

Literature

Barthes, R., 1993. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bazin, A., 1971. *What is Cinema? Vol. 1*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bell, E., 1995. Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies. *In*: Bell, E. AND HAAS, L. AND SELLS, L., ed. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bukatman, S. 2000. Taking Shape: Morphing and the Performance of Self. *In*: V. Sobchack, ed. *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 225-250.

Cholodenko, A., 1991. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, or The Framing of Animation. *The Illusion of Life: Essays on Animation*. Sydney: Power Publications, 209-242.

Deleuze, G. And Guattari, F., 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capiatalism and Schizophrenia.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. And Guattari, F., 1983. *Anti-Oedipus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Frierson, M. Fall 1993. Clay comes out of the inkwell: The Fleisher Brothers and Clay Animation. *Animation Journal*, 4-17.

Klein, N., 2000. Animation and Animorphs. *In*: V. SOBCHACK, ed. *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 21-40.

Nesbet, A., Summer 1997. Inanimations: *Snow White* and *Ivan the Terrible*. *Film Quarterly*, 50(4): 20-31.

Rogin, M., 1996. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rony, F. T., 1996. *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Taussig, M., 1993. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge.

Love Your Prosthesis Like Yourself: "Sex", Text and the Body in Cyber Discourse

Hannu Eerikäinen, (Humboldt Universität, Berlin)

he@euv-frankfurt-o.de

> I would rather go to bed with a cyborg than a sensitive man [...].
> Donna Haraway (Penley & Ross 1992: 18)

> Bis jetzt war noch Händearbeit nötig, von jetzt aber arbeitet der Apparat ganz allein.
> Franz Kafka (1996 [1919]: 132)

In Germany, after the World War I hundreds of thousands of soldiers came back from the front crippled. Some 80 000 of these men were amputees, 24 000 with missing arms and 56 000 with missing legs (Fineman 1999: 88). No longer embodying the military glory and pride of *Vaterland*, but incarnating the instrumental logic of modern mechanical warfare reducing the body to a functionalized part of a rationally organized killing and destruction machinery, these German veterans were turned into living corpses. As a product of a modern "megamachine" (Jardine 1987: 152),[1] they were a new form of "docile bodies" (Foucault 1984 [1975]: 179-187): bodies with a personal history, made into a faceless mass of disabled beings without a future as an independent individual, as a sovereign subject. In the name of social justice, but perhaps more importantly, to avoid political disturbances, it was urgent to rehabilitate these not only mutilated but traumatized survivors. For this purpose, a large-scale rehabilation program was conceived in the course of which the war cripples were literally reconstructed. Prosthesis, that was the rebirth, a technological resurrection, for these men who were as soon as possible to be reworked – or, better, recalibrated – from *Kanonenfutter* to productive *Arbeiter* and socially integrated *Bürger* of the post-*Kaiser* German state, the *Weimarer Republik*.

As an achievement of a scientific design, a kind of proto-cyborgian body engineering (cf. Gray 1995), implemented by what Mia Fineman (1999: 103) terms the German "medical-technical industry", a new kind of human being – or, should we better say, a posthuman being (see Terranova 1996; Hayles 1999) – was born. As Fineman (1999: 88), referring to the concept introduced by Peter Sloterdijk (1983: 794) in his *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, says, *Homo prostheticus* "obediently marched from the western front to the production front". Prosthesis, that was the triumph of instrumental reason (see Horkheimer and Adorno 1994 [1947]) in usability of the body: the body was no longer, as the conventional logic postulated, a whole more than sum total of its parts, but instead, now a body part – a prosthetic arm or a leg – was more than the whole body; a part having a functionality of its own, its own logic, its own teleology.[2] Like in Fordism, the body became fragmented and extremely Taylorized (see Bahnisch 2000); no longer the machine as an extension of man, now it was man that was turned into an extension of the machine.

This kind of fragmentation finds its characteristic expression in a perversely philantropic idea of divided labour elaborated by Henry Ford in his autobiography *My Life and Work* (1923); Mark Seltzer's summary is illuminating:

> The production of the Model T required 7,882 distinct work operations, but, Ford observed, only 12 percent of these tasks – 949 operations – required "strong, able-bodied, and practically physically perfect men". Of the remainder – and this is clearly what Ford saw as the central achievement of his method of

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

> production – "we found that 670 could be filled by legless men, 2,637 by one-legged men, two by armless men, 717 by one-armed men and ten by blind men". If from one point of view such a fantasy projects a violent dismemberment of the natural body and an *emptying out* of human agency, from another it projects a transcendence of the natural body and the *extension* of human agency through the forms of technology that supplement it. This is the double logic of technology as prosthesis, and it begins to make visible the interlaced problems of the body and uncertain agency that the questions concerning technology entail. (Seltzer 1992: 170-171)

Thus, in the beginning of the twentieth century, on the both fronts of war and production, the prosthesis defined the idea of being human anew. From this perspective, the figure of the Weimar prosthetic man was, in fact, an unintentiolly ironic comment on the ideal of the "New Man" (see Küenzlen 1997 [1994]) manifested by various political movements – whether secular or (neo)religious, progressive or reactionary, on the left or on the right, all under the idea and ideology of *reform* – of the early twentieth century, the formative years of the modern world. As we soon will see, this prosthetic man, a modern man having a "Fordist", that is, fragmented and Taylorized body, curiously resurfaces, though as a being of opposite gender or genderless altogether, in postmodern fantasies about prosthetic sex – a form of sex most vigorously advanced not by masculinist cyberpunk techno-freaks (see Cavallaro 2000), but postfeminist cyber-theorists (for postfeminism, see Brooks 1997; for cyberfeminism, see Marsden 1996; Braidotti 1997; Sollfrank 1997, 1999; Plant 1997, 1999).

After the World War I, according to the German medical-technical discourse of what was called *Krüppelfürsorge*, that is, a system of social measures taking care of the cripples, this prosthetic being was propagated as an "entirely new form of life" (Fineman 1999: 96-97), a body construction half organic, half technological. As a hybrid of flesh and metal, was the Weimar prosthetic man a cyborg *avant la lettre* (for the idea of the "Weimar cyborg", see Biro 1998)? In terms of affects, how did these prosthetically reconstructed men feel themselves? Was their mechanically repaired and augmented bodies a source of joy or anger, of happines or sorrow? Did these men love their artificial limbs? Did they have the feeling that "the will is the best prosthesis" (Fineman 1999: 90), as the official rehabilitation doctrine had it? Was their self-perception similar to what Freud (1996 [1930]: 57) was later to term *Prothesengott*, a prosthetic God, an omnipotent and omniscient being capable of exceeding its own limits with technological extensions?

"I am a person who fell in love with her own prostheses" (Stone 1995: 3). Would it been possible that this kind of declaration of prosthetic love were made by some of the happy cripples being *45 % erwerbsfähig* (Fineman 1999: 95), that is, 45 % fit for employment? Hard to say, but this is the way Allucquère Rosanne Stone, a Californian techno-theorist playing with ideas concerning "sex, death, and machinery" (Stone 1995: 1-32), celebrates prosthetic embodiment in her treatise on, as the title puts it, the "war of desire and technology at the close of the mechanical age". This "war", however, is not about the agony of death, but in the mode of "ludic postmodernism" (Ebert 1992-1993; Morton 1999) or, as Peter Bürger (2000: 11) has it, the "playful-hilarious postmodern" (*spielerisch-heitere Postmoderne*), it is about words – or, rather, free-floating signifiers – juggling with the idea of a prosthetic reconstruction of the human body.

Accordingly, for Stone the question of prosthetics is not, as it was for the German war cripples, about a desparate need to be recognized as a human being, as a socially accepted subject entitled work, income and respect, but instead, about postmodern "experiments with subject position", about "floating identities" (Stone 1995: 2-3). It is not about, as it was for the Weimar Republic disabled veterans, a "prosthetic will to work" (Fineman 1999: 90-91), but an individual-hedonistic, solipsistic "extension of my will, of my instrumentality" (Stone 1995: 3). And it is not

about work as the only means of survival, but – in the mode of what I call "post-sex" (see Eerikäinen 1999a, 1999b) – *sex work* in "virtual systems" (Stone 1995: 6-8, 17). Instead of being constrained by what she terms an "epistemological Calvinism" entailing that "work is the quintessential defining human capacity" (ibid.: 9), Stone enjoys of moving freely in a new world of a limitless self based on a "*play* ethic", in a realm of "technosocial games" (ibid.: 14-15).

Considering this kind of fascination by the technologizing of the body – an objectification of the body as the subject and of the subject as the body – one only can ask, why is the prosthesis today, in the world of the postmodern (see Jameson 1991), an object of desire, a dream object of sexual fantasies expressed in postmodern and/or poststructuralist textual strategies concerning corporeality and embodiment in technoculture? And corollarly, why has the sexual become a form of the textual in the context of a technological reconstitution of all that is – or, used to be – human? Is this the final triumph of the prosthesis?

In terms of postmodern cultural theory, the issue of prosthetics refers to a broader problematics to be only touched here.[3] In this respective, one can ask: (1) is the prosthesis an embodied form of the Derridean logic of the supplementary suggesting both presence and absence, addition and substitution, the *différance* of becoming a post-body (see Derrida 1984 [1967], 1981 [1967], 1982 [1972]); (2) or, is the prosthesis an incorporated signifier signifying the Lacanian lack and its overcoming (see Lacan 1977 [1966]), a kind of Hegelian sublation of the primordial state of being as a split entity, the *Urzustand* of human existence; (3) or, is the prosthesis a linguistic-cultural token signaling a coming-to-the-world of a post-Nietzschean *Übermensch* (see Nietzsche 1968 [1883-1885]) as an incarnation of technological (omni)potence? In a word, is the Weimar prosthetic man a prototype of the Stelarcian cyborg (see Stelarc 1991) celebrated by post/neo-futurist techno/cyber-theory in the ecstasy of the technological sublime (cf. Inkinen 1999: 244-248);[4] that is, a figure suggesting no longer the Biblical image of God (neither the image of the human being as the image of God), but a technological demiurge creating itself in a cybernetic process of *autopoiesis* (see, for example, Sfez 1995)?

Libidinal language

Obviously, something has happened – something fundamental that the prosthesis has turned from a medium of survival to a theory toy in a post-Lyotardian universe of post-theoretical theory fictions playing with the idea of the posthuman being. If the prosthetic reality of the Weimar Republic is shown in a critical way, in many cases in a sharply ironical light, in artworks of the avantgarde of the time – perhaps most clearly by Otto Dix in his *Skat Players* (1920) (for the context, see Biro 1998; Foster 1991) – what we have in the prosthetic fantasies elaborated by Stone as well as so many techno/cyber theorists seduced by Donna Haraway's (1985) postmodern "cyborg myth" is something entirely different: the prosthesis, turned into the central form of the technologization of the body (continuing thus McLuhanian visions of the technological extensions of the human being; see McLuhan 1964), is now a medium of a curious *pleasure of future* enjoyed in the present through a libidinal language of the techno-imaginary: the present not as an anticipation of the future, but the future as an extended present (cf. Kern 1996: 84-85).

This is the way the form of postmodern linguistic figuration that I call *cyber discourse* dissolves the boundaries bertween the imaginary and the real (both in the Lacanian and quotidian sense), between fantasy and reality, between the fictional and the factual. In this sense, cyber discourse is a world of theory fictions. As Haraway (1985: 65-66) claims, "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion". This can be seen in the paradigmatic manner, for example, in a theory of "virtual bodies" elaborated by Cathryn Vasseleu (1997), a feminist cyber theorist approaching the world of the "cyber" from the philosophical perspective. Relying on

Howard Rheingold's (1992) fantasies of "teledildonics" and Derrick de Kerckhove's (1991) theories of "virtual evironments", both of them intertwining into a projection of a "full body data suit", Vasseleu concludes that new computer and digital technology, dissoluting the separation between the organic and the machinic, between the body and a prosthetic apparatus enveloping the subject, will amount to the disapperance of the border between the interior and the exterior – enabling, in the end, "virtual sex".

> If the body has previously been described as being left out of virtual reality, it assumes an essential but paradoxical interiority to a disembodied consciousness within the virtual "birthday suit" [Rheingold's expression for a 'Smart Skin' system used in teledildonics, the *Ur*-form of cybersex]. In the pursuit of a shared consciousness, the fold of consciousness is reversed. It turns from being contained in the body to becoming a container or skin conveying the body in cyberspace. (Vasseleu 1997: 53)

Taking at the face value Rheingold's *fantasy* of a sexual encounter experienced through "teledildonics", Vasseleu (ibid.: 54) muses upon how in virtual reality the "expression of sexuality becomes an intelligible exhange of information". Although this kind of sex technology is admittedly a "phallic imaginary", for Vasseleu it is apparent that the "'ecstasy' of a communal exchange of virtual sex" based on "shared consciousness" (ibid. 53) is, in contrast to Rheingold, "[f]ar from being a thought experiment that got out of control" (see Rheingold 1992: 348). On the contrary, for her "virtual sex" has "implications which extend the significance of Kant's Copernican 'thought experiment' into virtual relations with sexual objects" (Vasseleu 1997: 53-54). Drawing on Luce Irigaray's (1985 [1974]) "speculum" theory and referring to Deleuze and Guattari's (1998 [1972]) "schizoanalysis", Vasseleu suggests that "[c]yberspace in these terms is thus an ideal love object – infinite, reiterative, excessively recombinant" (Vasseleu 1997: 55). That is, as Vasseleu, speaking in the idiosyncratic language of Deleuze and Guattari (1998: 294), says, "we always make love with worlds" and thus "our love addresses itself to this libidinal property of our lover, to either close himself off or to open up to more spacious worlds, to masses and larger aggregates".

What we here have is, in the configuration of what I call post-theory, a *jouissance* of ecstatic theory-language engendered by a theory futurism fascinated by the technological. It is a form of postmodern theory euphoria based on the implosion of the sign and the liberation of the signifier in the wake of the "linguistic turn", and later of what according to Nancy Armstrong (2001) can be called the "Cultural Turn". If, in the mid-1980 during the culmination of the first wave of postmodern theory, as Fredric Jameson (1984: 80), theorizing the experience of the subject perplexed by the new urban space, says, "there has been a mutation in the object, unaccompanied as yet by any equivalent mutation in the subject", and accordingly, "we do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace", now the situation seems to have changed: what we today have is hyper-theory in the form of post-everything post-theory.

After the triumph of the signifier cultural theory has turned into *écriture*, writing producing ideas by linguistic figuration based on the proliferation of free-floating signifiers. Hence, the new method of perceiving things is that of conceiving of them in terms of textuality, through a language functioning as theory. This new mode of theory, as the apex of the second wave of postmodern theory, does have an object: it is this theory itself. And moreover, it has an equivalent subject: the contemporary post-theorist that as the post-subject – a subject having a "fluid" or "fragmented" identity – has come into being by a post-Althusserian interpellation (see Althusser 1971) of this very post-theory in the hyperspace of the postmodern technological sublime. This is a postmodern erotics of theory: driven by a desire for theory the post-

theorist is seduced by libidinal language promising the pleasure of new ideas. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is as Roland Barthes – already long ago – said:

> The text you write must prove to me *that it desires me*. This proof exists: it is writing. Writing is: the science of the various blisses of language, its Kama Sutra (this science has but one treatise: writing itself). (Barthes 1975 [1973]: 6)

In the imaginary paraspace of post-theoretical linguistic figuration, technology is now something similar as textuality for Barthes: it is a "galaxy of signifiers" (Barthes 1974 [1970]: 5). In this "universe of discourse" (Marcuse 1964), the prosthesis signals no longer loss and suffering, but pleasure and libido. The prosthesis has turned from a mechanical aid of the working body into a supplement of a postmodern theory body, into an object of libidinal fantasies. Here, the prosthesis functions as an extension of a "virtual body" (Brook 1999: 136-157), in the free zone of "cybersexualities" (Wolmark 1999). Sex, sexuality and the body have become a seducing sphere of the imaginary of the technological: what once was a mechanical fact is now a fiction – a theory fiction – of cyborgs moving freely in the limitless realm of cyberspace, an immaterialized form of the Jamesonian hyperspace. Apparently, in the world of virtualization of bodies and sexuality, as Robert Darnton (1994) says, *Sex ist gut fürs Denken*. For me, this is a postmodern version of the sixties radical chic, transferred now to the realm of the technological imaginary.

Wo Es war...

Of course, there are aeons between the grim post-war years of the Weimar Republic and the happy-go-around new age of Silicon Valley where you can have "fun in the warm California sun" (Sirius 1997: 12). In spite of this – or, perhaps, because of – one can ask, what has happened that the idea of prosthesis has gone through such a radical change? Why from an artificial limb trying to substitute for a bodily loss has become a technological extension of the body allegedly augmenting and enhancing not only the range of abilities of the subject, but most of all, post-corporeal pleasures of the "postmodern body", a body enveloped by computer screens and networks all calling for immediate interfacing and interaction and promising an enjoyable experience of indulging oneself in a total immersion (for that, see, for example, Huhtamo 1995)? How is it that a bitter necessity has turned into an object of utopian dreams, even a vehicle of libidinal fantasies? Why is the prosthesis seductive? Why is the prosthetic body "sexy"?

There is no doubt that expressly the enormous development of new technologies around the computer is a substantial reason for the euphoric ideas of empowering the subject through prosthetic extensions of the body; still, there is something more to that. While in the post-war Germany the prosthesis was both a concrete fact and a discursive construction, now the prosthesis is first and foremost a discursively constructed theory fiction: an affective object that generates peculiar postmodern feelings in the realm of cultural theory – a theory functioning more often than not on the basis of libidinal language. In contrast to Jameson's (1984, 1991) reading of the postmodern, I would say, there is not a "waning of affect", but rather, an affective conglomeration of emotions, passions and longing I call *prosthetic love* – a form of love that can be appropriately characterized, though, with the Jamesonian terms describing the sensuous mode of postmodern culture in general: "euphoria", "intensities" and a "strange new hallucinatory exhilaration" (Jameson 1984: 76). For me, this is precisely the way cyber discourse is functioning.

Whether prosthetic love is a postfeminist version of affects and emotions traditionally ascribed in masculine imagination to mythical figures and literary fantasies ranging from Pygmalion and Pandora to the "machine women" dreamt of by Heinrich von Kleist, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Auguste de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam and others (see, for

example, Drux 1999; Wittig 1997; Gendolla 1992; Glaser & Kaempfer 1988) or just a postmodern conceit remains to be elaborated in my work in progress concerning the idea of cybersex. In the present paper, my thesis is that the prosthesis is a textual entity in the universe of techno/cyber-theory: from a medical aid the prosthesis has turned into a *theory prosthesis* of post-theory.

For me, this kind of sexualization of prosthetic technology manifests, for its part, an emergent discourse formation that I call technomorphism; a configuration of ideas that although in the spirit a genuine product of the postmodern has its roots deep in the modern, in the celebration of the technological characteristic of the avantgardist movements from the cult of the machine typical of the Futurism to the machine romanticism of the Constructivism and the Bauhaus amounting, in the end, to what Richard Coyne (1999) calls "technoromanticism". What we here have is a "sex-appeal of the inorganic" (Perniola 1999) in a world where nature has ultimately lost its illusory "naturalness". It is a post-biological, post-organic world based on artificial constructions, a universe of technological artefacts dominated by the rule of the posthuman paradigm: no longer, as for Freud (1946 [1933]: 86), *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*, instead, where I was, there *it* shall become – the machine. This is the *Leitmotiv* of a new order of life under the auspices of the Machine – or, as Arno Baruzzi (1973) says, *sub specie machinae* – redefining human subjectivity not in terms of corporeal abilities but prosthetic potentialities.

Today, prosthetics informs the idea of the posthuman being, a being genealogically intelligible in the context of what Seltzer (1992) calls the "body-machine complex". In the background, there is a long tradition of the ideas of the man-machine and the machine-man from the automata of the Antiquity through golems and androids as well as Cartesian, LaMettrian and Sadean "body-machines" to the contemporary cyborgs (see, for example, Meyer-Drawe 1996; Berr 1990; Bammé et al. 1983; Baruzzi 1968; Baruzzi 1973). Perhaps most clearly this transformation of the human into the posthuman – at least at the level of linguistic figuration based on postmodern free-floating signifiers – is manifested in cyber discourse. All that is "cyber" – from cyberpunk science fiction visions (see Bukatman 1993; McCaffery 1994) to postmodern/poststructuralist theory fictions – forms at present a technomorphist avantgarde playing with ideas concerning the post-natural body, in short, the post-body. For me, this discourse rewrites human corporeality into a posthuman morphology of the subject living in a new kind of artificial paradise of prosthetic supplementation of all that once was human. In this paradise, the prosthesis is sexualized and sexuality is prosthetized. For me, cybersex is the climax of this techno-evolutionary leap of human – that is, posthuman – sexuality (see Eerikäinen 1999a, 2000).

The "new man"

Before I am going to visit this post-utopian paradise of prosthetic love to admire its posthuman marvels it is instructive to return for a moment to the grim reality of the Weimar Republic. In this masculine *Maschinenpark*, pleasure was not so much on the agenda as it was the shear necessity of survival. And it was the "cynical reason" that dictated the social ethos morphing the male subject into a man-machine construction. "Cynical reason" – what is it? To explain all the monstrous dimensions of cynical reason Sloterdijk (1983) needs 953 pages; that would be another story. Suffice here to say that in this particular German context – in the context of a prosthetic redesign of the body in a social order functioning according the logic of military-industrial efficiency (ibid.: 791-814) – cynical reason means, I would say, inverted rationality: first you destroy the integrity of the human being by mutilating his body, and then you repair the damage by substituting mechanical surrogates for organic body parts. Or, from a larger perspective: first you build a rationally working killing and destruction machinery based on the latest achievements of science and technology, and then you

reconstruct those poor ones who have not been lucky enough to die with the means resulting from the very same reason that in the first place is the *raison d'être* of the whole war enterprise producing both deads and living deads.

Mens sana in corpore sano – this ideal of the Antiquity was no longer valid after the great death orgy at the beginning of what Eric J. Hobsbawm (1994) calls the "Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991"; what Hobsbawm sees as the "Age of Extremes" means for me, amongst other things, an insidious extinction of the classical idea of "man as the measure of all things" (see, for example Davies 1997: 107), amounting finally to a postmodern *Umwertung aller Werte* in terms of technology. Truly, what we now have is, to refer to Günther Anders's (1988 [1956]) more than melancholy insight, an *Antiquiertheit des Menschen*; this becoming antiquited of the human being began in the trenches of World War I. The whole idea of being human became thoroughly redefined in terms of the machine; this was the imperative of the technological: *where I was, there the machine shall become*. Since then the prosthesis has been the emblem of the transformation of the human into the posthuman.

Homo prostheticus, according to Fineman (1999: 87), means that the "ancient ideal of human perfectibility stands in ruins". For her, the prosthesis is not a perfection of the body, on the contrary, it is a "conspicuous token of irreparable lack"; instead of a higher form of being human, it signifies "technologically supplemented imperfection" (ibid.: 88). The official rehabiliation doctrine of the Weimar Republic, however, saw things precisely another way around. Encouraged by new scientific approaches of emergent labor science and psychotechnics (see Rabinbach 1990: 179-237) the German medical-technical industry considered the body not as an organic whole, as the substratum and substance of human personality, but in terms of functional capabilities. The body was a machine to be supplemented with machinic spare parts. The body was an energetic resource to be calculated, regulated and managed for the maximum effect in the service of national economy (cf. Rabinbach 1992; Erlach 1994; Rieger 2000).

In this framework, the body was a "functional part of the social machine" (Fineman 1999: 92). The Weimar Republic war amputee reconstructed with prosthetics was treated as an economic factor who – like the Fordist man – "can still do his part, even if his own parts no longer add up to a whole" (ibid.: 93). As such a "conglomeration of separate functions", the cripple was seen to constitute a thoroughly new entity consisting of a "unique configuration of body and soul" amounting to a "special biological person" with its own powers, capabilities and laws" (ibid.: 96-97). The post-war Germany was not only a matrix of the pathologies in the modern; it was also a clinique and laboratory for the construction of the "new man". The Weimar Republic was a desparate effort for a national and social renewal after the atrocities of the war, a short German interlude between the collapse of the Wilhelmine *Kaiserreich* and the uprise of the Fascist *Drittes Reich*, a period of emotional and intellectual turmoils beginning with a *Menscheitsdämmerung* (Lunn 1982: 63) and ending with an eclipse of reason. This was an era in which all that was technological was seen not only as practical results of innovative *Ingenieurwissenschaften*, but also as objects of utopian dreams and dystopian nightmares: technology was a source of fantastic and phantasmatic projections characteristic of the modern.

The birth of the "new man" implied, of course, in the first instance the male. The genesis of this masculinistic figure began, in fact, already in the imperial Germany instrumentalizing Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* as a spiritual aid in the military training purporting to "harden" the allegedly "effeminate" recruits into fearless warriors to whom "'thou shalt' sounds more agreeable than 'I will'" (Nietzsche quoted in Fineman 1999: 91). This "new man" was celebrated in the post-war Germany by Ernst Jünger, a proto-fascist author hardened in the *Stahlgewittern* of the war and awarded the "Pour le mérite" of the Wilhelmine Empire (see Werneburg 1993; Koslowski 1991), as the prototype for an adequate form of the subject in a militaristically organized society to come after the hated, moribund democracy. The "new man" – described

by Jünger in his "armored texts", most enthusiastically is his *Arbeiter-Soldat* (Jünger 1982 [1932]) – was, as Andreas Huyssen (1993: 8) says, a "metaphysically coded gestalt of the warrior-worker with the warrior's body constructed as the ultimate armored fighting machine".[5] This masculine figure was the emblem of a "new, fully technological age", "with its joyously anticipated synthesis of flesh and steel", of "body and machine" (ibid.: 9). Jünger's "megalomaniac and narcissistic fantasies of power, combined with a cult of hardness and invulnerability, resulted from the traumatic experience of emasculation in the lost war" (ibid.).

What is important here is that for Huyssen a line leads from Jünger to contemporary "cyborg science fiction" (ibid.). Seen genealogically, the Jüngerian emasculated Weimar man, the mutilated war survivor and prosthetically reconstructed warrior-worker, engulfed emotionally by a mixture of ressentiment and hope, is an ancestor of the postmodern cyborg. According to Matthew Biro (1998), this "new man" – elaborated both in the Weimar Republic scientific-medical-political discourses and literary, visual and cinematic fantasies – was, in fact, a cyborg. Of course, as Biro (ibid.: 72) says, the word "cyborg" did not exist at that time; but the idea of the cyborg – and this is in his argumentation decisive – was already inscribed in the cultural imaginary of the post-war Germany. This figure appeared, for example, in the Berlin Dada photomontages, in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) and in Jünger's photobook *Die veränderte Welt* (1933). What Biro calls the "Weimar cyborg" represents on the one hand the authoritarian and aggressive military ideals, and on the other, as a radical critique of these ideals, dysfunctional, half-mechanized and puppet-like personality types of a pathological culture of the time. Thus, Biro's "Weimar cyborg" is a complex figure, a textually reconstructed epitome of the catastrophic Weimar years, that is, the period 1919-1933 leading from one war into the next.

Losing the penis... for pleasure

In this connection, it is appropriate to emphasize that the transformation – or, should we better say, a metamorphosis – of what was in the pre-war Germany called the *Sontagsarm*, a "sunday arm", meaning that it was mainly used only as a cosmetic *Ersatz* in free time simulating the missing limb (Fineman 1999: 103-104), into the Weimar prosthesis as a proper work arm (or a leg enabling working) was a political process reaching deep down to the affective economy of not only the Weimar prosthetic men, but of the German nation desperately seeking a new identity after the humiliating end of the war. Thus, at issue was not only the honour of the nation, but also the pride of being a man, *trotz alledem*. While the prosthetic man was first and foremost conceived of as a working man, as a labour body re-integrated into production, he was no less a man. But while the prosthetically rehabilitated working man was saved by literally interfacing him with the production machinery, there were, of course, thousands of men who had lost more than their working capabilities and were thus irreversibly damaged. George Grosz, whose bitterly ironic artworks so incisingly reveal the hypocrisy characteristic of the Weimar Republic, brings this into relief. During a brief stay in a military hospital, he hears how an unlucky soldier lying in the next bed has been blown off his genitals.

> "No more fun with the girls for him", said the medical orderly. The sargeant was of a different opinion. "Don't believe it, my boy", he said. "They'll bloody well give him a brand new custom-built cock made of bloody wood. We've seen the lot here. And artificial legs are as good, partially, as the real thing, even better for some things, if you ask me, like... bloody hurdling, or high-jumping, partially anyway. I mean better, partially, than the real thing." He was fond of the word "partially". (Grosz in Fineman 1999: 96)

In Finemans interpretation, the "sargeant imagines the prosthesis not as an

imitation of the lost limb itself, but as a refinement and extension of a lost or weakened function" (ibid.). Thus, "[w]hat is lost in affect is made up for in effect: the soldier with the wooden cock might not have fun with the girls, but the girls can still have fun with him" (ibid.). If this kind of "cynical functionalism" exemplifies, as Fineman says, a "nightmarish spectacle of castration anxiety" (ibid.), that is, the Weimar prosthetic phantasmagoria in terms of the sexual, then, what is the sexualization of the prosthesis – and the prosthetization of sexuality – celebrated by post-feminist techno/cyber-theorists? Why to be female – or, for that matter, feminist – means today to be, as Patrick D. Hopkins (1998) formulates, something like a "sex/machine"? What is this "Third Wave feminists" fascination of the technological enhancement and augmentation of sex, even the substitution the machine for the human body (see Pearce 1999)? Why the "Third Wavers" love to have "cybersex" (ibid. 276-277) with post-gender cyborgian constructions in cyberspace, or, as a "Web Grrrl" under the pseudonym "Weeber" puts it:

> Machines are easy [...] Everyday, we are creating more and more intimate relationships with them [...] [We] girls need to invent our own technological improvements over those overrated things called human relationships. Why not begin this process of breeding with machinery now, while the pesky risk of pregnancy is (as of yet) impossible. (ibid.: 277)

Obviously, this is the postmodern affective state of the subject I call prosthetic love. To illuminate my idea I refer to Jeanne Hamming's "post-lesbian" discussion of the dildo with the title "Dildonics, Dykes and the Detachable Masculine" purporting to a "non-phallocentric reconceptualization of the dildo (Hamming 2001: 336), engendering, as she claims, a "technological mutation from human to post-human" (ibid.: 337). For Hamming, the dildo functions as a "transformative object", even a "fetishistic 'attachment'", as a "supplement", in the end, as a "prosthesis" (ibid.: 331). In this sense, the dildo is "capable of signifying an extra-phallic desire" (ibid.). Thus, "any lesbian can go out and buy a better penis than any man possesses" (ibid.). As a "phallic simulacrum", the dildo-prosthesis "appears to be potentially superior to the flawed organic penis"; hence, the dildo acts as a "technologically enhanced extension of the penis" (ibid.). In sum, for Hamming, the dildo "offers a lesbian gender flexibility as a cyborg" (ibid.: 330); this is what she calls, instead of conventional gender transgression, a "gender mutation" entailing a transformation "from lesbian to post-lesbian" (ibid.: 335). Thus, the dildo – or, an artificial, detachable sex organ – "offers the potential to subvert the power dynamics of heterosexuality" (ibid.: 333) and makes possible a "post-gender, cyborg identity" (ibid.: 332).

> As a cultural construct that supposedly inhabits counter-hegemonic spaces, the dildo-donned lesbian offers feminist lesbian theorists a provocative cultural sign – she both has the phallus, not biologically, but technologically, and does not have it, able to leave it behind at will. The dildo acts as a post-gender prosthetic and the lesbian, then, acts a cyborg, post-human, and therefore not male, nor castrated. She functions, then, as an unaccountable gender-bending sign. In this sense, the dildo acts as a disembodied prosthetic, not as a supplement to a woman's lacking penis, a reproductive representation of the male body, but as a productive mutation of the dildonic body as altogether different. (ibid.: 337)

If the Weimar Republic war cripple, the man castrated by a shell, had "no more fun with the girls" because of the loss of the penis, according to the official rehabilation optimism there was still, I would say, prosthetic hope since "[w]hat is lost in affect is made up for in effect" (Fineman 1991: 96). And if the "wooden cock" (ibid.) designed for the prosthetic man – at least in the imagination of the medical sargeant

– was now a dildo, a detachable penis, that is, a sex prosthesis "as a refinement and extension of a lost or weakened function" (ibid.), for Hamming (2001: 339) the dildo represents a "post-human sexual scenario" that not only subverts the "female castration complex" (the lack of penis suggesting woman's "castrated sex"), but opens the possibility that "what perhaps becomes castrated is the male body and the phallocentric baggage it carries". No longer the constraints of the biological body, the prison-house of the flesh; instead, a sexual freedom brought by technology, by postmodern prosthetics. Is this now what Haraway (1991: 249) means by saying that "[p]rosthesis becomes a fundamental category for understanding our most intimate selves"?

Zerbrecht die Krücken – "Break the cructhes", this exhortation manifested the official prosthetic ethos of the Weimar rehabilation program (Fineman 1999: 90). The prosthesis was seen not as an obstacle of what was understood as literally full-bodied life; on the contrary, it was propagated as an empowerment of the natural body, a body though maimed still a promise of enhanced capabilities. In this respect, the "quasi-scientific identity politics" of the Weimar medical-technical industry centered on the concept of the *Krüppelseele* (ibid.: 97), that is, the cripple soul, expressing an entirely new mode of being human – a form of existence thoroughly conditioned by technology, whether by the war machinery or the rehabilitation apparatus and, in the end, the capitalist, Fordist production system. This techno-being was, of course, conceived of as the male; it was, paradoxcically, at the same time a projection of the Antique ideal and its deformed reality. Where there once was an organic body, there was now an artificial construction.[6] Against this background, one is tempted to ask whether the technological reconstitution of the human being characteristic of the postmodern technoculture had its beginning already in the Weimar prosthetics, instead of the Wienerian cybernetics (see Wiener 1961 [1948], 1964, 1968 [1950]), as it is usually seen?

From now on: cybersex

Destructive fantasies and utopian hopes of a political resurrection, phantasmagoric visions of power, order and discipline and transgressive wish-images of release, deliverance and transcendence. This is the affective force field reverberating around the figure of the prosthesis in the Weimar Republic. How does this emotionally electrified configuration turn into a libidinal *Besetzung* or cathexis of technology in the postmodern? The answer is, of couse, the feminist appropriation of the idea of the cyborg in the form of a postmodern mythology and the wish-image of a prosthetic empowerment of the body inscribed in it (see Kirkup et al. 2000; Wolmark 1999; Lykke & Braidotti 1997; cf. Gray 1995). If, in the Weimar Republic, the "body-machine complex" was coded as an enterprise to overcome the masculine pathology resulting from the war by the very same means that had caused the war in the first place, in feminist techno-theories – or, better, theory fictions – technology becomes, in a contradictory way, a projection screen of a utopian post-gender world and an object of sexual fantasies enacting technology as a new realm of being beyond the carnal body (cf. Balsamo 1997: 17-40, 116-156). In feminist techno-discourses, all that is "cyber" represents desire, plesure, and as a climax of an immersion in the worlds of technological embodiment, a sensation of *jouissance* (see, for example, Aristarkhova 1999).

If the Weimar prosthetic male is a wounded phallic figure, the man as a dysfunctional phallus manifesting at the same time traumatic loss and destructive reconstruction of the ego, the postfeminist prosthetic female is simultaneously a Freudian narcissistic subject dreaming of autoerotic pleasures of techno-body and a Lacanian mirror-image reflecting, through a misrecognition, the fragmented body as an imaginary whole. *Love your prosthesis like yourself* – this is the seduction of the female/feminine/feminist cyborg, the cyborg as the sexual object of post-sexual female desire, of a new kind of post-gender being as a technologically constructed post-

subject. This is what I call "sex", that is, post-sex in which sexual desire and pleasure turn into their own simulation – a simulation engendererd by techno-textuality.

Like in the Jüngerian techno-fantasies in which the body loses its substance as flesh and turns into "armored text", into phantasmagoric textuality celebrating the metamorphosis of a fragile male subject as a powerful, invulnerable and invincible ideal-ego, in techno-feminist *écriture* the naturally born female subject sheds the constraints of biology and adopts a new identity as a prosthetic incarnation of empowerment fantasies, a cyborg that leaves nature behind and embaraces in a postmodern artificial paradise all the marvels promised by – or, inscribed in – technology. This is the seduction of the prosthesis: no longer an extension of the phallus, but an all-embracing network of power coming into being as a creation of post-gender female post-bodies, a techno-corporeal construction that has sex organs all over the new cyborg body constituting a whole in fragments.

In cyber discourse, technology as such is an object of libidinal fantasies and theory fictions: the libido has moved from the realm of the flesh to the site of techno-systems. This is what Zoë Sofoulis (2001 [1997]: 1), a feminist techno-theorist, calls "techno-eroticism". For her, as a "great believer in polymorphous perversity", technology represents a "potential as an object of erotic enjoyment". According to Sofoulis, this is the promise of the Freudian "prosthetic god" implying "technologies that extend or are related to those limbs, organs and fuctions over which we have conscious control" (ibid.) amounting to a new form of the subject which she calls "para-ego". "Techno-eroticism" means for Sofoulis, however, more than a seduction of cyberspace and the cyborg: "I confess to finding myself quite turned on by the rhythmic up and down motion of a large crankshaft in a big steam age machine", especially when seeing "the shaft dipping into a reservoir of hot thick oil"; this view gets her, as she puts it, "hypnotised" (ibid.) But Sofoulis emphasizes that "it is not only the feminine that has perverse aesthetic and libidinal relations to technology"; for her, from futurists and surrealists to the contemporary "academic field of 'cyber-studies'" the allurement engendered by "the eroticism of machinery" has constantly been the focus of "textual/libidinal attention" (ibid.).

Textual/libidinal attention, this is the key to the whole issue of cybercultural "techno-eroticism": in cyber discourse, technology takes the form of textuality which, in turn, appears as a new kind of libidinal pleasure, based on what Jim Collins (1995: 16), referring to the excessive style of cyberpunk as a sign of contempory "technologies of absorption", calls "techno-textuality". In my interpretation, this is a characteristic postmodern mode of experience, a euphoric state of affective excitement, in which technology, sexuality and textuality become intertwined with each other opening up a new imaginary space for the Freudian "pleasure principle" (see Freud 1947 [1920]). No longer the atavistic temptation of flesh, nor its sublimation into *Ersatz*-experiences, into culturally coded fantasy and fetish objects, but the "cold seduction" (Baudrillard 1992 [1979]: 219-248) of technology. Technology is here not only an extension of, but, in fact, a substitution for, the body. It is akin to what Linda Williams (1991), in cinematic terms, calls "excessive bodies": bodies shown as objects of spectacle and sources of ecstasy, embodying deep-down corporeal, even visceral emotions from pleasure to horror, especially as projections of the female body. In contrast to that, cyber bodies are not visual but textual: they are experienced not in the space of the eye, but in the imaginary of cyberspace – in the virtual reality of language.

What does this mean in terms of sex? Due to the inherent logic of this new order of life postulated by all that is "cyber" there are, of course, many answers; but for sure, one of them is what Arthur and Marilouise Kroker (1993) say about the "next sex" which is going to be the "last sex" (cf. Stocker & Schöpf 2000):

> A floating world of sexual software that can be massaged, mirrored, uplinked and downloaded into a body that always knew it didn't have to be content

> with the obsolete carcerals of nature, discourse and ideology. In *the galaxy of sexual software*, morphing is the only rule: the quick mutation of all the binary signs into their opposites. Recombinant sex is the next sex, the last sex. A time of flash-meetings between the cold seduction of cyberspace and the primitive libido of trash sex. (Kroker & Kroker 1993: 15; emphasis mine)[7]

Obviously, the Krokers are here not only in possession of language, they are possessed by a language: this is the *jouissance* of digital delirium (see Kroker & Kroker 1997), a peculiar outcome of post-theory. Here language functions as the "sexual software" bringing libidinal pleasure, the thrill of textual ecstasy. Although this delirium generates orgastic exultation it is something different compared to the sound and fury of the body that was still possible to experience in the old world of flesh now already disappeared for ever. Instead of old-fashioned sexuality, from now on we enjoy textuality; no longer carnal pleasures, but the ecstasy of free-floating signifiers.

But then again, there is a striking similarity in digital delirium compared with the Jüngerian rapture of the technological: for Jünger, the new world of the machine is given in a new language, in a new discourse dominated by machinic metaphors. Thus, for Jünger "historical periods distinguish themselves by their signifying systems" (Sokel 1993: 35). In this sense, "[e]mphasis on language brings Jünger close to the linguistic turn that is typical of postmodern discourse and is inspired as much by Saussure as by Nietzsche". Jünger thus "conceives of a historical period as textuality, as a group of interrelated texts" (ibid.). Seen from this perspective, Vasseleu, Hamming, Sofoulis and the Krokers, amongst other techno/cyber-theorists, speak the same language as Jünger. In this language, in its libidinal excitement, textuality becomes one with sexuality, and sexuality is sublimated into textuality.

This is the universe of "sex", where not only the flesh – now understood, of course, to be but *meat* – is mere a poor residue of the old world doomed to live entangled in the lower spheres of nature; but moreover, in this fantastic realm of "sex", paradoxically, sex is turned into post-sex that, in turn, is there only to disappear altogether. In this respect, there are just few who have seen the light, but for sure, William Bogard is one of them; for him, "sex 'itself', 'real' sex is already long dead" (Bogard 1996: 154-155):

> What is sex today? It is everything and nothing or, alternately, it is a pure *residue*, the hyperreal projection of something dead, or left over from another time, that we can only recover in the dial-up, playback mode of postindustrial societies. Sex is a decoy, sex is a mock-up, a phantasm. It is dissolving into its screen, into information, its body is becoming a data phantom. As a function of bodies, sex is, or soon will be, history, that is, obsolete – too dangerous, too uncertain, too exhausting. Like everything else, soon your only "access" is a password. Sex is like history today, it just keeps being over. (ibid.: 160)

Instead of sex (what ever it is, in the first place), what we here have – or, soon will have – is cybersex. It is, as Plant (1998: 30) says, "virtual sex". For her, this new kind of sexual experience is commonly held up as the "epitome of disembodied pleasure, contact-free sex without secretions in a zone of total autonomy" (ibid.). Indeed, it is all of that; but, according to Plant, in fact, it is more: technological sex, sex in the pleasuredome of prosthetics, is a "safe environment free from the side-effects and complications of actual intercourse: transmittable diseases, conceptions, and abortions, and the sad obligations of emotional need"; that is, cybersex or techno-sex is a "closed circuit, a sealed elsewhere, a virtual space to be accessed at will" (ibid.). What ever you dream about it is there for you, *virtually*. In this postmodern artificial paradise, as Plant recounts:

> [...] cybersex is well advanced: the hardware is fetishized, the software is

> porn, and vast proportions of the telecommunications system are consumed by erotica. But these are merely the most overt – and perhaps the least interesting – examples of a generalized degeneration of "natural" sex. As hard and wetwares collapse onto soft, far stranger mutations wrack the sexual scene. The simulation of sex converges with the deregulation of the entire sexual economy, the corrosion of its links with reproduction, and the collapse of its specificity: sex disperses into drugs, trance, and dance possession; androgyny, hermaphroditism, and transsexualism become increasingly perceptible; paraphilia, body engineering, queer sex, and what Foucault calls "the slow motion of pleasure and pain" of SM [...] (ibid.)

As for Pat Califia, to whom Plant explicitly refers, what we already now have is "high-technology sex" (ibid.). And it is as if Norbert Wiener, the founding father of perhaps the last modern science, cybernetics, would have been resurrected in this new world under the regime of the "cyber", for it is expressly cybernetics that at the same time overcomes and rescues sex – but, of course, in the form of post-sex, sex entirely extracted from sex. As Plant assures, "[c]ybernetics reveals an organism cross-cut by inorganic life – bacterial communication, viral infection, and entire ecologies of replicating patterns which subvert even the most perverse notions of what it is to be 'having sex'" (ibid.). Apparently, this is now the new world of "next sex", "sex in the age oft its procreative superfluoness" (Stocker & Schöpf 2000). This is the world of the prosthetic being, the world of the cyborg. In this world of technological freedom, as Haraway (1985: 66) says, "[c]yborg 'sex' restores some of the lovely replicative baroque of ferns and invertebrates" which for her entails "such nice organic prophylactics against heterosexism". This is the promise of the feminist cyborg: "The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world" (ibid.: 67).

Now, if sex is already over, and gender will be soon "post", and, as Stelarc (1991: 591) already long ago saw it, the "body is obsolote", what is left is textuality replacing sexuality. In this world of libidinized technology and technologized libido, the imperative of the post-subject is the supreme form of narcissism: *love your prosthesis like yourself*. And the best prosthesis of that new form of the subject known now as the "para-ego" is, of course, libidinal language engendered by all that is "cyber". This is the pleasure, a post-Barthesian *jouissance*, of cyber discourse, the ecstasy of "sex": sex as text, text as sex. Is this the ultimate triumph of the prosthesis?

Endnotes

[1] Originally "megamachine" is Lewis Mumford's (1967) term for "any enourmous machine where the human becomes an indispensable part of a larger mechanical complex, the army being an obvious example" (Jardine 1987: 158).

[2] Although the prosthesis as a medical-technical means to rehabilitate a crippled body was during and after the World War I implemented first time in history in such a large scale, in itself prosthetics is, of course, an old invention having its roots already in the ancient Egypt and the Greek Antiquity, in the long tradition of surgery. According to the standard definition given by the OED (1989: 672), prosthesis is "[t]hat part of surgery which consists in supplying deficiencies, as by artificial limbs or teeth, or by other means"; thus, a prosthesis is an "artificial replacement for a part of the body". As such, the prosthesis is closely related to the amputation of the body parts that as thorougly damaged are irreparable. The idea of the prosthesis is clarified by the OED with an example of a medical textbook (*Amputation Prosthesis*): "If the leg amputee is to be a succesful member of society he must first learn to walk and travel on his prosthesis" (ibid.). Refering to the OED I am, of course, not saying that a dictionary definition is the only meaning of a word; I am only stating the mere fact that prosthesis is mainly a medical term. For the relations between the body, media and medicine in the context of prosthetics, see Gebhard & Kächele 2000.

[3] The presentation at hand is a part of my doctoral thesis with the title *Cybersex: A Desire for Disembodiment. On the Idea of the Post-Human Being in Cyber Discourse* to be completed in the near future. The broader problematics I am able only to touch here will be discussed properly in that work.

[4] The concept of "the technological sublime" was originally used by Leo Marx (1967 [1964]: 194-230) to express an emotional, semi-religious attitude toward technology. Later the notion has served as a criti-

cal term in the analysis of technoculture (see, for example, Carey 1989: 120-123; Dery 1996: 3-17). In the contemporary sense, especially in regard to the postmodern, the concept of sublime has its origin in the aesthetic theories of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant referring to an experience of "astonishment", "stupor" and "awe" which exceeds the human mind and is thus beyond proper representation; in consequence, the human imagination attempts, through phantasmatic figuration, to represent that which is unrepresentable, so as to enforce present that which is absent (see Jameson 1991: 32-38; Culler 1997: 77). Thus, the sublime is a borderline experience trying to find an intelligible form through figurative expressions. In this sense, all that is "cyber" is based on a metaphorical language manifesting the logic of the sublime.

[5] Beside *Der Arbeiter* (1932) Jünger praised the virtues of the "new man" in his essay works based on his own war experiences: *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (1922), *Feuer und Blut* (1926), *Die totale Mobilmachung* (1930) and *In Stahlgewittern* (1934). For a historically as well as psychoanalytically elaborated background of the Jüngerian phantasmagoria, see Theweleit 1986 [1977].

[6] I am, of course, fully aware that what is called the "natural" body is as such a cultural construction, to say the least. However, it is one thing to say that the idea of the body is culturally constructed, and another that the body is *nothing else* than a product or an effect of cultural processes, that is, something thoroughly non-biological. In this context, I only refer to Michel Foucault (1976 [1975]) for whom there still is a body outside discourses, and to the Harawayan idea of the cyborg as a construction *half* organic, *half* technological (Haraway 1985, 1991).

[7] Speaking of the "next sex" and the "last sex", the Krokers are, faithful to their style, playing also here with language. As well known, in English the word sex means sex understood as gender (to be of some sex) and – especially since the sixties in the vein of American English – sex as bodily acts, that is, sex as sexual practices and experiences of desire and pleasure (to have sex) (cf., for example, Kramarae & Treichler 1990 [1985]: 409-417). Relying on this ambiguity, the Krokers seem to suggest both the dissolution of sex/gender binary oppositions (male/female) and of all kinds of classificatory and hierarchical differences concerning sexual practices (homo/hetero, queer). Moreover, the word recombinant is here important: it suggests a mixture, transferred to the cultural level, analogous to the biological combining of DNA components from various species in order to produce new entities (genetic engineering, cloning). Of course, by all that the Krokers want to emphasize the hybridity of sex and sexuality, that is, the cultural constructiveness of the body and its desires and pleasures, as well as the fusion of the machine and the human in technoculture.

Literature

Althusser, Louis (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: NLB.

Anders, Günther (1992 [1956]) *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. Band 1: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution*. München: Beck Verlag.

Aristarkhova, Irina (1999) "Cyber-Jouissance. A Sketch For A Politics Of Pleasure". http://www01.heise.de/tp/english/pop/topic_3/4126/1.html

Armstrong, Nancy (2001) "Who's Afraid of the Cultural Turn?" *differences*. Vol. 12, Nr. 1, 2000.

Bahnisch, Mark (2000) "Embodied Work, Divided Labour: Subjectivity and Scientific Management of the Body in Fredrick W. Taylor's 1907 'Lecture on Management'". *Body & Society*. Vol. 6, Nr. 1, March 2000.

Balsamo, Anne (1997) *Technologies of the Gendered Body. Reading Cyborg Women*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Bammé, Arno, Feuerstein, Günter, Genth, Renate, Holling, Eggert, Kahle, Renate, Kempin, Peter (eds.) (1983) *Maschinen-Menschen, Mensch-Maschinen. Grundrisse einer sozialen Beziehung*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Barthes, Roland (1974 [1970]) *S/Z*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Barthes, Roland (1975 [1973]) *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Baruzzi, Arno (ed.) (1968) *Aufklärung und Materialismus im Frankreich des 18. Jahrhunderts. La Mettrie – Helvetius – Diderot – Sade*. München: List Verlag.

Baruzzi, Arno (1973) *Mensch und Maschine. Das Denken sub specie machinae*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Baudrillard, Jean (1992 [1979]) *Von der Verführung*. München: Matthes & Seitz.

Berr, Marie-Anne (1990) *Technik und Körper*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

Biro, Matthew (1998) "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture". *New German Critique*. Nr. 62, Spring-Summer 1994.

Bogard, William (1996) *The Simulation of Surveillance. Hypercontrol in Telematic Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Braidotti, Rosi (1997) "Cyberfeminism with a Difference". Kemp, Sandra & Squires, Judith (eds.) (1997) *Feminism*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Brook, Barbara (1999) *Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London & New York: Longman.

Brooks, Ann (1997) *Postfeminisms. Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*. London & New York: Routledge.

Bukatman, Scott (1993) *Terminal Identity. The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Bürger, Peter (2000) *Ursprung des postmodernen Denkens*. Weilerswist: Velbrück.

Carey, James W. (1989) *Communication As Culture. Essays on Media and Society*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Cavallaro, Dani (2000) *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture. Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson*. London & New Brunswick NJ: The Athlone Press.

Collins, Jim (1995) *Architectures of Excess: Cultural Life in the Information Age*. London: Routledge.

Coyne, Richard (1999) *Technoromanticism. Digital Narrative, Holism, and the Romance of the Real*. Cambridge (Mass.) & London: The MIT Press.

Culler, Jonathan (1997) *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Darnton, Robert (1994) "Sex ist gut fürs Denken. Von emanzipatorischen Potentialen der Pornographie". *Lettre International*. Heft 27, VI. Vj. 1994.

Davies, Tony (1997) *Humanism*. London: Routledge.

Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix (1998 [1972]) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis (Minnesota): University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1982 [1972]) *Margins: Of Philosophy*. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1984 [1967]) *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1981 [1967]) *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge.

Dery, Mark (1996) *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Dixon, Broadhurst Joan & Cassidy, Eric J. (1998) *Cyberotics, Technology and Post-Human Pragmatism*. London & New York: Routledge.

Drux, Rudolf (1999) *Der Frankenstein-Komplex. Kulturgeschichtliche Aspekte des Tarums vom künstlichen Menschen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Eerikäinen, Hannu (1999a) "A Desire for Disembodiment. On the Meaning of the Human Being in Cyber Discourse". Inkinen, Sam (ed.) (1999) *Mediapolis. Aspects of Texts, Hypertexts and Multimedial Communication*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Eerikäinen, Hannu (1999b) "Cybersex as Post-sex". Seeking Pleasure Beyond the Body". *Semiotische Berichte*. "Sex and the Meaning of Life / Life and the Meaning of Sex". Ed. by Bernard, Jeff, Gorlée, Dinda L., Withalm, Gloria. Jahrgang 23, Nr. 1-4, 1999.

Eerikäinen, Hannu (2000) "Cyberspace – Cyborg – Cybersex. On the Topos of Disembodiment in the Cyber Discourse". Flessner, Bernd (ed.) (2000) *Nach dem Menschen. Der Mythos einer zweiten Schöpfung und das Enstehen einer Posthumanen Kultur*. Freiburg: Rombach-Verlag.

Ebert, Teresa L. (1992-1993) "Ludic Feminism, the Body, Performance, and Labor: Bringing *Materialism* Back into Feminist Cultural Studies". *Cultural Critique* 23.

Erlach, Klaus (1994) "Anthropologische Aspekte des Maschinenbegriffs". Maier, Wolfgang & Zoglauer, Thomas (eds.) (1994) *Technomorphe Organismuskonzepte. Modellübertragungen zwischen Biologie und Technik*. Stuttgart: Problemata / Frommann-Holzboog.

Fineman, Mia (1999) "Ecce Homo Prostheticus". *New German Critique*. Nr. 76, Winter 1999.

Foster, Hal (1991) "Armor Fou". *October*. Nr. 56, 1991.

Foucault, Michel (1984 [1975]) "Docile Bodies". Rabinow, Paul (ed.) (1984) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, Michel (1976 [1975]) *Überwachen und Strafen. Die Geburt des Gefängnisses*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Freud, Sigmund (1996 [1930]) *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur. Und andere kulturtheoretische Schriften*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag.

Freud, Sigmund (1946 [1930]) "Die Zerlegung der psychischen Persönlichkeit". (Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse.) *Gesammelte Werke XV*. London: Imago Publishing.

Freud, Sigmund (1947 [1920]) "Jenseits des Lustprinzips". *Gesammelte Werke XIII*. London: Imago Publishing.

Gebhard, Allert & Kächele, Horst (eds.) (2000) *Medizinische Servonen. Psychosoziale, anthropologische und etische Aspekte prothetischer Medien in der Medizin*. Stuttgart & New York.

Gendolla, Peter (1992) *Anatomien der Puppe. Zur Geschichte des Maschinenmenschen bei Jean Paul, E. T. A. Hoffman, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam und Hans Bellmer*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.

Glaser, Horst Albert & Kaempfer, Wolfgang (eds.) *Maschinenmenschen*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang.

Gray, Chris Hables (ed.) (1995) *The Cyborg Handbook*. New York and London: Routledge.

Hamming, Jeanne E. (2001) "Dildonics, Dykes and the Detachable Masculine". *The European Journal of Women's Studies*. Vol. 8, Issue 3, August 2001.

Haraway, Donna (1985) "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s". *Socialist Review*, Vol. 15, Nr. 2, 1985.

Haraway, Donna (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Hayles, N. Katherine (1999) *How We Became Posthuman? Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Eric J. Hobsbawm (1994) *The Age of Extremes : A History of the World, 1914-1991*. New York: Vintage.

Holmes, David (ed.) (1997) *Virtual Politics. Identity and Community in Cyberspace*. London: Sage.

Hopkins, Patrick D. (ed.) (1998) *Sex/Machine. Readings in Culture, Gender, and Technology*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Horkheimer, Max & Adorno, Theodor W. (1979 [1947]) *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Huhtamo, Erkki (1995) "Encapsulated Bodies in Motion: Simulators and the Quest for Total Immersion". Penny, Simon (ed.) (1995) *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*. New York: State University of New York.

Huyssen, Andreas (1993) "Fortifying the Heart – Totally: Ernst Jünger's Armored Texts". *New German Critique*. Nr. 59, Spring-Summer 1993.

Inkinen, Sam (1999) "The Internet, 'Data Highways' and the Information Society. A Comment on the Rhetoric of the Electronic Sublime". Inkinen, Sam (ed.) (1999) *Mediapolis. Aspects of Texts, Hypertexts and Multimedial Communication*. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Irigaray, Luce (1985) *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Itacha, NY: Cornell University Press.

Jameson, Fredric (1984) "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism". *New Left Review*. Nr. 146, July-August 1984.

Jameson, Fredric (1991) *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.

Jardine, Alice (1987) "Of Bodies and Technologies". Foster, Hal (ed.) (1987) *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Seattle: Bay Press.

Jünger, Ernst (1982 [1932]) *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt*. Stuttgart: Cotta's Bibliothek der Moderne.

Kafka, Franz (1996 [1919]) "In der Strafkolonie". *Erzählungen*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam.

Kerckhove, Derrick de (1991) "Bioapparatustalk". Moser, Mary Anne (ed.) *The Bioapparatus*. Alberta: The Banff Centre for the Arts.

Kern, Stephen (1996) *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.

Kirkup, Gill, Janes, Linda, Woodward, Kath & Hovenden, Fiona (eds.) (2000) *The Gendered Cyborg. A Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

Koslowski, Peter (1991) *Der Mythos der Moderne. Die dichterische Philosophie Ernst Jüngers*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Kramarae, Cheris & Treichler, Paula A. (eds.) (1990 [1985]) *A Feminist Dictionary*. London & Boston: Pandora Press.

Kroker, Athur & Kroker, Marilouise (eds.) (1997) *Digital Delirium*. Montréal: New World Perspectives.

Kroker, Athur & Kroker, Marilouise (eds.) (1993) *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Küenzlen, Gottfried (1997) *Der Neue Mensch. Eine Untersuchung zur säkularen Religionsgeschichte der Moderne.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Lacan, Jacques (1977 [1966] *Écrits. A Selection*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Lunn, Eugene (1982) *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lykke, Nina & Braidotti, Rosi (eds.) (1997) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs. Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine and Cyberspace*.

Marcuse, Herbert (1969 [1964]) *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. London: Sphere Books.

Marsden, Jill (1996) "Virtual Sexes and Feminist Futures. The Philosophy of 'Cyberfeminism'". *Radical Philosophy. A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Philosophy*. July/August 1996.

Marx, Leo (1967 [1964]) *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. London: Oxford University Press.

McCaffery, Larry (ed.) (1994 [1991]) *Storming the Reality Studio. A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

McLuhan, Marshall (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Meyer-Drawe, Käte (1996) *Menschen im Spiegel ihrer Maschinen*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Morton, Donald (1999) "Birth of the Cyberqueer". Wolmark, Jenny (ed.) *Cybersexualities. A Reader on Feminist Theoryx, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Mumford, Lewis (1967) *The Myth of the Machine. Technics and Human Development*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1968 [1883-1885]) *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Pearce, Kimber Charles (1999) "Third Wave Feminism and Cybersexuality: The Cultural Backlash of the New Girl Order". Carstarphen, Meta G. & Zavoina, Susan C. (eds.) *Sexual Rhetoric. Media Perspectives on Sexuality, Gender, and Identity*. Westport (Conneticut) & London: Greenwod Press.

Penley, Constance & Ross, Andrew (1992) "Cyborgs at Large: Interview with Donnan Haraway". Penley, Constance & Ross, Andrew (1992) (ed.) *Technoculture*. Minneapolis & Oxford: University of Minnesota Press.

Perniola, Mario (1999) *Der Sex-Appeal des Anorganischen*. Wien: Turia + Kant.

Plant, Sadie (1997) "Beyond the Screen: Film, Cyberpunk and Cyberfeminism". Kemp, Sandra & Squires, Judith (eds.) (1997) *Feminism*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Plant, Sadie (1993) "Coming Across the Future". Dixon, Joan Broadhurst & Cassidy, Eric J. (eds.) *Virtual Futures. Cyberotics, Technology and Post-Human Pragmatism*. London & New York: Routledge

Plant, Sadie (1999) "On the Matrix: Cyberfeminist Simulations". Wolmark, Jenny (ed.) *Cybersexualities. A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*. Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press.

Rabinbach, Anson (1992) *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*. New York: BasicBooks.

Rheingold, Howard (1992) *Virtual Reality*. New York: Summit Books.

Rieger, Stefan (2001) *Die Individualität der Medien. Eine Geschichte der Wissenschaften vom Menschen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Seltzer, Mark (1992) "Writing Technologies". *New German Critique 57*. Fall 1992.

Sfez, Lucien (1995) "Von der Welt der Kommunikation zur Utopie der Körper". *Mythos Information*. Gerbel, Karl & Weibel, Peter (eds.) (1995) *Welcome to the Wired Worl. @rs electronica 95*. Wien & New York: Springer Verlag.

Sirius, R. U. (1997) "Out There Having Fun in the Warm Californian Sun". Kroker, Athur & Kroker, Marilouise (eds.) (1997) *Digital Delirium*. Montréal: New World Perspectives.

Sloterdijk, Peter (1983) *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft. Band 1*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Sofoulis, Zoë (2000) "Posthuman or Para-ego? Interactive models of human-technology relations". http://hosted.at.imago.com.au/wov/papers/posthum.htm

Sokel, Walter H. (1993) "The 'Postmodernism' of Ernst Jünger in his Proto-Fascist Stage". *New German Critique*. Nr. 59, Spring-Summer 1993.

Solfrank, Cornelia (1997) *First Cyberfeminist International*. Hamburg: Old Boys Network.

Solfrank, Cornelia (1999) *Next Cyberfeminist International*. Hamburg: Old Boys Network.

Stelarc (1991) "Prosthetics, Robotics and Remote Existence: Postevolutionary Strategies". *Leonardo*. Vol. 24, No. 5, 1991.

Stocker, Gerfried & Schöpf, Christine (2000) *Next Sex. Sex im Zeitalter seiner reproduktionstechnischen Überflüssigkeit*. Ars Electronica 2000. Wien & New York: Springer.

Stone, Alluquère Rosanne (1995) *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Cambridge (Mass.) & London: The MIT Press.

Terranova, Tiziana (1996) "Posthuman unbounded: artificial evolution and high-tech subcultures". Robertson, George, Mash, Melinda, Tickner, Lisa, Bird, Jon, Curtis, Barry & Putnam, Tim (eds.) (1996) *FutureNatural. Nature, Science, Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Theweleit, Klaus (1986 [1977]) *Männerphantasien*. Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/ Roter Stern.

Vasseleu, Cathryn (1997) "Virtual Bodies / Virtual Worlds". Holmes, David (ed.) *Virtual Politics. Identity and Community in Cyberspace*. London: Sage.

Völker, Klaus (ed.) (1994 [1971]) *Künstliche Menschen. Über Golems, Homunculi, Androiden und lebende Statuen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Werneburg, Brigtte (1993) "Ernst Jünger and the Transformed World". *October*. Nr. 62, 1993.

Wiener, Norbert (1961[1948]) *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. New York and London: The MIT Press.

Wiener, Norbert (1964) *God and Golem, Inc. A Comment on Certain Points where Cybernetics Impinges on Religion*. Cambridge (Mass.): The M. I. T. Press.

Wiener, Norbert (1968 [1950]) *The Human Use of Human Beings*. London: Sphere Books Ltd.

Williams, Linda (1991) "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre and Excess". *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 44, Nr. 4, 1991.

Wittig, Frank (1997) *Maschinenmenschen. Zur Geschichte eines literarischen Motivs im Kontext von Philosophie, Naturwissenschaft und Technik*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

Wolmark, Jenny (ed.) *Cybersexualities. A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*. Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press.

The Girl in Space-Time
Encounters with and within Eija-Liisa Ahtila's Video Installations

Taru Elfving, Goldsmiths College
taruelfving@hotmail.com

The Girl I

Today begins with an image of a grinning mask, somewhere in a chaotic yard full of junk. A girl stands against a yellow metal door of a garage. The bright sun highlights the colours of the girl's red shirt and blue skirt. "Today my father cries", she begins. She is the narrator of her father's and grandfather's tragedy, which has just ended in the latter's death. Her story is today, the present in all its ambiguity. Her older self and her father are identified as Vera and Dad as their parts of the story open. But the girl is just Today as she inhabits the border space of the messy yard, the grey area between the privacy of the home and the public space.

The Girl II

38 years old and still just a girl – does she just look like one, an eternal youth, or is she a girl even as a woman? Girl in pale pink jacket sits on a fence with her legs just slightly too wide apart, "as a little girl who does not know anything about sex yet". But actually she is an adult, a woman "who in a feminine way expresses her aggression in disguise". She has been sent back to girlhood, to the beginning of womanhood, amongst the other girls. She wanted too much, all that kept men happy. She returns to the school sports hall, to the space where girls are allowed to be competitive, active, passionate – where all her questions originated. She embodies now, and very knowingly so, both the past and the future, in the present.

What is the Girl?

Due to her peculiar place in representation the girl is easily passed unnoticed. I circled around the girl as if she was a black hole focusing instead on time and space as potentially radical aspects that challenge linear narrative in the works of Finnish artist and filmmaker Eija-Liisa Ahtila. Then she suddenly emerged, stood out, as a crystallization of all the questions I had been asking, but defying any attempts to define or locate her. Questions of difference, subjectivity, time and space all were sucked into a whirlpool that is the girl.

In my work I am not focusing on (the problematics of) representation – of a girl, girls, girlishness, girl-ness. My aim is not to think about the reality of being a girl, or revealing the real girl(s), nor about trying to approximate reality. I am not concerned with representations as better and worse, or traditional and transgressive, and definitely not with natural and cultural representations, surface and depth. Nor with representational logic of the real and a copy, individuals termed girls and images of them.

Instead of representations I focus on the girl in visual culture as an unstable and unmarked *sign* or *site* that is thoroughly complex and paradoxical and therefore challenges representational logic – whether in the signifying systems of language or images. The girl could be understood as a *non-sign* or a *non-site* that defies the binary logic based on solid entities and sameness. Any attempt to represent the girl is doomed to fail, because as Dorothea Olkowski (1999, p.20) has argued pure difference is excluded from representation, which relies on identity, opposition, analogy

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

and resemblance. Therefore I aim to approach the girl as a crack or catastrophe, a radical break or gap. We have to rethink notions of time and space, and being in time and space, in order to disrupt the representational logic and to see the girl as something other than either an essential category of being or a culturally constructed identity.

Is the girl then any age? Or a point/moment where linearity of time becomes confused and multilayered? The girl does not fit into the essential categories of age and sex, but at the same time she can't be totally abstracted. The girl coming to terms with her sexuality and subjectivity is a historically and culturally specific weak hinge in binary logic.

For Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988, p.276-7) the girl is: "an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes." This abstract notion of the girl is problematic in stripping her of any specificity, but at the same time offers important insight into the girl's position within the binary logic of the same: "The question is fundamentally that of the body – the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms. This body is stolen first from the girl: ... The girl's becoming is stolen first, in order to impose a history, or prehistory, upon her. The boy's turn comes next, but it is by using the girl as an example, by pointing to the girl as the object of his desire… The girl is the first victim, but she must also serve as an example and a trap." Here Deleuze and Guattari (1988, p.276) locate the girl and her embodied being as an unmarked, the condition for the binary subject positions and sexualities of boy, man and also woman.

According to Luce Irigaray (1985a, p.25) the girl is meaningless and without a place in patriarchy until puberty – only then she enters into the economy of exchange as potential mother, wife, whore. Before puberty the girl is the ultimate unmarked, *no-thing*, as her body lacks even the signs of female sex(uality). But as Irigaray (1993, p.87) points out, already then her virginity is traded. She can be seen as an object/mirror of male sexuality and desire – a young girl being an empty page for desire to reflect itself on. She somehow occupies the place of a pure object and negativity that women do not quite fit into, especially anymore.

Puberty is a confusing state in-between (both-and, neither-nor) where a girl's body becomes marked by culture and she becomes aware of this marking. This causes a split between body and mind, stolen body and impossible subjectivity, that is clearly visible in teenage girls in their sexual awakening and the awkwardness thereof, which Ahtila's girls emphasize - marked simultaneously with signs of (other's) sexuality and prohibitions, being desirable as untouched and at the same time pure with nothing to touch. However, I would argue that puberty does not need to be understood as an in-between stage in a progress from child to adult. Teenage is culturally privileged and loaded age, which supports the necessity of linear, supposedly natural, development from childhood innocence to sexual subjectivity of adulthood. The girl can be seen to escape in her paradoxical position from this logic of before and after.

The Girl as the present

The girl in Today could be understood to embody the present, the today. But she is the present in a sense that the present does not exist as a moment, a definable point in time. It is in constant flux, always already gone or about to come. It is where the past and the future meet, and where the past and future as virtualities are actualized. Being the present the girl is both virtual past and future – not yet actualized as she is signified in the logic of the same as other, mirror, lack.[1] The past is present in the present, not as present gone, but as virtual. Therefore we do not need to and are not able to go back to some original moment and the first site of signification when the

girl was defined as lack, no-thing. We can excavate the virtual at the present that the girl is.

In If 6 Was 9 adult women recollect their sexual awakening, but Ahtila has put these stories into the mouths of teenage girls. Virtual actualizes as the women and the girls, present and past, collide. The stories are memories of the past affected by individual duration, but instead of personal history they become multiple, shared – not any more representations of the past, but virtual past as the present, reaching towards the future. Due to this the voices of the girls seem multiple, not anchored to individual subjects. These voices do not refer to something shared, which could be linked to essential sexed identity or experience, but deny any possibility of such essential subject position. The girl is present in women - the embodied being keeps its virtualities. (Conley 2000, p.26) This collision of women and girls disturbs because it reveals their coexistence and inseparability even in their particularity, the overlap of past and future in the present, which defies linearity and progress. This different conception of time troubles the representation of time, which Olkowski (1999, p.22) critiques as a line of now-points, a multiplicity of successive arrests that does not comprehend motion and change.

According to Elizabeth Grosz (2000, p.230) the present is the site of duration, which proceeds not through progression, but through division, dissociation – by difference, sudden and unpredictable change. She stresses that memory and perception take us outside of ourselves and do not reside in us. This openness to the outside and to change is emphasized in the way the girls gesture, talk and relate.

The girl in *Today* sits in a chair staring at us with blank eyes. She says: ”I am sitting in a rocking chair, I have something on my lap, I have a boyfriend, I am 66 years old.” With this remark her screen in *Today* closes and our gaze moves on to the next one with an older woman sitting in a rocking chair, smoking with an ashtray on her lap. Vera, young and old, at the moment of transition. The girl situates herself as older, creates a bridge – or maybe she *remembers* the future, as if it was another simultaneous layer of her being. If remembering is a process that transcends the limits of linear time bringing past and present together, it reshapes not only the past but also the present, and the future.

Trouble in space-time

According to Irigaray (1996, p.23) we need to rethink space and time in order to be able to think and live (sexual) difference. The girl as the present, a *site* of duration – or *event* of multiple time, problematizes the wholeness of the subject and linearity. The girl is a rupture, a point of radical disturbance, in the binary logic of representation and signification. She is a threshold, an unmarked territory – marked only by limits and/or pure lack of form, essence etc – guarded by prohibitions. She is an unexpected opening that may allow us to challenge the rigidity and self-enclosure of this logic and offer different way(s) to think about space, time and difference.

If the present is a *mode* of differing or differentiation as Grosz (1999, p.18) writes, then the girl can also be understood as a mode of differentiation. This radically different mode of duration – not *being in* some absolute flow of time, but more like *embodying* multiple folds of time – suggests that the girl must also have a different relation to space. She does not simply occupy space as a solid subject-entity in material space inhabited by objects. The girl reveals the impossibility of such occupation of space supposedly outside and separate from the subject.[2] Does her relation to space highlight the different spaces, overlapping spaces of different modes of subjectivity? Multiple space as a ground for encounters, where subjects meet and change, their relation to space also constantly changing.

The girl in Today stands out in bright colours and shapes from the background. She occupies space as a foreigner/stranger, hovering in the in-between spaces slightly awkwardly. Her embodied presence stands out expressing even more

discomfort when she steps into her father's bedroom for a moment. Or is she there at all? Their two realities are like pasted or folded together. There seems to be a strong physical, and maybe also temporal, distance between the girl and her father. She faces and speaks to the camera, reaching out of the reality of the narrative. She creates a bridge between the viewer and herself, our reality and the fictional realm.

Can the girl's relation to space be seen as productive or creative? Like the girl in *Today*, the girls in *If6was9* show their ambivalent relation to different spaces – public space, intimate privacy of home and the semi-privacy of the school sports hall. Are spaces defined too rigidly to give them space of their own? Repetition of threshold places/sites, holes or gaps, underlines their ambiguous meanings and positions within the structures based on strictly separated public and private, outside and inside spaces. The awkward body emphasizes the blurred distinction between inside and outside, from the different aspects of the embodied subject to the subject's relation to different spaces.

If 6 Was 9 plays with a strong cultural symbol of female sexuality, the hole, a break in the wholeness and solidity of normative subjectivity. A hole could also be seen to refer to an in-between stage, a dynamic space of change and ambiguity, such as teenagehood. The holes of male and female bodies circulate in the stories, but they have a spatial dimension as well. In a View Master children are led inside a mountain through a disappearing hole. The landscape images that appear in between the girls' stories focus similarly on openings and entrances: a path leading to the shore through an opening in a fence, automatic doors of the shopping mall and three repetitive images of a gateway through the facade of a house. Sexuality, subjectivity and space of the girls are defined by entrances and exits that emphasize their dynamic position as indefinable and uncontrollable by the cultural binary logic. Their relationship to these spaces is everything but passive. Body and space are entwined together in this loaded presence of thresholds/holes.

Repetition of the images, the spaces as thresholds, is powerful. Every cityscape is tripled, except one or two panoramas highlighting the opening or passage in the centre of the image. This multiplication and repetitious flow of pictures destabilizes their meanings. What we do not see or read in the simple signs of the images becomes meaningful. These spaces become gaps and silences. This could be seen to work like Irigaray's (1985b) *mimesis*, strategic repetition of cultural tropes and texts, which in this process become something else, revealing the levels of meaning hidden in between the lines. The holes and passages are not anymore just banal innuendo or essentialising sexual signs.

Does this ambivalent relation of the girls to the various spaces they occupy suggest a relation of constant negotiation between subject and space? They redefine or at least trouble the significations and forms of different spaces with their embodied presence that does not quite fit the subject positions on offer. How can this dynamic relation to space be linked to the different mode of time that the girl embodies? Even if the girl is considered a materially specific *site* of difference, embodying processes of change, she can easily be assimilated to the prevailing binary logic as a place or space of events, a passive receptacle, a medium or tool, or an unmarked sign that invisibly supports the other signs. We have to be able to find another way of understanding the relation between space and time, matter and mind, to be able to reconceptualize the girl as a mode of subjectivity where duration is intertwined with specific materiality.[3]

Ways to imagine a different radical position may emerge when repeating creatively the position given for the girl as lack, nothing (to be seen), nonexistent – *non-sign, non-site*, *no-thing*. As *non-site* the girl can't be defined as a site, place or point as such, because she always occupies and exists in the gaps, as threshold(s). Therefore she suggests a different relation to space raising the question: What is the space in-between?

If present is a threshold/hinge that joins past and future, then subjectivity of the girl is a mode of becoming, a relational process. There is no clear division of

before and after, no clear borders between inside and outside. The subject as defined in linear and universal space-time is shattered and replaced by a field of forces where space, time and the subject are intertwined, not defined against each other. Time, space and be(com)ing appear as folded matter, where surprising and ever changing, virtual and actual, connections can occur.

Threshold - Excess

The true or real girl cannot be revealed, as she is already real as virtual. Like difference is real even if incomprehensible in the logic of the same. The girl is not hidden behind or under a surface of signification that can be stripped off, as this refers to truth, origin and depth in opposition to supposed falsity and artificiality of the surface and the effect of the outside. The relations of surface and depth, space and time, can only be understood through the dynamic in-between, where we can also find the girl.

Focusing on the spaces in-between Irigaray's *mimesis* may work as a strategy to approach the radicality of the girl. With *mimesis*, strategic repetition, Irigaray (1985b) claims it to be possible to get in touch with a different logic and mode of be(com)ing, with *the feminine (le féminin)*. *The feminine* is repressed as the condition of the logic of the same and therefore can only be discovered in the gaps and silences, as incomprehensible excess that disrupts the binary logic and opens it to change. For Irigaray *the feminine* is linked to the female body and sexuality as that which is repressed and excessive in the logic based on male morphology. Does this mean the strategy of *mimesis* and *the feminine* are limited to the problematics of sexual difference? Or can we think of them as an opening towards differences in general, in their multiplicity?

Irigaray works against the universality of language as it does not allow for creation, difference and change. This leads to an interesting contrast with Deleuze & Guattari's take on the girl as a universal becoming of all sexualities. They refuse to consider the girl in her (embodied) specificity, although they first place the body at the heart of the question, as stolen in the fabrication of opposable organisms (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, p.276).[4]

> "The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo… The girl is like the block of becoming that remains contemporaneous to each opposable term, man, woman, child, adult. It is not the girl who becomes a woman; it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl." (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, p.276-7)

Skipping thus the specificity of the female sexuality and embodied subjectivity runs the risk of remaining within the logic of the same that is based on male morphology. This makes it too easy to position the girl again as an empty, blank ground for forces constituting other subjects and modes of subjectivity. Sexual difference cannot be overtaken on the way towards multiple differences and dynamic of becoming. Is the girl's body stolen again, but for a slightly different purpose, by Deleuze & Guattari?

Bringing Irigaray together with Deleuze (&Guattari) may help to solve some problems or creatively confuse matters further. The radical position that Deleuze & Guattari assign for the girl does not seem too far from Irigaray's notion of *the feminine*. They both function as an unmarked *non-site* and *non-sign* that can be understood as a threshold. There may be a way of thinking them together, in parallel, and thus avoiding the problems of each one: taking bodily specificity and sexual difference into account in thinking about pure difference – to see pure difference as an excess that opens up virtualities, actualizing them and creating conditions for new to emerge. As Olkowski (1999, p.111) suggests, body could be located as the

moment when the present is continually becoming, as a boundary between duration and matter. The stolen body of the girl seems privileged here as this moment of becoming, able to remind the other bodies of they capacity to flow over the enforced stability and solidity as well.

According to Grosz (1994, p.20) the body is a site of mediation, a threshold, between what is considered to be internal, or purely subjective, and what is external and publicly visible. It is not just a site, but also an active mediator, which problematises the binary pairs such as self-other, active-passive and cultural-natural. The girl's body is the privileged and most dynamic site of mediation. She embodies both multiple time and indefinable space, as if located before the dividing cultural order. Her embodied being has not adapted to its allocated side of gendered binaries such as time-space and interior-exterior, but confuses and mobilizes them as difference.

In the end of her part in Today, the girl questions the identity of the crying father and then projects herself into the future. She asks whose father it actually is - Sanna's, Marko's, Mia's, Pasi's, or Vera's. Her voice pronounces "Vera's dad", but her image doesn't. Why an image of three identical grasshoppers? Is her identity seeping out of its borders, blending with the others'? Does she not identify with her name, but only adapts oneself to it when older? Is the voice hers, someone else's or one of her many selves? She escapes from us, but something remains – the red shirt.

Stain on stain

The red shirt of the girl is the first strong visual point of contact that stays with us throughout *Today*. It stands out like excess or surplus of the image. Like a fold it reveals the different levels (of reality, text or logic) built into the image and the narrative. The girl in her bright red shirt stands out from her surroundings. The girl does not become a woman by slowly turning from pale girly pink to a full womanhood of fleshy red. From the non-signification and disembodiedness of a girl to a wife, mother, mistress, subject and object. Her red shirt is a *stain* that disrupts the smooth surface of representation and signification. The redness that veils her body claims that body back – but not as the original stolen or lost, but as something radically new.

I take the term *stain* probably quite far from its original psychoanalytic/ Lacanian context, and use it to approach the flow of images in Ahtila's film in all their materiality.[5] The narrative, the roles and poses of the characters, their surroundings and relations are all marked by even cultural stain, which resides both in the images and in the viewer's response. Like a fluid varnish or a coloured filter it discreetly ties everything into a whole.

With a closer look the bodies of the characters stand out as points of slight disruption. In their material specificity these embodied subjects absorb the stain in various degrees, never blending in to the images as perfectly as expected. The bodies are points of resistance, which more or less actively interfere in the smoothness of the image and its reception. Returning to the red shirt of the girl, this disruptive element can be seen as something that has not absorbed the stain much at all or has swallowed too much of it. It has turned into *a stain on stain*, a material spot that stands out from the back ground and breaks the unity of its surface, as excess. This is emphasized by the shift to Vera's screen – the girl's presence as a disruptive *stain* has been replaced by an evenly spread stain, red colouring, which fits her harmoniously in with the space she occupies. Just like her father inhabits a blue space, which reflects both his shirt and sorrow, and maybe also his challenged masculinity.[6]

The red shirt is not just a piece of clothing or a bright *stain*, but a *sign* inscribed on the girl's body that positions her embodied being simultaneously as central to and transgressive of the fictional realm of the narrative. The shirt veils the girl as a mask giving her form and presence. It simultaneously lifts her from the inhabited space and makes her the point of focus within it. Maybe the opening image with the grinning mask is not just accidental. Like the mask, the red shirt could be seen as

disruptive, out of place, because it has no depth to refer to. The mask is plain surface without the expected (material) depth, which as its opposite places the surface in the order of signification and representation. As an unmarked the girl does not fill the place of depth – so the shirt becomes a *stain* marking the point of excess, the site of difference that the embodied subject of the girl is. In the same way than abject matter without the controlling element of surface, the mask without material depth disrupts the binary oppositions of inside & outside, mind & matter, time & space.

With(in) the videos

The video works by Ahtila are simultaneously so fragmented and multilayered that my reading and rewriting of them is marked by an obvious distance, an interval inherent to the workings of memory. But this distance is not a viewer's objectified distance, but a spatio-temporal gap that is not an opposite of proximity. As a viewer I cannot simply read the image and understand or absorb its many meanings, as if it was a clearly structured sign system. I take parts of it with me and in my memory they keep unfolding. Remembering doesn't reproduce but transforms as Silverman (1996, p.189-90) has argued - through recollection new connections are formed, highlighting the inevitable shifts that happen in every encounter. My encounter with the girl in the red shirt has become a neverending process, where I am more and more enmeshed with the work.

The red shirt works like a little supposedly insignificant detail that according to Deleuze & Guattari (1988, p.292) triggers becoming. In my first experience of *Today* I took the viewer's assigned place as the fourth wall of the installation. This caused a momentary closure of the cube, but at the same time dynamized the space as I became the surface or the body where the gaze and the words of the characters were directed to. Present, future and past of the fictional realm blurred together in my presence as a stranger, an outsider. As an outsider I was drawn to the girl and her openness. I brought in an unexpected dimension, which triggered new connections to appear within and with the work. It may be this bridge between the viewer and the girl that makes creation possible. Does the girl need the viewer to be able to function as the radical unmarked and the dynamic present? The viewer's presence and openness may be needed to mobilize the virtual in the work. I have to take a creative role alongside the girl.

A few months ago I gave a paper titled Red Shirt. I was wearing a bright red shirt without realizing the obvious connection until someone mentioned it afterwards. The blindness of my position as an interpreter, viewer and reader of the work had fooled me. The girl was present there in my presentation as a *stain*, drawing my embodied subject into my writing. Maybe I am becoming the girl, or my becoming is the girl. Like the women and the girls become one as the girls in *If 6 Was 9* speak the words and memories of the women. This is creation of the girl, actualization of virtualities, making space for the excess that the girl is.

Endnotes

[1] According to Olkowski's reading of Henri Bergson reality is created as unforeseen and absolutely new and therefore we can't speak of actualization of possibilities, but only of the actualization through differentiation of the virtual, which is "the real, but unactualized multiplicity". Possibilities are already defined and thus limited in the actual/real and this closed system cannot comprehend creation nor difference. Olkowski 1999, p. 82.

[2] According to Olkowski the linear representation of time is intimately linked with representation of space, as if the moments were separable material entities. Everything in this model can be represented as quantitative homogeneous space, which is unable to account for movement and change. Olkowski 1999, p. 127-8.

[3] Elizabeth Grosz has argued for this rethinking: "Duration is a mode of infecting self-differentiation: difference is internal to its function, its modes of elaboration and production, and is also its ramifying effect on those objects located "within" its milieu. This means that not only must concepts of time… be opened

up to their modes of differentiation, but also that our very concepts of objects, matter, being – well beyond the concept of life itself – need to be open to the differentiations that constitute and continually transform it." Grosz 1999, p. 28.

[4] In their critique of the organic and binary model Deleuze and Guattari offer as an alternative the notion of Body without Organs (BwO), a radical mode of understanding the body and its capacity of becoming. But can we leap directly to BwO or to the abstract notion of becoming without ignoring crucial aspects of difference rooted in the unthought materiality of the body, its dynamic specificity that is not essential?

[5] Kaja Silverman refers to Lacan's notion of the screen, or a cultural image repertoire, an effect of the gaze, which always mediates the encounter between a viewing subject and an image/object. She prefers his notion of the stain, which can better account for the complicated material relation between the body and its representation. Silverman 1996, 201.

[6] Meshing of subjectivity and space – is this a subject formation gone wrong or a process of space and embodied subject affecting each other? Can the colour be thought of as material excess connecting the two or an enforced and restricting cultural stain? I have approached these questions using the notion of *mimicry* by Roger Caillois, as discussed by Grosz (1994 & 1995) and Silverman (1996). Is the mimicry of Vera and father creative or passive and unintentional? Is unintentional necessarily passive and noncreative – or can active and passive be thought differently in this context?

Literature

Conley, V. A., 2000. Becoming-Woman Now, In: I. Buchanan & C. Colebrook, eds. *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Edinburg: Edinburgh University.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F., 1988. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism & Schizophrenia*. London: The Athlone Press.

Grosz, E., 1994. *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Grosz, E., 1995. *Space, Time and Perversion. Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York & London: Routledge.

Grosz, E., 1999. Becoming…an Introduction & Thinking the New: of Futures yet Unthought: In *Becomings. Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1-28.

Grosz, E., 2000. Deleuze's Bergson: Duration. The Virtual and a Politics of the Future: In I. Buchanan & C. Colebrook, eds. *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Edinburg: Edinburgh University, 214-234.

Irigaray, L., 1985a. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Irigaray, L., 1985b. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Irigaray, L., 1993. *je, tu, nous. Toward a Culture of Difference*. New York & London: Routledge.

Irigaray, L., 1996. *Sukupuolieron Etiikka*. Translated by Pia Sivenius. Tampere, Finland: Gaudeamus.

Olkowski, D., 1999. *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Silverman, K., 1996. *The Threshold of the Visible World*. New York & London: Routledge.

Affectivity, Becoming, and the Cinematic Event: Gilles Deleuze and the Futures of Feminist Film Theory[1]

Amy Herzog, (University of Rochester; USA)

amhz@mail.rochester.edu

Gilles Deleuze's two volumes on film, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2:The Time-Image* pose a radical challenge to contemporary practices of film theory. Rather than figuring film as a text to be interpreted or a fixed object to be dissected, Deleuze suggests that film is best understood in terms of those elements unique to the medium: movement and temporality. Central to his approach are affects, percepts, and concepts: a fluid play of intensities, sensations and thought that disintegrates the distinction between "subject" and "object." Rather than "reading" a film, Deleuze would map the forces that transect and work to comprise each dynamic and unique cinematic event.

The *Cinema* books suggest a means of looking at film that explodes static views of the work that the work of art does. Rather than "representing" something, film, for Deleuze, has the potential to create its own movements and temporalities. These movements, while related to formal elements of rhythm and duration within the film itself, cannot be reduced to specific techniques or concrete images. Similarly, the temporality that Deleuze locates within the cinema cannot be pinned to a specific type of shot, nor a particular moment in the shooting, editing, projection, or reception of a film. By refusing to thus concretize his theory, Deleuze completely sidesteps psychoanalytic and semiological film theories that would locate the "meaning" of film beneath the surface level of signs. Instead, movement and time penetrate and resonate throughout the film-event as a whole, functioning not as signifiers, but as the progenitors of thought.

What impact might Deleuze's work have upon feminist approaches to screen-based work? The field of feminist film theory contains a diverse set of practices, practices that are often at odds with one another, but that share a concern with the way in which issues of gender and sexuality are integrally bound up in the images we see on the screen. At the risk of making a gross generalization, one could argue that the majority of this work to date has dealt with film and media through a combination of two methods: by examining *representations*—textual interrogations of the way in which femininity is depicted, embodied, and configured on screen—and through a focus on *reception*—looking at the myriad ways in which audiences utilize these images, and the range of meanings they create from them. Yet if we are to take Deleuze's approach to film seriously, we could no longer consider the "text" and the "subject" to be divisible entities; questions of representation and reception would no longer make sense. How might Deleuze's proposals be utilized by feminist media scholars? How does one engage with popular audio-visual culture as a feminist without resorting to critiques of representations? Is such a move even desirable or productive? Can one take up the Deleuzian concept of becoming without losing one's political and social goals into a sea of abstraction, or, conversely, without making coarse and simplistic analogies between systems of movement and changeability and a feminine "essence"?

While these are questions I could hardly hope to answer in the context of this paper, I would like to suggest some ways in which Deleuzian theory might in fact be mobilized toward certain feminist agendas. These would be mainly in the service of a feminist philosophy, one that looks at the arts in terms of their affective potential, the new modes of looking and thinking they might engender in the larger services of *life*. This is not to underestimate the importance of other feminist methodologies,

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

approaches that will necessarily evolve along different trajectories. Nor is it to argue that Deleuzianism should be embraced unquestioningly. Deleuze's project is not a feminist project, and several of his key concepts (namely the body without organs and becoming-woman) remain fraught with difficulties for many feminists.[2] Rather than "recuperating" Deleuze, however, I will argue here that feminists can make an intercession in his work, teasing out the potentials contained within his focus on futurity and becoming in new, undetermined directions. Looking specifically at the questions provoked by film and other audiovisual media, Deleuze's use of Bergson provides a particularly salient feminist tool.[3]

It may be useful here for me to summarize some of Deleuze's writings on film and his use of Bergson, however, before elaborating on their potential productivity:

The *Cinema* books map a rift in filmmaking that can be roughly situated at the end of World War II. This split, however, cannot be reduced to a historical shift, but exists instead in differing configurations of movement and time. The movement-image, according to Deleuze, is exemplified by classical Hollywood cinema. Time proceeds only as dictated by action (the action of narrative, of cause and effect, of rationality). Temporality in the movement-image, for Deleuze, is governed by the "sensory-motor schema." All movements are determined by linear causality, and the characters are bent toward actions that respond to the situations of the present. Even when temporal continuity is momentarily disrupted (e.g. in a flashback), these moments are reintegrated into the prescribed evolution of past, present, and future. The movement-image is structured, not only by narrative, but by rationality: closed framings, reasonable progressions, and continuous juxtapositions.

The time-image, however, breaks itself from sensory-motor links. The emphasis shifts from the logical progression of images to the experience of the image-in-itself. What we find here are pure optical and sound situations (opsigns and sonsigns), unfettered by narrative progression, and empty, disconnected any-space-whatevers. This move from "acting" to "perceiving" carries over to the characters in the film, who cease to be "agents" and become, instead, "seers." Though Deleuze is hesitant to identify any single film that embodies the time-image, moments in films by Pasolini, Ozu, and Godard gesture toward that ideal: moments of rupture, hesitation, irrational cutting, or prolonged duration. Movement that is aberrant (i.e. not rational or sensory-motor) can be seen, according to Deleuze, to be caused by time itself. Built through irrational movements and op/sonsigns, the time-image exists thus not as a chronology, but as a series of juxtaposed "presents." What is achieved is exceedingly rare: a direct image of time (Deleuze, *Time-Image* 41, 72).

The distinction that Deleuze draws between the sensory-motor schema and that of the time image emerges from Bergson's discussion of the faculties of perception and the actualization of images into action. In order to act upon its environment, a body must isolate from the undifferentiated flow it perceives only those images that interest it in particular, upon which it can choose to act. The complex correlations between objects and images are thus reduced to causal (and spatial) links. Deleuze finds that the associations made between elements in the movement-image progress along a similar trajectory. But to understand the ways in which the time-image breaks from this modality, we must look more closely at Bergson's theory of perception.

In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson proposes a definition of matter:

> Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of "images." And by "image" we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist call a *thing*-- an existence placed halfway between the "thing" and the "representation" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 9).

For Bergson, the brain does not produce a representation of what it perceives. Perception is the mutual influence of images upon one another, of which the brain is only another image—it does not "produce" anything, but filters impulses into actions or non-actions. The implications for film are two-fold. By addressing the perceiving subject as one image among the world of images, Bergson steps outside models that locate perception and memory within the mind of the subject. I would further suggest, following Deleuze, that Bergson's theory of matter allows us to see film not as a fixed representation, a concrete image of a "real" object, but as an image in its own right, with its own duration and axes of movement. What we might call the film-image thus occurs in the gap between subject and object, through the collision of affective images.

Deleuze's formulation of the film-image as a mobile assemblage (sometimes a frame, sometimes a shot, a sound, or the film as a whole) lends itself to this reading. It refuses to reduce the physical image on the screen to a mere reproduction of an assumed "real" object it represents. Such a formulation similarly reevaluates the relationship between the concrete optical and sonic images that comprise the film. Rather than conceiving of each component as a "building block," it allows for the shifting conglomerations of elements which are themselves dynamic and mobile. A film cannot be distilled to a structure that originates from outside itself. Instead, each film-image is contingent, particular, and evolving.

The distinction between the time- and movement-images becomes more clear in this context. Rather than a question of either content or form, the difference lies in their affective power, whether they are bent toward action, in the case of the movement image, or if they open into different temporal modalities. It is in this second case that the time-image falls, and it is here that Deleuze locates the creative potential of film. This potential does not exist solely within the physical image itself, however, but is contained as well in the modes of perception and thinking that it triggers. Much like the time-image, the mental faculty most attuned to the openness of time, according to Bergson, is that of intuition.

All matter, for Bergson, exists as images defined by the range of their possible actions (real or virtual) upon other images. The human subject is an image/object like any other, with the distinction that, as a living being, it has both the potential to generate its own actions and to function as a perceptive center, organizing itself in relation to other images. While part of this organization involves the mechanisms of the intellect, which is concerned only with actions, there is a component that is inclined instead toward the temporal. Within each "living center" exists a delay between the moment of perception and the moment of action. The greater this delay or "zone of indeterminacy" becomes, the greater access the subject will have to the alternative mechanisms of intuition.

Bergson's intuition, unlike the popular usage of the term, involves a precise methodology. Rather than immobilizing and distilling from matter that which can be acted upon, intuition delves simultaneously inward to the depths of the self and outward, beyond the self, to grasp objects in their entirety, as they exist in duration. Duration here refers not to "time," which for Bergson is a concept already fractured into spatial components (minutes, seconds, years, and so on). Instead, each image contains its own unique duration, its own capacity for change. Intuition is a mode of unmediated access to the play of forces that comprise existence. Unlike the intellect, which is oriented toward the interest that a being has in the objects it can act upon, intuition is driven by the inward-motion of instinct, a form of sympathy "that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution* 176).

The potential affective force of film lies in its ability to key into durations that would defy the limitations of the intellect, working not toward action, but toward the zone of indeterminacy which lies between perception and action. Yet the cinematic experience, for Deleuze, is not a pure state of reflection, nor is it one that could be

deemed "intuitive." One cannot "think inside" film; film must be conceived of as a problem that arises from outside. Meaning, as such, cannot be conceptualized as signification, nor as something garnered through a direct synthesis or sympathetic penetration of the object. Deleuze posits instead a theory of expression, filmic images that are temporal and dynamic. It is the image that is encountered directly, presenting a complex "problem," a provocation to thought.

It is this provocation that I see as the true potential of film. The act of creation, for Bergson, is a solution to a challenge from the outside, from life. The question of cinema is not a question of representing or perceiving movement, but of thinking through movement, of creating new movements and new images of thought. They can only be achieved through an *active*, *productive* mode of perception, one that *reads* and intuits rather than merely distilling for its immediate usefulness. As Dorothea Olkowski writes, "when perception is attentive, every perception becomes an act of creation in which the perception opens as many circuits as there are memory images attracted by this new perception, making of every perception a qualitative multiplicity"(Olkowski, *Ruin of Rep.* 114). The act of creation occurs with the introduction of the new, requiring not a new analysis of art, but rethinking the practice of "the art of living" (Bergson, *The Creative Mind* 106).

"Style in philosophy," Deleuze writes, "strains toward three different poles: concepts, or new ways of thinking; percepts, or new ways of seeing and hearing; and affects, or new ways of feeling. They're the philosophical trinity, philosophy as opera: you need all three to *get things moving*"(Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 164-165). Cinema contains the potential to transect all three poles. The overlappings of each, and the movements between them, offer incredible promise for feminist film theories. Rather than enacting a split between mind and body, the embodied act of perception becomes a critical component in the act of thinking. The arts play a fundamental role in this process, posing the problems from which the new might emerge.

The impetus to *get things moving* thus lies not only with the creator of the work, but with the perceiver, the theorist, the image itself: a limitless list of entities and energies. Though Deleuze does not present the process in these terms, I think such an understanding opens up new paths for feminist work on audiovisual culture, seeing the work not as an object for critique, but as a evocation always in the interests of *living*. Rather than distinct entities, texts, or subjects, the film-event is an *encounter*, transected by any number of shifting forces. Hardly an exercise in abstraction, this Deleuzian shift places a critical emphasis upon mobilization and becoming, a realignment that allows for the multiple and shifting demands of various feminist agendas.

The politics of becoming may not be the most effective or direct means of addressing the complexities of very real social crises. Yet even from within Deleuzian thought, one can insist, and should insist, that women's differences *do* make a difference, that their biological, social, and historical existences give rise to different modalities—and in fact that these modalities may have connections with other modalities that have been consistently devalued in patriarchal culture. A feminist engagement with becoming in audiovisual culture might focus its energies upon those modalities, systems, and processes that have been perpetually devalued, silenced, and hidden. More broadly, however, such an engagement might give rise to *new* modalities, new ways of creating images, new ways of thinking *feministly*. "Feminism," according to Elizabeth Grosz:

> "isn't the struggle to liberate women, even though it has tended to conceive of itself in these terms…. [I]t is the struggle to render more mobile, fluid and transformable the means by which the female subject is produced and represented. It is the struggle to produce a future in which forces align in ways fundamentally different from the past and present. This struggle is not a struggle by subjects to be recognized and valued, to be and to be seen to be what they

> are, but a struggle to mobilize and transform the position of women, the alignment of forces that constitute that "identity" and "position" (Grosz, "Forces" 16).

There has been a wealth of new feminist work on Deleuze and audiovisual culture, as is evidenced by this conference. Some of the most convincing intercessions have involved minor- and experimental media, works that lack widespread distribution and receive little critical attention. Deleuzian concepts have proved invaluable in demonstrating the radical affectivity of these works, and moreover, the political capacity of the time-image. I would like to offer that Deleuze may provide an equally valuable set of tools for those working on "classical," mainstream, and commercial works. As Verena Conley has noted, "In order to actualise becomings one has to have a vision or see the image in the cliché"(Conley 28). Looking even at the most hackneyed, clichéd films, the attentive, inventive thinker might see within their stutterings and pauses waves of affect that move against the prevailing current. This affectivity might take an infinite number of forms: a strain of music that overwhelms the narrative flow, a glance between characters that gestures toward a whole world of unactualized becomings. It might even be mapped through the work's mode of presentation, the life which it takes on in the popular imagination, the "conceptual personae" characters, films, or entire bodies of work give birth to, beyond the will or control of their creators. In these interstices, whatever their manifestation, erupt moments of the irrational, the monstrous, bursts of sheer joy that open into new images "out of time," images that continually falsify and recreate.

Surely these moments are rare; even more rare are the instances when the radical potentials an image contains become actualized. But the question is not whether a film is "successful" or not, but rather whether it gives rise to new images of thought, new acts of creation. The point is not for film to make us think, but for us, via the affect, the percept, to *think filmicly*. This is not an apolitical or ahistorical practice. It demands a rigorous rejection of binaristic thinking, stratification, and linearity. It can only arise from the specificity of the singular, situated event. It is a modality of incredible use to feminists, offering the potential for positivity, production, and becomings that are surely other than those imagined by Deleuze and Guattari.

Feminism itself has never been a body of knowledge, but rather a mode of critique, a process of thinking. A system continually in flux, feminism is contingent, arising out of—or perhaps entering into—its social and historical conditions. Deleuze's writings may be one of the more procreative challenges that feminism can similarly mediate. Feminist work on the arts that utilizes the tools provided by Deleuze would necessarily need to occupy this work, infect it, create from it new and unpredetermined futures. Feminism will surely by transmogrified by such an intercession, yet Deleuzianism shall be equally, mutually defamiliarized. This is perhaps the leap we must make to begin ""existing not as a subject but as a work of art" (Deleuze, *Negotiations* 95).

Endnotes

[1] Portions of this essay appeared in an earlier publication, "Images of Thought and Acts of Creation: Deleuze, Bergson, and the Question of Cinema," *In[ ]Visible Culture: An Electronic Journal For Visual Studies* (Fall 2000) http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue3/issue3.htm

2 See Jardine and Irigaray, for example.

3 I am indebted in this approach to Elizabeth Grosz's essay "Deleuze's Bergson: Duration, the Virtual and a Politics of the Future."

Literature

Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Trans. Arthur Mitchell. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998.

- - -. *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. Mabelle L. Andison. New York: Citadel Press, 1992.

- - -. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1991.

Conley, Verena Andermatt. "Becoming-Woman Now." *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 18-37.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

- - -. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. Trans. Martin Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Grosz, Elizabeth. "Deleuze's Bergson: Duration, the Virtual and a Politics of the Future." *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. 214-234.

- - -. "Forces." Delivered at the "Pleasure and Power in a Gendered Perspective" Conference at Central European University, Budapest. May 23-6, 1999

- - -. "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics." *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski. New York: Routledge, 1994. 187-210.

Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Jardine, Alice A. *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Olkowski, Dorothea. "Flows of Desire and the Body-Becoming." *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*. Ed. Elizabeth Grosz. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. 98-116.

- - -. *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* . Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Inventing "African Solutions"

HIV Prevention and Medical Media

Katarina Jungar, Åbo Akademi University and
Elina Oinas, University of Turku

kjungar@abo.fi,eoinas@abo.fi

Introduction

Ever since the global panic around HIV/AIDS started, Africa has been represented in extremely catastrophic terms—the lost continent, as Cindy Patton phrases it (Patton, 1997). During the last two years, male circumcision has become vividly discussed as a new possible strategy for HIV prevention in Africa. This paper focuses on this discussion, mainly in the medical media, but also to some extent, in the popular news media. We wish to demonstrate that the contemporary debate on male circumcision bases its questions and research interests on mythological understanding of HIV/AIDS as something specific for Africa, and how these assumptions and questions are based on and reproduce colonial imagination of 'African sexuality'.

The background for this study is an interest in the concerns raised by women's activism and HIV activism in Southern Africa. We wish to explore how the debate on male circumcision relates to the concerns of activists who point at the urgency of protecting women from HIV, and suggest ways of changing sexual power relations in order to do this. We wish to demonstrate that the male circumcision debate not only completely ignores women and girls but also maintains a (hetero) sexual politics of male power. As a version of heterosexual power is maintained, also an idea of HIV/AIDS as something specific for Africa, 'African Aids' (c.f. Patton 1997) is reproduced.

We are working from selected articles in medical journals. Medical media here means primarily journals like the *Lancet* and *British Medical Journal* that popularize and debate research findings and health care policy, but also journals of stricter academic style reporting research and findings. We deliberately blur the difference between media texts and scientific texts, as we argue that the medical journals are no less "objective" than other media in the traditional sense. Medicine, as no other human enterprise, cannot represent a level of knowledge that can raise itself above "culture" and thus address the HIV epidemic objectively. In this analysis of medical media the fact that medicine is just another social institution and an integral part of contemporary media society, is not pointed at as a problem. A problem and indeed a very lethal problem for women that will be identified in this article are the sexism and constructions of "Africa" inherent in medical accounts of HIV/AIDS.

Inventing 'African AIDS'

According to Paula Trechler (1997) AIDS should be viewed as constructed through language--in particular through the discourses of medicine and science. This construction according to her is "true" or "real" only in certain specific ways – for example, insofar as it guides research or facilitates clinical control over the illness. The name AIDS in part constructs the disease and makes it comprehensible (Susan Sontag 1991). Treichler (1997) argues that it is not possible to look behind language to determinate what AIDS "really" is, rather, the site where such conclusions and fixing occur is to be explored. She states that the social dimensions of AIDS epidemic are marginalized in the biomedical discourse. In this article, it will be shown how the social construction of AIDS is a complicated matter: in a paradoxical argumentation the medical media maintains a representation of HIV/AIDS based on simple biological

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

determinism while, in the very same texts, the constructions of HIV/AIDS are based on stereotypical ideas of Africans and 'African culture'.

Patton (1997, 387) claims that "Western science today is slowly consolidating around a particular construction of 'African AIDS', which elaborates on the colonialist mystifications of the past century". One important part of this construction is the idea that Africa and Africans are already lost to the pandemic. The other widely spread thought is that AIDS in Africa is spreading in a different way than in the west. Patton maintains that the idea of 'African AIDS' is very much connected to constructions of African sexuality, which stem from western colonial imagination of African sexuality as closer to nature and therefore different to the west, but she does not elaborate on what this might mean for women specifically.

According to Patton (1997) in 1988, a new theory, that Africans are afflicted by genital ulcers, which can increase transmission of the virus from women to men, was put forth. "Conference visual AIDS during the genital ulcers era were never complete without pictures of diseased genitals –projected to 6 or 8 feet high to get over the point that the equipment of men and women in Africa is "different"" (Patton 1997, 398). It is around this time that there is, for the first time in medical media, a mentioning that speculates about the connection between male circumcision and HIV transmission (Aaron Fink, 1986).

Now, fifteen years later, medical media is still seeking for a "difference", something essentially African, in order to explain the high infection rates in Africa. The male circumcision debate is a part of this enterprise. According to different review articles and a MEDLINE search conducted by us, male circumcision has been discussed in approximately 40 articles since 1986.

These articles in the *Lancet, British Medical Journal, AIDS, International Journal STD AIDS, Clinical Infectious Diseases, New England Medical Journal and International Journal of Epidemiology*, and to some extent other media following up the medical reporting, constitute the material of this study.

Activists addressing HIV/AIDS

Male circumcision as HIV prevention strategy has recently gained visible media attention, compared to, for example availability of health care, illiteracy, lack of access to condoms, lack of money for prevention programs etc—not to mention gender inequalities and violence against women that is hardly discussed in relation to HIV. In this article we contrast the male circumcision debate with activists that connects HIV/AIDS to questions of historically specific patterns of colonialism, apartheid, capitalism and a global economy with its powerful pharmaceutical corporations.

HIV/AIDS activists, in their HIV prevention work, have to deal with the Western constructions of 'African AIDS' on the one hand, and the realities of HIV/AIDS in women's lives, on the other. One strategy has been to highlight the importance of women's empowerment in fighting HIV/AIDS. Activists in Africa have, like other activists worldwide, emphasized the impossibility in fighting HIV/AIDS without addressing HIV/AIDS in gendered terms. They look for ways of pointing out that women are more vulnerable to become infected both socially and physiologically, and that this should not be disregarded in HIV prevention work, while at the same time bearing in mind that there is no reason for victimizing women or viewing Africa as something inherently "different".

Local grass-root activism and especially women's activism has grown to powerful political movements in Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing HIV/AIDS alongside other social and political issues. Of importance in most movements is to situate HIV/AIDS into a wider social context. In South Africa, for example, where one of the authors (Jungar) conducted fieldwork with women's organizations during 2001, grass-root organizations involved with women's empowerment and HIV prevention represent a wide scale of social activism and very differing awareness of gendered

power relations in the society. Also international NGOs, different government organizations, the UN and HIV/AIDS researchers have shown that women, especially young women are becoming infected in greater numbers than men (UNAIDS/ 99.2, UNAIDS/ 99.16E). Much of this "African women are dying"-discourse can be explained in terms of western constructions of 'African AIDS'; AIDS in Africa as something radically different, with different transmission patterns having to do with dramatic differences in Western sexual practices and mystified 'African sexuality'.

Women who are working in organizations dealing with empowerment of women, men's sexualized violence and issues around women's health emphasize the connections between HIV, gender and (hetero) sexuality. For example the Musasa Project in Zimbabwe highlights the difficulties most women face in negotiating safe sex in heterosexual relationships due to gendered assumptions of sexuality. They are concerned with the connections between violence against women and HIV: "There is a strong link between women's low position in society, male violence against women, and the spread of HIV/AIDS" (PACSA factsheet, 1999). The question of women's lack of voice and power as sexual subjects has also been highlighted as the major obstacle hampering safe sex practices among young European women (e.g. Janet Holland et al. 1994). Feminist research and the feminist movements in the West have, however, been peculiarly silent about HIV/AIDS, as a key feminist issue.

The global fight for the right to drugs for people living with HIV is an important part of the empowerment of women. The South African *Treatment Action Campaign*, among other HIV-activism, is raising the issue around HIV from the personal to the political level of global resistance. Access to health care and medical treatment is one important part of this battle, but the empowerment that this means for women, is also having an effect on the challenge these women pose towards other forms of inequalities. For example those mother to child transmission projects that focus on women's own initiatives and informed choices have created a political consciousness among women about their health rights, and ultimately a political consciousness about global politics. These women are raising questions around women's health and therefore situating these questions into a larger context of economical exploitation and global capitalism.

Male circumcision—scientific uncertainty

To the background of what Patton calls constructions of 'African AIDS' and the knowledge continuously produced among HIV-activist we want to explore the debate around male circumcision as a means of fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa.

The pro-circumcision texts are mostly reviews of other medical articles, and their argument is that on the basis of medical research it seems that the removal of the foreskin reduces a man's susceptibility to HIV infection (Robert Szabo & Roger Short 2000a; Daniel T. Halperin & Robert T. Bailey 1999; Weiss, Helen A., Maria A Quigley and Richard J Hayes, 2000).[1] For example, Szabo & Short (2000a, 1592) popularize selected research findings and conclude with a strong pro-circumcision statement: "The majority of men who are HIV positive have been infected through their penis. There is conclusive epidemiological evidence to show that uncircumcised men are at much greater risk of becoming infected with HIV than circumcised men". Weiss and colleagues (2000) conducted a "meta-analysis" of previous research concerning the connections between male circumcision and HIV infection rates. This article conclude that "the data from observational studies provide compelling evidence of substantial protective effect of male circumcision against HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in populations at high risk of HIV/STD" (Weiss, Quigley and Hayes, 2000: 2369).

These texts point out that there are problems--for example that there is no evidence that male circumcision performed on adult men has any positive impact--but their conclusion is clear: *lack of* male circumcision is a health risk in Africa and

male circumcision should be promoted as a means of HIV prevention:

> "The hour has passed for the international health community to recognize the compelling evidence that show a significant association between lack of male circumcision and HIV infection. It is time to take following actions: to provide communities with accurate, balanced information so that individuals can make informed choices; to provide the training and resources needed to offer safe, voluntary male circumcision in which pain is kept to minimum; and to begin investigations of the feasibility of acceptable male circumcision interventions in communities with large HIV and STD seroprevalence where circumcision has traditionally been practiced" (Halperin & Bailey 1999, 1814-1815).

Voices against the practice of male circumcision are raised in the journals, too (e.g. Van Howe 1999). In fact, strong opposition follows any article presenting male circumcision as a HIV/AIDS prevention strategy. The Szabo and Short (2000a) article mentioned above invoked more than 50 replies to *British Medical Journal*. These replies argued, for example, that the review did not hold scientific standards, present enough evidence, take into account the risks of complications involved in circumcision, etc. Van Howe's (1999) meta-analysis concludes that medical research does not show conclusive evidence on the protective effect of male circumcision.

Researchers who in their empirical studies have most data on circumcision and HIV infection rates are more cautious in promoting male circumcision as a preventive measure. It is more frequently popularizing media texts that highlight and promote male circumcision as a preventive measure. In the following it seems necessary to deal with the issue of scientific evidence for male circumcision promotion first, in order to show that what is discussed here is above all scientific uncertainty on whether male circumcision can even be seen as a solution for male infection. A major concern of this article, the evident consequences of male circumcision promotion when examined from a gender perspective, will be the second part of the article.

Biological reductionism

What is evident is that the male circumcision research has been conducted on a macro level of large populations of men, often involving whole societies. Different infection rates in different countries are explained by the rate of male circumcision in different areas (Halperin & Bailey 1999).

When the medical texts promoting male circumcision are contrasted to each other the inconsistencies and the tendency of biological reductionism are evident. In the often cited study by Stephen Moses, Janet E Bradley, Nico JD Nagelkerke, Allan R Ronald, JO Ndinya-Achola, and Francis Plummer (1990) infection rates in populations are explained in terms of male circumcision, but other factors for such as, access to health care, economy, illiteracy, gender inequalities, money spent on prevention programs and availability of condoms that could be seen to influence the different infection rates in different countries are unaccounted for. Moses et al. (1990) produce a map of Africa 'demonstrating' a connection between HIV infection rates and male circumcision. The social, cultural, economic, religious, and other differences within Africa are disregarded—and only the foreskin of the black penis prevails as a way to explain difference.

Not only diversity within Africa is overseen, but different countries are also seen to have male populations that are either circumcised or not. "There are only a few countries in Africa in which there are a significant mixture of societies which practice and do not practice circumcision" (Moses et al. 1990: 693). This statement becomes interesting if we study different statements about South Africa. According to Moses et al. (1990) most societies in South Africa practice circumcision. Ten years

later, South Africa has high infection rates, and now South Africa is seen as a partly non-circumcision area (Weiss, Quigley & Hayes, 2000). The authors, again on a sweeping journey over Africa, looking for connection between infection rates and male circumcision, come to the same conclusion as the earlier article: there is a connection between male-circumcision and low infection rates, even if their data contradict each other. The former study is reviewed in the later one, and both are seen to prove that male circumcision is a way to prevent HIV-infection in Africa.

During the 1990s the research on male circumcision takes regional and cultural differences in African societies more seriously, and detailed studies within local communities are conducted (e.g. Marc Urassa, James Todd, J Ties Boerma, Richard Hayes & Raphael Isingo 1997; Thomas C. Quinn, Maria Wawer, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Chuanjun Li, Fred Wabwire-Mangen, Mary O. Meehan, Thomas Lutalo & Ronald H. Grey 2000; Ronald H. Gray, Noah Kiwanuka, Tomas C. Quinn, Nelson K. Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Fred Wabwire Mangen, Tom Lutalo, Fred Nalugoda, Robert Kelly, Mary Meehan, Michael Z. Chen, Chuanjun Li & Maria J Wawer, 2000; RTD Oliver, Josephine Oliver & Ron C. Ballard 2000). The Rakai study in urban Uganda (Quinn et al., 2000; Gray et al., 2000) is the only one where a clear pattern is found, and this study is always put forth as evidence in the review articles that promote male circumcision (Szabo & Short 2000: 1592, Denise Ford 2000: 9). The Rakai findings, however, are based on a very small number of non-infected men: 50 circumcised men had not become infected even though they were exposed to the virus. Also the ethical aspects of this study have been questioned and debated in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (342 (13), 343 (5)), where even the editor herself stated that this study has serious problems in design (Marcia Angell, 2000). The project was defended as an ethically better study than most other medical trials in a developing countries (Grey et al., 2000) but it is clear that such a study would never pass ethical standards to be conducted in the West. The ethical misgivings of medical trials on HIV are a serious matter, but for our analysis another aspect of the debate after the publication of the article is even more evident. The Rakai researchers themselves do not, in fact, promote male circumcision in their conclusions (Quinn et al. 2000: 928). One of the circumcision promoters, Robert C. Bailey (2000: 364), notices this too, and maintains in a letter to *NEJM* that they should have recommended circumcision. The Rakai group, in their answer, comment that the connection between male circumcision and HIV infection is scientifically unclear despite the striking numbers of 0 infections among the 50 circumcised men. They state that the issue is too complicated—complicated for example by social factors--for any recommendations. Still, this study is continuously used as a basis of male circumcision promotion.

Another example of uncertainty interpreted into pro-circumcision arguments is a Tanzanian study that did *not* find a clear correlation between circumcision rates and infection rates, but still concludes that male circumcision may offer a slight HIV preventive effect for some groups of men (Urassa et al., 1997).

The only certain result our examination of the pro-circumcision texts found is the uncertainty regarding scientific proof of whether male circumcision is related to HIV infection rates among men. In studies where a weak connection is found it is still unclear at which age the procedure should be conducted and how much of the foreskin must be removed. Most studies conclude with a statement that more research is needed. "Randomized trials are needed to determine the utility of circumcision as an HIV preventive measure" (Gray et al., 2000: 2380).

No texts promise anything close to a total protection for men. The studies are conducted on the level of populations, and social aspects, such as differences in behavior between different social groups--not to mention monitoring for individual behavior such as actual sexual practices--cannot be sufficiently accounted for. Based on populations it should be clear that these studies do not offer evidence on the level of the individual, even if they had found a connection between male circumcision and

male infection—which they did not. Still, the highly regarded medical journals publish texts where male circumcision is strongly promoted. The article titles describe the political agenda: "How does male circumcision protect against HIV infection?" (Szabo & Short, 2000a: 1592)—the question is how, not whether. Harper and Bailey article phrase the problem as a *lack of* circumcision as if circumcision would be a natural and unproblematic procedure.

Also when skepticism or reluctance is expressed, the common conclusion is that more research should be conducted. Our question is: why? Also the promoters conclude that people still would need other prevention measures, like condoms. One answer is that the "the dark continent"-discourse is at work here: it can only be on a continent that is seen as already lost, where such a preventive measure at all can make any sense. It did not make any sense, however, if the realities of HIV infection in Africa are in focus, but they are not. The image of "Africa is different" makes sense as it protects Western white heterosexuality.

Africa is lost, anyway

In all the articles male circumcision is being promoted only to non-western countries. The first question we need to ask is why male circumcision is researched and promoted as a method to prevent HIV transmission in the South, and especially in countries with high infection rates, but not in Europe or the United States. How can medical researchers argue that male circumcision can offer some immediate protection against the spread of the disease but not promote circumcision in the West? Even the most enthusiastic pro-circumcision researchers keep the "developed" world out of the discussion:

"Other than recommending that male circumcision should be seriously considered as an additional means of preventing HIV in all countries with a high prevalence of infection, we have avoided all discussion about the relative advantages and disadvantages of neonatal male circumcision as a routine procedure in developed countries, where the prevalence of HIV infection is low. We do not intent to enter that debate, where objectivity is hard to find" (Szabo & Short, 2000b: 1469).

Nowhere in the articles is the construction of this clear cut "difference" between the developed countries and Africa explored or explained however strongly it is assumed to exist. It seems clear that this unexplained "difference" is the bottom line of the whole argumentation for male circumcision. HIV/AIDS in Africa is something special, an issue different from HIV/AIDS in the West. Imagery of a Dark Continent on the brink of disaster, as pointed out by Patton (1997: 391) are invoked, for example: "The heterosexual spread of HIV-1 in some regions of sub-Saharan Africa has been *explosive*" (Tyndall et al.1996: 449). Africa is constructed as a lost continent where people are dying anyway, which is why different preventive measures must be implemented and can be afforded. Africa being the Dark Continent the Africans cannot afford "opinions", as the West can in the quote above.

The argument of Africa as 'different' is intertwined with Africans as different. The underlying assumption is that promotion of use of condoms and changes in sexual behavior—that elsewhere are seen as the primary mode of HIV protection—do not solve the problem of 'African AIDS'. Male circumcision promoters do not question the condoms as the primary measure of HIV/AIDS prevention, but they argue that condoms in Africa do not suffice. Condoms cannot be enough in Africa because Africans will not use condoms, or cannot use them properly. Access to condoms is not even always accounted for in the texts that seek explanations for regional differences in infection rates.

"Although condoms must remain the first choice for preventing the sexual transmission of HIV, they are often not used consistently or correctly, they may break during use, and there may be strong cultural and aesthetic objections to using them"(Szabo & Short 2000a: 1593).

> "However, in the view of the rapid spread of HIV-1 and the lack of effective prevention strategies currently available, circumcision indeed may offer one of the few effective means of slowing the spread of HIV-1 in some countries" (Tyndall et al., 1996: 23, emphasis ours).

Why would not condoms be a currently available, effective means of prevention of HIV/AIDS in Africa? Our interpretation is that in these texts Africa is represented as hopeless and Africans themselves cannot be trusted to elucidate a change, which is why surgical measures directly on their bodies are most effective. In this discourse the black penis that needs to be altered is an appropriate means of addressing a mystical catastrophe in Africa. In many ways the medical argumentation for male circumcision resembles medical texts on female contraceptives that are implanted under the skin or in the womb, so that they work independently of the patient, despite of cultural and racial inferiority of her/him.

Following Patton's argumentation, it should be no surprise that male circumcision as HIV prevention resonates with Western fantasies about African sexuality and, unlike more mundane prevention campaigns that no doubt take place in Africa, attract the interest of the media in the West. "In Western eyes, Africa's problems can only be solved through civilizing forces—or in the romantic version, through a withdrawal from civilisation and a return to pristine "tribal ways" (Patton 1997: 391). The medical promotion of male circumcision is a graphic illustration of what "tribal ways" can mean. In several texts it is suggested that male circumcision is, anyway, already a part of African culture, at least in many areas. Male circumcision may be a more "natural" method of prevention to Africans than the plastic devise, a condom that is a western technological invention and difficult to use by Africans.

Male circumcision and invisible women

The other aspect of the male circumcision debate we wish to highlight is the way in which women are rendered invisible in the entire debate. Not even the opponents of male circumcision as HIV prevention raise the issue of women becoming infected, too. Instead, women are totally marginalized rendering them to nothing else but sources of infection and objects of male heterosexuality.

Szabo and Short (2000: 1593) quite bluntly state where they put their emphasis—on the penis: "Of the estimated 50 million people infected with HIV worldwide, about half are men, most of whom have become infected through their penises". The Weiss, Quigley and Hayes (2000) review on male circumcision and HIV prevalence restrict itself to female-male transmission in sub-Saharan Africa (Weiss, Quigley and Hayes, 2000), with the explanation that in Sub-Saharan Africa heterosexual transmission is the predominant mode of transmission. Weiss and colleagues (2000) ignore the figures that the primary mode of heterosexual transmission is male to female transmission. The campaigns of women's activists maintain heterosexual transmission should be seen in gendered terms, but the research agenda around male circumcision is focused solely on protecting the man from becoming infected. While making the gender dimension of heterosexual transmission invisible and at the same time focusing on the protection of men, gendered power relations are in fact strengthened.

Szabo and Short (2000a) make it clear in the following statement that they really are addressing safe sex for men, regardless of its possible consequences for women:

> "It may also be time to re-think the definition of "safe sex". Since the penis is the probable site of viral entry, neither infected semen nor vaginal secretions should be allowed to come in contact with the penis, particularly in uncircumcised males." (Szabo & Short, 2000a: 1593).

These authors are promoting male circumcision as HIV/AIDS prevention, but disregard the risks of women being exposed to semen in heterosexual acts. The research reports state that "HIV transmission to the female partner was not significantly reduced if the male was circumcised"(Quinn et al., 2000: 924) or that "the overall effects of circumcision on HIV transmission from infected men to their HIV-negative partners was modest and not statistically significant." (Grey et al. 2000: 2380). In other words, women become equally infected by HIV-positive men regardless of whether they are circumcised or not.

Even if the discourse of biological reductionism was accepted as a starting point for discussion, the issue of women getting infected should be the central one as women, especially young girls, are claimed to be physiologically more vulnerable to HIV infection than men due to the composition of female sexual organs (Nicola Gavey & Kathryn McPhillips, 1997). Especially young women's tissues are more easily penetrable by the virus also in sexual acts by consent, not the mention acts of violence where ruptured tissues are a specific risk factor for the young woman rather than the man (Robin Gorna, 1996).

What these studies do not account for is that if the "news" of men being protected by circumcision spread, HIV transmission to women may increase significantly. If circumcision were seen as a way of prevention it would probably decrease women's possibility to negotiate safe sex as the whole discourse is built upon male power in heterosexual practices. The real risk for women is that the medical "knowledge" of the protective effects of male circumcision lead to neglect of other prevention measures. This worry is not unwarranted since the media seems eager to publish any news on progress in HIV prevention, and scientific news must be simplified in popular media.

On the basis of statements in many pro-circumcision texts, the idea that male circumcision may protect men from HIV has already become known and influences lay people. Szabo and Short state that "it is pleasing to note that organizations are now beginning to give serious consideration to the policy implications arising from the protective effect of male circumcision against HIV infection" (Szabo & Short 2000b: 1467). An article on a Tanzanian study report, that male circumcision has become popular among educated, urban men regardless of their ethnic or religious background (Urassa et al., 1997). Halperin and Bailey present the following:

> "In east and southern Africa, increasing numbers of people are becoming aware of the differences in prevalence of AIDS and STDs between circumcised and uncircumcised men, and they are taking action. Male circumcision is increasingly recommended by traditional healers. Private clinics that specialize in male circumcision, many of which are run by people with minimum or no medical training, are sprouting up in Tanzania, western Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, and many advertise their services as a way to alleviate chronic STD infection and AIDS. Young men and adolescents in east and southern Africa are increasingly electing circumcision—both the medically safe procedure and more precarious non-clinical methods—in regions where traditionally they have avoided the practice." (Halperin & Bailey 2000: 1814)

Media needs 'African news'

The medical news media seems to have become especially attached to the idea that male circumcision may provide something new to write about in the for news media rather eventless battle against AIDS in Africa. The XIIIth International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa gained a lot of media attention and also here male circumcision was presented as a possible new hope for Africa. For example, *Lancet* in June 2001 in an article named "Male circumcision could help protect against HIV infection", maintain that despite problems some conference delegates agreed on the importance of continuing research on male circumcision:

> "…Buvé pointed out, however, that to substantially reduce HIV transmission, men would need to be circumcised before they reached sexual maturity. Furthermore, since there are doubts about the safety of circumcision procedures in parts of Africa, implementation of this policy would also have important practical and ethical implications. Most importantly, the delegates were concerned that safe sex practices might decrease if circumcision became perceived as providing full protection against HIV infection.
> Despite indecision about the appropriate population studies that need to be done, all the speakers agreed that randomised controlled trials examining the effect of male circumcision on HIV transmission are needed." (Stephanie Clark 2000: 225)

In popular media the news are visibly highlighted. This study, however, did not attempt to cover all popular media reporting on the matter, but some examples may be worth mentioning. In the South African main newspaper *Mail & Guardian*'s special issue on the World Aids Day, the "news" were reported in a lengthy article that was also concerned of male circumcision becoming used as a "natural condom", but it ends followingly: "Circumcision is only one of many complex ways of stopping transmission. South Africa, with the fastest growing and largest population of HIV patients in the world, needs them all. And fast." (Ford, 2000: 9).

A BBC TV-documentary was made about the Rakai research. The documentary was reviewed in the British Medical Journal in the following way:

> "[the TV-program] turned out to be a first-rate virological detective story. […]An impressive array of witnesses--doctors, scientists, anthropologists--were lined up to present the evidence, which seemed to suggest overwhelmingly that having a foreskin could make men more vulnerable to HIV. It all hinged on the natural protection offered by keratin, found in much lower quantities in the foreskin, and so making uncircumcised men much more vulnerable to heterosexual transmission of HIV. There was a wonderfully dramatic white coat and Petri dish moment when an American scientist used a live foreskin taken from a just circumcised adult male to test the rate at which HIV invaded the cells. They changed colour in a jiffy, proving they had succumbed to infection. This was television science at its best." (Trevor Jackson, 2000: 1419).

There are examples of success in risk reduction programs in several African countries (Patton, 1997; Craig W. Waldo and Thomas J. Coates, 2000). Women's grass-root movements in Africa are very clear about there already being enough knowledge on ways to prevent and even stop the HIV transmission; educational programs, access to health care and the availability of condoms are among prevention strategies that are known to work effectively. Safer sex with (female) condoms and drug-related programs that empower women can be crucial strategies for women. Such projects, however, are less likely to gain news attention. Even less likely to gain visibility are projects that focus on *not* specifically "African" problems, but feminist political issues like power dynamics in (hetero)sexual encounters.

Discussion

The male circumcision debate seem more interested in 'African sexuality', than in actual change. In our analysis, the media interest in male circumcision research is connected to, first, medicalization, and second, a media fascination by `African news' that feed the Western fantasy about 'African sexuality'. Medicalization has been described as a typical feature of modern Western societies: it is easier to see social problems in terms of medical, preferably clinical, problems than in terms of social power relations (Conrad 2000). In this article, we have, however, wished to turn the

attention to the constructions of 'Africa' and the marginalization of women, in the circumcision debate.

Especially young women are becoming infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS/ 99.2, UNAIDS/99.16E). In the media reports and medical articles on male circumcision the question of what the consequences will be for women is, however, marginal. The writers do not consider how a promotion of male circumcision as HIV/ AIDS prevention may affect infection rates for women. Women's organizations, in contrast, have focused on the social conditions that make women more vulnerable for becoming infected with HIV. When considering social and economical circumstances, gender inequalities and sexism, it becomes quite clear that young women should be the main targets of interest in HIV/AIDS research and media attention.

Women's organizations promote a change in power relations between men and women, and a radical change in how heterosexual relations are perceived. The male circumcision model, on the contrary, reproduces a stereotypical assumption of heterosexual practice where the involved parties are an active male penetrator who will not take an interest in his partner's health and safety, and a passive female. It is here easy to join Waldo's and Coates' (2000) statement about the bias towards individual-level solutions and randomized clinical trials in prevention research: "HIV prevention scientists are not connected to prevention efforts outside their own academic lives. Community-based interventions have been occurring in affected communities since the beginning of the epidemic, but HIV prevention scientists are frequently not involved in them." (Waldo & Coates, 2000: 24-25).

Patton (1999) maintains that in media AIDS is constructed through a deadly set of assumptions about cultural and political difference. She is concerned with the way scientists and policy makers have the power to produce masks of otherness. This article shows that Patton's concern is valid even for recent expert accounts on how to deal with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. In face of the knowledge of how the virus actually is spread in Africa, there are all reasons to be alarmed about the promotion of male circumcision that may actually increase the spread of the virus. The tragic of the medical construction of "African AIDS" is that it hampers the implementations of possibly effective prevention programs. There is already existing experience of programs that have worked in prevention--but they are economical, educational and social rather than surgical.

HIV activists are one of the most important forces for changing deadly discourses around HIV and AIDS, and to provide resistance on a global scale. On the basis of this study contrasting local activism with the heroic stories of an assumed medical breakthrough, it is more than unfortunate that the activists' stories are less often paid attention to in medical research, medical media or popular news media.

Endnotes

[1] Mainly two explanations are given to why uncircumcised men would be more vulnerable to HIV-infection. Firstly the foreskin contains HIV-target cells. During intercourse the foreskin is pulled back and the highly vascularised part of the foreskin, which contain a high density of HIV-target cells is exposed. The other explanation is that the foreskin during intercourse may be more sensitive to trauma, witch could cause tearing and bleeding, which means additional vulnerability to HIV. Finally it is explained that circumcision may reduce the risk of STDs, which could act as co-factors for HIV infection (Weiss, Quigley & Hayes, 2000: Szabo & Short, 2000). References

Literature

Angell, Marcia. 2000. "Investigators´ Responsibility for Human Subjects in Developing Countries." *New England Journal of Medicine* 342 (13): 967-9.

Bailey, Robert B.2000. "A Study in Rural Uganda of heterosexual Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus." *New England Journal of Medicine* 343 (5): 364.

Conrad, Peter. 2000. "Medicalization, genetics, and human problems." Bird, Cloe E., Conrad, Peter, Fremont Allen M. (eds.) *Handbook of Medical Sociology* (5th ed.) Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, N.J.

Clark, Stephanie. 2000. "Male Circumcision Could Help Protect against HIV Infection." *Lancet* 356 (9225): 225.

Fink, Aaron J. 1986. "A Possible Explanation for Heterosexual Male Infection with AIDS." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 315 (18): 1167.

Ford, Denise. 2000 "Circumcision: The Kindest Cut." *Mail and Guardian*, December 1.

Gavey, Nicola and Kathryn McPhillips. 1997. "Women and Heterosexual Transmission of HIV: Risks and Prevention Strategies." *Women and Health* 25 (2): 41-63.

Gorna, Robin.1996**.** *Vamps, Virgins and Victims: How Can Women Fight AIDS?* London: Cassell

Gray, Ronald H., Noah Kiwanuka, Tomas C. Quinn, Nelson K. Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Fred Wabwire Mangen, Tom Lutalo, Fred Nalugoda, Robert Kelly, Mary Meehan, Michael Z. Chen, Chuanjun Li and Maria J Wawer. 2000. "Male Circumcision and HIV Acquisition and Transmission: Cohort Studies in Rakai, Uganda." *AIDS* 14(15): 2371-81.

Halperin, Daniel T. and Robert C. Bailey. 1999. "Male Circumcision and HIV infection: 10 Years and Counting." *Lancet* 354 (9192):1813-15.

Holland, Janet, Ramazanoglu, Caroline, Scott, Sue & Thomson, Rachel. 1994. "Desire, risk and control: The body as a site of contestation." Doyal, Lesley, Nardoo, Jennie & Wilton, Tamsin (eds.) *Aids: Setting a Feminist Agenda*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Jackson, Trevor. 2000. "No News is Bad News." *British Medical Journal* 321: 1419.

Moses, Stephen, Janet E Bradley, Nico JD Nagelkerke, Allan R Ronald, JO Ndinya-Achola, and Francis Plummer. 1990. "Geographical Patterns of Male Circumcision Practices in Africa: Association with HIV Seroprevalence." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 19 (3): 693-7.

Oliver R T D, Josephine Oliver and Ron C Ballard**.** 2000. "More Studies Need to Be Done Before Widespread Circumcision is Implemented." *British Medical Journal* 321: 1468-1469.

PACTA factsheet. 1999. "Gender, Violence and HIV/AIDS." No 46.

Patton, Cindy. 1997. "Inventing 'African AIDS'" in Roger N Lancaster and Micaela di Leornado (eds.) *The Gender/Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy*, pp 387-405. New York: Routledge.

Quinn, Tomas C, Maria Wawer, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Chuanjun Li, Fred Wabwire-Mangen, Mary O. Meehan, Thomas Lutalo and Ronald Grey. 2000. "Viral Load and Heterosexual Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1." *New England Journal of Medicine* 342 (13): 921-9.

Sontag, Susan**.** 1991. Illness as Metaphor, and, AIDS and its Metaphors. London: Penquin.

Szabo, Robert and Roger V Short. 2000a. "How Does Male Circumcision Protect against HIV Infection?" *British Medical Journal* 320: 1592-4.

Szabo, Robert and Roger V Short. 2000b. "Author's Reply." *British Medical Journal* 321: 1468-69.

Treichler, Paula "AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse: An Epidemic of Signification" in Roger N Lancaster and Micaela di Leornado (eds.) *The Gender/Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy*, pp. 357-386. New York: Routledge.

Tyndall, Mark W, Allan R Ronald, Elisabeth Agoki, William Malisa, Job J Bwayo, J O Ndinya-Achola, Stephen Moses and Francis Plummer. 1996. "Increased Risk of Infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 Among Uncircumcised Men Presenting With Genital Ulcer Disease in Kenya." *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 23 (3): 449-53.

UNAIDS/ 99.2. 1999. AIDS - 5 years since ICPD: Emerging issues and challenges for women, young people & infants. A UNAIDS discussion document.

UNAIDS/99.16E. 1999. Gender and HIV/AIDS: Taking stock of research and programmes.

Urassa, Marc, James Todd, J Ties Boerma, Richard Hayes and Raphael Isingo. 1997. "Male Circumcision and Susceptibility to HIV Infection among Men in Tanzania." *AIDS* 11 (3): 73-80.

Van Howe, RS. 1999. "Circumcision and HIV infection: review of the literature and meta-analysis." *International Journal STD AIDS* 10 (1): 8-16.

Waldo, Craig W and Thomas J. Coates. 2000. "Multiple Levels of Analysis and Intervention in HIV Prevention Science: Exemplars and Directions for New Research." *AIDS* 14 (suppl 2): 18-26.

Weiss, Helen A, Maria A Quigley and Richard J Hayes**.** 2000. "Male Circumcision and Risk of HIV Infection in Sub-Saharan Africa: a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis." *AIDS* 14 (15): 2361-70.

Effects and Affects of *Queer as Folk*

Sanna Karkulehto, University of Oulu

skarkule@hotmail.com

This paper deals with a British gay television series called *Queer as Folk* (Russel T. Davies, Charles McDougal)[1]. The series was shown in England and in Finland (*Älä kerro äidille*) during the year 2000, and it gained lots of media publicity by the time it was presented. The reason for its effectiveness and affectiveness, and the special attention it received by media – and by individuals via net – was the fact that the series was openly sexual, and it told primarily about gays and lesbians. The series told particularly about gay culture and gayness: about men wanting other men, and about experiences of men wanting other men. The series was also exceptional in its way not to ease off its themes to the mainstream audience by sitcom series humor and comedic tendencies, as most previous series telling about gays had done.

Queer as Folk tells about two thirty-something wealthy and healthy gay guys, Stuart (Aidan Gillen) and Vince (Craig Kelly), who are from Manchester, UK. They have known each other from early school, and they spend most of their spare time together. The first episode of the series introduces viewers to the lives of the protagonists at the local gay bars, as well as in privacy. The audience also gets to know a 15-year-old Nathan, a kid recently awakened into his homosexual bloom, who gaily loses his boyhood in Stuart's bed, and a lesbian couple Romey (Esther Hall) and Lisa (Saira Todd), of whom Romey has just been taken to a hospital to give birth to a child artificially inseminated by Stuart's sperm. Later on the series introduces us also to the families of Stuart's, Vince's and Nathan's, to their mates at work and school, and to many friends and relationships of theirs.

Queer as Folk brings gayness a central theme of a prime time television series, and this way gayness becomes visible in everybody's own living room. In addition the protagonists of the show represent changed and new gayness, which is quite a new phenomena in cultural representations of homosexuality. As compared to their predecessors, these "millennium gays" question the earlier, through pathology defined (modern) discourse of homosexuality. In comparison to the representations of degenerated gay guys with identity problems of pre 1990's, these postmodern gays have surprisingly become "gay" and "proud" heroes, who are almost praised by the culture, and who have often been reset from social marginality to the middle of the action. This paper analyses the reasons and consequences of this surprising, and at least at first a radical looking, cultural change. My focus is on the increased habit of mainstream medias to make use of queer references: how do they position into the field of the political aims positioned in queer theory[2]? The social, political, and cultural significance and function of *Queer as Folk* is studied in this context, as well as the relation between queer politics and queer aesthetics in the series.

On the one hand this paper is a case study of the television series *Queer as Folk*, but on the other hand it will also pay attention to this recent change in consumerism and entertainment to a more positive one about queer references and gay and lesbian representations. *Queer as Folk* is studied in this context: as a commercial product which fulfills needs of the market in offering new, different and exotic queer entertainment, but also as a project which seems to have resisting and subversive queer political tasks. How does *Queer as Folk* meet these culturally two-dimensional and ambivalent challenges?

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

The cultural expansion of queer images

Advertising especially in fashion business is an ongoing practice, which has to recreate itself endlessly, again and again after every end of a season. Fashion advertisers have to be able to show that the products and companies they represent are always ahead of us and other companies. In this chasing after new ideas and images gender ambivalence has proved a productive and effective source from where to get something new and different into advertising. Advertisers have noticed that flirtation with queer images gives commodities desired specialty with which to stand out from the mass. Queer is seen as an exotic and chic effect with which it is easy to get some "special flavour, and added spice" into advertising. Queer has become a sign of designer's ability to be creative, innovative and avant-garde. Because of that the employment of queer references has increased remarkably in advertising from the middle of 1990's, and it has been found useful even with a greater extent since then. (Mistry 2000)

Today it is not only fashion industry that makes use of gender-bending and gender ambivalence in their productions. Also media has begun to prefer presenting non-heterosexual performances. Queerness and gayness have become chic in today's society. Homoeroticism is not considered only as fashionable; people are given an impression that it is also politically correct and economically wise to make sexualities other than heterosexual visible. Television and cinema industry have started to show series and movies of gay, lesbian and trans-people; common people advertising is using queer references (f. e. adverts of a phone company, athlete's foot cream, shower gel, and margarine), and it has been noted that almost all self-respecting – as well as many generally respected -- papers and magazines (f. e. *Vanity Fair, Newsweek, Helsingin Sanomat*) are willing to publish at least one, and even more, sympathetic news and articles on gay culture and its economical power. (Pulkkinen 1993, 309 and Lassila 1996, 144.) Queer has become sexy in the media. There are no doubts that queer images and a certain kind of queer attitude in media representations have culturally expanded and with good reason, we can talk about distinctive *queer aesthetics* that media is making use of. Queer has become a commodity, as Marianne Liljeström put it at the seminar (affective encounters) workshop. In this context it is quite obvious that there is a commercial and political order for a television series like *Queer as Folk,* which tells about wealthy and successful gay people. It is possible to see *Queer as Folk* as a made to order gay television series, which is expected to be a profitable product.

On the field of queer theory the way advertising and mass media are making use of queer images, references, and representations is not really seen in a positive light. First of all, popularity of queerness in for example advertising is not seen politically significant, because the reasons for using them in advertisements are not political, but purely commercial. While queer politics expects that queer should be shocking and radical, and as such, subversive, commercialized queer aesthetics makes it a mass media commodity, in which process queerness most likely loses its radical edge. The mass media audience is considered as heterosexual, and since mass medias are commercial practices, they cannot shock, disturb or upset its buying hetero audience too much. This is why queer images in mass medias are usually domesticated, and queer itself is only representing sexual glamour and exoticism, which as such cannot be called subversive. Those used images hardly have anything to do with pursuing equality between genders and sexualities. (Mistry 2000.) Secondly, the process of commercializing and aestheticizing queer has been accused of capitalistic utilization and colonizing queer identities in a way, which only makes use of the otherness of gay people, and which this way, as a matter of fact, only maintains heterosexual hegemony (see Roseneil 2000). How does *Queer as Folk* look under this kind of a theorization?

Queer as Folk as a contradictory and ambivalent project

One of my main arguments is that *Queer as Folk* doubtlessly is a commercial product and project, which actually makes use of the fact that queerness, gayness, and all kinds of sexual ambiguity are fashionable in today's culture, media, and advertising. It is a product, which fulfills needs of the market by offering new, different and exotic queer entertainment, and in this sense the show is (re-)producing queer aesthetics. *Queer as Folk* is a fashionable, cute and affective series, which is well done, enjoyable, and rewarding to the spectator with its classic and conventional romantic plot. On top of that the spectators get some extra enjoyment while they can imagine they are also being politically correct and tolerant towards gay people (since it is so fashionable today..) while watching a gay series from television.

Although *Queer as Folk* is producing queer aesthetics and making use of the fact that queerness is fashionable in today's culture, and although it is participating this way the party of "watering down" queer's critical and political edge (see Mistry 2000), it also seems to have some queer political and provocative tasks - aims that are emphasized in queer theory (queering things, subversion, subverting dominant dichotomies and categorizations, and resisting heteronormativity etc.): For example *Queer as Folk* tells primarily about proud, healthy and wealthy, good looking and lively gays and lesbians, which as an idea doesn't fit into the traditional, cultural image of gay and lesbian representations (usually represented as melancholic, deviant, degenerated, sickly, and dying men and women; see f. e. Lahti 1989 and Paasonen 1999, 40), and on the other hand it also declares gay rights (and queer politics) by many ways, as for example with a poster which says "Smash the Heterosexual Orthodoxy", and especially in Stuart's behavior. Stuart becomes in the series clearly a politically aware and hetero norms consciously resisting person, and he is the one who most explicitly constructs his own queer identity.

There is for example a sequence where Stuart as a gay man and Romey as a lesbian woman walk together with their baby (and in doing so they are falsely representing a nuclear family, and indicating in Butlerian way the illusiveness of such representations in general) and kiss goodbye before Start goes alone to a car store. A salesman of the car store is watching through a window the family performance of Stuart's and Romey's, and with no questioning he thinks that what he sees is a "normal", productive, heterosexual family. Because of this the salesman tries to convince Vince that he should buy some other car than the one he has already chosen, because "lots of gay guys drive that car", and it doesn't really fit into an image of "a family guy", and "a real man". Then the salesman adds that the resale value of those particular cars is high, because gay guys "die young". Stuart gets clearly annoyed of the salesman's remark, and when it is time to pay the car, he maliciously drives the car through the car store's window right in front of the upset salesman's desk. This way the series is criticizing the fact that culturally gay guys are seen as people who "die young", as the salesman says.

Queer as Folk also dismantles some stereotypes culturally connected to gayness, and it does it quite radically. The narrative of the series provocatively focuses on representing free time and sexual lives of gay guys'. It mostly tells about their parties loaded with alcohol, drugs, and one-night stands, in which people are mainly seeking hedonistic sexual pleasure. It produces Butlerian idea of gender as performative in a way that embarrasses and confuses the prime time spectator: the repetitive representations of sex acts become gender performance, in which the gender specific repetition of identities are represented by sex. Homosexual gender identity is produced in *Queer as Folk* by sex, and by showing openly and endlessly almost porn-like sex scenes in which gay guys are having sex together again and again. It repeats over and over again, what no-heterosexual male sex and homosexuality are like.

My argument is that by expressing and reiterating excessive gay sex *Queer as Folk* reveals (by this exaggeration) cultural gay stereotypes, which traditionally reduce gayness to sexuality, and according which gay subjectivity is seen only as sexuality, and according which the only foundation of gay identities is in a sex act. Homosexuality gets defined in *Queer as Folk* clearly by sexual behavior, and because of this one could think that a conventional spectator gets verification for traditionally maintained idea of a gay man as a hypersexual creature. But I argue that the representations of gay sex acts can be seen also differently: through the excessive homosexual performances the series tackles ironically the problem of cultural discourses, which particularly connect gayness to sexuality. From this perspective the series seems to mock the discourse in accordance to heterosexual matrix, which connect gayness repetitively to sexual activities. This is how the series makes space for subverting the dominant sexual discourse and queer identities, which deliberately produce ironic and parodic homosexual bacchanal. The series takes everything out of the sex and appropriates the dominant sexual discourse, and at the same time it laughs at the stereotype of a sexually addicted gay guy, while it makes the audience gape repetitively at men having sex together.

But then, even though *Queer as Folk* has obvious queer political aims that I think it even achieves, the series also has its contradictories and ambivalences because of which it can be criticized of being reactionary. As I mentioned above, male identity is defined in *Queer as Folk* through sexuality. Female identity, on the other hand, gets constructed in the series through family relationships. *Queer as Folk* connects masculinity and maleness traditionally to activity and publicity, while femininity and femaleness are connected to passivity and privacy. In addition male identity is defined in series by work, while female identity gets constructed through motherhood and domesticity. While the men in the series are presented either as ones moving from one sex act to another, or as men building up their careers, Romey and Lisa are shown in the middle of putting up a family, and nesting. Their relationship is presented as asexual, and thus passive. Although the artificial insemination made for Romey is possible to see as a sign of women's possibility to make independent decisions on their bodies, and so on their own lives, as Susanna Paasonen noted while I gave this presentation, I think that it also becomes a symbol of asexuality and traditionally considered receptiveness of passive female sexuality. On top of that the lesbian representations can easily be blamed to be irritatingly stereotypic. Besides, women in *Queer as Folk* are conventionally in minor, supporting roles, while men are in the leading roles.

So although *Queer as Folk* questions homo–hetero dichotomy and the idea of complementary sexuality and sexual identities, opposition between male–female, which essentially defines heteromatrix, does not get questioned. The series makes a visible effort to achieve equality between sexualities, but meanwhile it forgets equality aspirations between genders. Even if *Queer as Folk* breaks the cultural matrix of compulsory heterosexuality, it doesn't put the dominant definition of masculinity into question; according to it masculine subject is still a norm.

Queer as Folk maintains the dichotomizing separation between men and women, in which power always belongs to a man. I claim, that this is how *Queer as Folk's* radical and political mission appears as domesticated: maintaining hierarchic opposition between genders enables it to deconstruct sexuality and sexual identities. While the position of a conventional spectator certainly gets shaken in *Queer as Folk* by its breaking sexual boundaries, it also gets offered support and security by the fact that boundaries between genders stay untouchable. The series is both time effective and affective, and this is how, I claim, it has been able to be sold both to the financial producers and television channels, and to the mainstream audience.

Every now and then the makers of *Queer as Folk* seem, however, willing to call the conventional masculinity into question. Quite deliberately, if superficially they have tried to show consideration to politically aware spectators for example with

a line of a friend of Nathan's, Donna's (Carla Henry), after frustrated Nathan has accused even her of "fascist heterosexual orthodoxy". Almost imitating the black feminist slogans she remarks: "I am black and I am a girl. Try that for a week." Token gestures of good will like this make an impression that the producers of the series are annoyingly aware of the fact that the series is reproducing the concept of traditional masculinity. One cannot avoid getting the feeling that because of it they have added a politically "compulsory" lesbian couple and young black woman, who nevertheless are left into marginality without anything significant to say or do. Although it is tried in *Queer as Folk* to make the connection between race, ethnicity, class, and gender visible, these aims are almost without exception not obtained. The privileged race in the series is white race, the privileged class is higher middle-class, and the privileged gender is a man.

Conclusion

In the television series *Queer as Folk* the commercial and political tasks get connected, and the mixture of them brings contradictions into the contents of it. I have presented here some themes, through which I think the series is pursuing subversive and boundary breaking policy of queer, and on the other hand some areas where it is making commercial, queer aestheticized concession. In addition, it is possible to see in *Queer as Folk* also ambivalence, which is not there because of the relation of the commercialism and politics, but because it is not possible to make purely resisting, radical and alternative movies or television series in the first place (see Kangasniemi 1996). *Queer as Folk* proves to be both with its politics, and with its aesthetics contradictory and ambivalent, but at the same time it is a multiple project, in which the experiences of people desiring same sex are tried to study instead of one-sided stereotypes through many sides. Positive gay images as well as representations of contradictions and conflicts show that there is no such thing as a consistent, but a complex gay community and diverse gay experiences.

Although *Queer as Folk* could be celebrated as a popular cultural torchbearer of subversive queer politics, it has to be taken under consideration that its subversive and resisting discourses and representations always contain contradictories. Power resistant discourses and discourses producing cracks to the hegemony are not safe from the cracks themselves, either. In the Foucauldian way of theorizing there is no power without resistance, but resistance is not loose or free from the power discourses any better than the other discourses. By taking this under consideration I think we could try to study the strategies, which produce hegemonic power positions and positions marginal to them from many sides, and to make critical analysis between hegemony and marginality.

Endnotes

[1] The paper draws many of its conclusions from my article "Alas heterojen fasistinen oikeaoppisuus." *Queer as Folk* -sarjan politiikkaa ja estetiikkaa. The article was published in *Lähikuva*-magazine 1/2001, and it includes an English abstract "Smash the Heterosexual Orthodoxy." Politics and Aesthetics of *Queer as Folk.*

[2] According to a very simplified definition here, in politically invested, academic queer theory the aim is to make culturally marginalized representations, identities and discourses visible, and to subvert normative heterosexuality, or heterosexual hegemony by constructing subversive discourses and representations, which enable the constitution of subjectivities and identities resisting hetero matrix. (See Butler 1993, 10–12; Kekki 1999, 206–207; Jagose 1996.)

Literature

Butler, Judith 1993: *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge.

Jagose, Annamarie 1996: "Queer Theory". Http:/www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-Dec-1996/jagose.html. Link checked Feb 1, 2001.

Kangasniemi, Hanna 1996: Kuvien välistä, kuvien takaa – miten tutkia lesboelokuvaa? – Pia Livia

Hekanaho, Kati Mustola, Anna Lassila & Marja Suhonen (eds.): *Uusin silmin. Lesbinen katse kulttuuriin.* Helsinki University Press.

Kekki, Lasse 1999: "Queer-teoria ja homoliike." – Jukka Lehtonen (ed.): *Homo Fennicus Miesten homo- ja biseksuaalisuus muutoksessa.* Helsinki: Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö.

Lahti, Martti 1992: Vajaat ja ylettömät - maskuliinisuus ja miehen ruumis. *Naistutkimus – Kvinnoforskning.* Vol. 5 (2)/1992.

Lassila, Anna 1996: Tutut roolit, tuntemattomat alueet. Butch, femme ja identiteettipolitiikan dekonstruktio. – Pia Livia Hekanaho, Kati Mustola, Anna Lassila & Marja Suhonen (eds.): *Uusin silmin. Lesbinen katse kulttuuriin.* Helsinki University Press.

Mistry, Reena 2000: From 'Heart and Home' to a Queer Chic. A Critical Analysis of Progressive

Depictions of Gender in Advertising. Http:/www.theory.org.uk/mistry-printversion.html. Link checked Nov 18, 2000.

Paasonen, Susanna 1999: *Nyt! Ja ikuisesti – rewind: Häät mediaspektaakkelina.* Nykykulttuurin tutkimusyksikön julkaisuja 61. Jyväskylän yliopisto.

Pulkkinen, Tuija 1993: Keinotekoista seksiä? Luonto, luonnottomuus ja radikaali sukupuolipolitiikka. *Tiede & edistys* 3/1993.

Roseneil, Sasha 2000: Postmoderneja seksuaalisuuden muutoksia: Queer viitekehyksenä ja vaikutteena. *Naistutkimus – Kvinnoforskning* 2/2000.

”I Must Reveal a Shocking Secret”[1]

Transvestites in American Talk Shows

Martta Kaukonen, University of Turku

hihhihhii@yahoo.com

A man with heavy make-up on and dressed in a lime green feather boa, a pink shirt and a mini skirt rushes to the stage. The entire audience breaks into loud applause and laughter. His mother, who has anxiously waited for her son, joins in the applause and laughter. The man takes his audience by greeting them merrily and assuring that everyone is having a good time. He faces his mother for the first time in drag. The boy christened Michael introduces himself to his mother as Miss Appassionata von Klimax. “He’s a wonderful actor – he really is”, the mother praises him. “I should say I only perform in this. I don’t go out and walk the streets in this. This is only a persona I created for a cabaret show”, Michael stresses. The mother enjoys herself and she assures she loves him no matter what.

The scene I described above is from an episode of *Ricki Lake* aired in 1999 called ”Today I Let My Secret Out Of The Bag, Mom, I Dress In Drag”[2]. In this episode, men dressed in women’s clothes reveal their activities – as the title suggests – to their mothers but also to their sisters, cousins and boyfriends. The themes on which I will concentrate in this article are presented in this scene. My paper scrutinises the ways in which transvestism is represented in American talk shows. My article is based on my forthcoming master’s thesis at the Department of Media Studies in the University of Turku.

Scope of the Article

The talk shows in which I am interested in this context are in Jane Shattuc’s (1997, p. 3.) terms ”issue-orientated day time talk shows”. I am not interested in the talk shows where the host/ess, for example Jay Leno or Conan O’Brian, interviews celebrity guests. Instead I will concentrate on shows such as *Ricki Lake* and *Sally* which are based on the problems of so called average people who appear on the show as guests. By “average people” I mean persons who are not celebrities. Thus, I divide talk shows in two different genres: in one genre the guests are celebrities, in the other non-celebrities. So, I do not use the label “average people” as a value-based, judgmental term. Moreover, I do not, for example, seek boundaries between average/normal and uncommon/abnormal. According to Shattuc (ibid., passim.), these shows continue in the tradition of the tabloid press. These shows have been labelled as social porn, and according to Shattuc (ibid., p. vii), both they and the research based on them have been held in contempt. As my research material, I use some episodes of *Sally* from 1997 and *Ricki Lake* from 1999.

In the discourse of the talk shows the term transvestism means a person’s desire or urge to wear the clothes of the biologically opposite sex. This is a popular understanding of the meaning of the term, in which the binary male-female -concept of sex is taken for granted. In the talk show discourse, there are many different kinds of phenomena within the umbrella term transvestism, such as gender-blending, cross-dressing, drag as well as transvestism. The discourse of the shows does not make a distinction between these phenomena.[3] In my master’s thesis I examine only male to female transvestites.[4] In my own theoretical analysis I understand sex in Butler’s (1990) terms as a performative act, thus, I do not use the operative terms sex/gender, which, on the other hand, are used in the talk show discourse.

Transvestism established itself as a basic theme in talk shows in 1990s. In my

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

work I seek to interpret the images of transvestism which were produced and reproduced in the talk show context in the end of the 1990s with the concept of *image*. The research on images of women was criticised in the 1970s for seeing a direct equivalence between image and reality (Koivunen 1995, p. 26-28). Anu Koivunen (ibid., p. 28) defends the method of researching images by arguing in her work on the technology of gender in Finnish wartime women's film that the concept of image does not entail a direct equivalence between image and reality. She (Koivunen ibid., p. 28-29) considers image more or less as a construction: image is not a passive reflection (of reality) but an active definer of meanings. I have discovered four images of transvestites in the talk shows: Confessor, Camp-character, Clown and the Other. These images often appear together. For example, the Confessor is often also a Clown. The interpretation of the images often depends on the way they are read; for example, the Clown can often be interpreted as a Camp-character as well. The scene I described in the beginning of this article is a secret revealing narrative, in which all the four images of the transvestite appear simultaneously.

The confessor

The Confessor is the image of a transvestite which is related to secret revealing narratives. The narrative functions by the following pattern: a guest of the show wants to reveal a secret about his/her life to his/her loved ones who are also visiting the show as guests. The secret can, for example, be gayness, an immoral profession, such as being a stripper, or infidelity. The secret is often transvestism.

According to Michel Foucault there has been an ongoing search for the truth about sex in Western societies for centuries. The main instrument for this process has been a confession. Originally, it manifested itself in religious contexts, in penance. Later on, the practise also spread to teacher-pupil, doctor-patient, and other relations of this kind. As the examples show, the relationship is always based on power and it always has two parties: the Confessor and the one who forces the confession.(Foucault 1998, p. 45-53).

The Confessor transvestite reveals a well-guarded secret about his/her sex, that is transvestism, to his/her loved one in the studio, to the show's host/ess and to the audiences in the studio and at home. It is a public confession. These different parties force the confession and demand it. They also estimate the confession and judge, punish or pardon the Confessor.

Michael lives with his/her mother, but the mother does not have a clue about her son performing in a cabaret role for two years. It is about time for Michael to confess the truth about her/himself and her/his sex to her/his mother, who is living in uncertainty, in the talk show. But first, Ricki Lake wants to make sure that Michael is ready to face the judgement following his confession: a punishment or a pardon. Is s/he "ready to let the cat out of the bag", Lake asks. "I'm as ready as I'm gonna be, darling", Michael affirms. But how about the mother? Has she already suspected something? And first and foremost, is she ready to face the truth about her son? The mother has her own doubts: a couple of her dresses are missing. Anyway, she assures, she is ready for the truth.

The truth comes out as Miss Appassionata von Klimax enters the stage. But what is the judgement Michael receives? "So you're not at all offended by this. You applaud him and you love him no matter what", Lake inquires. "Sure", the smiling mother assures. Thus, Michael is pardoned.

Camp-Character

In defining the Camp-character, I rely on Susan Sontag's classical essay "Notes on Camp" in which she defines the essence of camp. According to Sontag, camp is a way to view the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. This view is controlled by understand-

ing being as playing a role. Exaggeration and artificiality, as well as irony rather than tragedy, are characteristic of camp. Camp is playful, and offers a comic vision of the world. (Sontag 1978, p. 275-292). Moe Meyer (1994, p. 8), who has researched camp as a political practise, has criticised Sontag for claiming that camp is apolitical. My interpretation of the Camp-character relies on Meyer's (ibid., p. 5) view of camp as political activism, which is particularly a "queer-practise". The Camp-character is the image of a transvestite who makes use of the publicity s/he gains, and aims to fulfil his/her representations with his/her own meanings, nevertheless regarding the limitations of the talk show context. Often, the Camp-character also aims to influence politically. According to Shattuc (1997, passim.), talk show guests are often invited from sexual political organisations. By performing as comical characters, as transvestites have traditionally been represented, they take the possession of the stereotypical representation and fill it with their own meanings, nevertheless regarding the limitations of the talk show context.[5] Thus, camp humour is a weapon against a hostile and prejudiced environment (Babuscio 1984, p. 47).

Michael's visit to *Ricki Lake* is an intentional camp performance. The way s/he dresses and his/her make-up insinuate that s/he is performing tongue-in-cheek, and s/he does not even intend to be taken seriously. They also communicate that his/her intention is not to pass. With his/her performance, s/he focuses the attention to the inadequacy of the binary, male-female -categories of sex. In Butler's terms, this is a subversive performance, which shows the category of sex to be too narrow. According to Michael, s/he is a performing artist in his/her own local gay scene. The motivation of his/her visit is most likely political: to achieve national acceptance and publicity by humour for gayness and its subcultures, such as the cabaret culture s/he him/herself represents.

Clown

The Clown is the image of a transvestite, in which transvestism appears to be a self-evidently comical matter. The history of film is full of examples of transvestism as a source of comedy. Stella Bruzzi (1997, p. 147-172) has drawn attention to this matter and dedicated a chapter to it in her book about costume designing, *Undressing Cinema*. The chapter's title is justifiably *The Comedy Of Cross-Dressing*. Some examples of movies exploiting transvestism as a source of comedy are, just to mention a few: Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (USA 1959), Sydney Pollack's *Tootsie* (USA 1982) and Chris Columbus's *Mrs. Doubtfire* (USA 1993). According to Koivunen (1995, p. 76-77), the comic narrative is a strategy which attempts to disarm the threatening thing by laughter and to set it aside as a curiosity. The Clown is an image of a transvestite based on this strategy. By making transvestism laughable, the threat it represents to the binary category of sex can be dismissed.

Transvestism has hundreds of years of tradition in popular culture, especially in comedy (Garber 1992). Transvestism has been traditionally interpreted as comedy, also in the talk show context. No wonder, the thought of a man dressed in women's clothes is ridiculous enough for the studio audience to giggle already when Ricki Lake tells them the theme of the episode. When Michael appears on the stage, the audience bursts into laughter. This also happens with other guests, even with Phillip/Tracy who is, in Butler's (1995, p. 265) words, "´girlier´ than girls themselves".[6] So, there remains a question how much camp can be utilized in the context of talk shows and what kinds of limits the context sets to it.

The Other

The talk shows are dominated by the so called tolerance speech. The Otherness is an image of a transvestite, in which the transvestite appears to be the Other in relation to Us. "We" refers to the talk show host/ess, the audience at home and in the studio,

and to the loved one of the transvestite to which s/he reveals his/her secret. It is in "Our" power to decide whether to pardon the Confessor, to tolerate him/her or not. So, "We" is the subject of the tolerance or the intolerance, the transvestite its object. "We" is the norm to which the Other is compared. The transvestite represents a threat by drawing attention to the inadequacy of the category of sex. The tolerance speech is a way to deal with this threat. The transvestite is being controlled and s/he is assigned his/her place in the order of society by tolerating or not tolerating him/her.

From the beginning of the show, Michael has been at "Our" mercy, even though s/he has volunteered in the show. Ricki Lake makes it clear from the start by whose rules the game is played. The central thing is how the ones who force the confession regard it: is there going to be a punishment in the form of a break-up or is the Confessor going to be pardoned. Michael paves the way to his/her pardon by stressing the fact that s/he does not wear his/her costume in everyday life but that this is "only" a cabaret-role. His/her performance, which shakes the category of sex, is clearly situated in the space of feast and theatre, in which it is more acceptable to question the categories than in everyday space. Thus, it is much more easier for "Us" to accept him/her.

Conclusion

I have brought up four different ways of seeing representations of transvestism in talk shows. As I have pointed out, transvestism is a complex phenomenon. It draws attention, perhaps better than any talk show theme, to the idea of the talk shows: "We" against the Other, which is the basis of the whole format. The images I have discovered in talk shows are also discoverable in other products of the popular culture, such as in literature, theatre and film. Transvestism appears to be the Other in the popular culture in general – not only in the talk show context. The threat it represents to the binary category of sex is as universal as the binary category itself (Butler 1990).

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the following people for their valuable suggestions for my article: Sanna Karkulehto, Susanna Paasonen, Leena-Maija Rossi.

Endnotes

[1] Episode of *Sally*. USA 1997. Broadcast in Finland 30.4. 1998 MTV 3. Universal Television Enterprises, Inc.

[2] USA 1999, Columbia Pictures Television Inc. Director: Bob McKinnon; Executive Producer: Gail Steinberg; Executive Consultant: Garth Ancier; Senior Producer: Andrew Scher; Coordinating Producers: Michelle Mazur, Barbara Weinberg; Producer: Rachel Miskowiec; Fact Checker: Michael Buczkiewicz.

[3] For example, the episode of *Ricki Lake* described in the beginning of this article features drag queens, female impersonators and cabaret actors/actresses within the term drag.

[4] There are two reasons for this. Firstly, it is reasonable because of the briefness of the thesis. Secondly, the opposite scenario is very rare in the talk show context.

[5] About the stereotypical, comical representations of transvestism, see next chapter.

[6] When commentating the movie's *Paris Is Burning* male to female -transvestites.

Bibliography

Babuscio, J., 1984. Camp and the gay sensibility. In: Dyer, R., ed. *Gays and Film*. Revised edition. New York: Zoetrope.

Bruzzi, S., 1997. *Undressing Cinema Clothing and identity in the movies*. London and

New York: Routledge.

Butler, J., 1990. *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London and New York: Routledge .

Butler, J., 1995. Haluttu ruumis. In: Rossi, L-M, ed. *Kuva ja vastakuvat*. Tampere: Gaudeamus (Originally. Kotz, L. & Butler, J. The Body You Want. *Artforum*, November 1992, 82-89.)

Foucault, M., 1998. *Seksuaalisuuden historia Tiedontahto Nautintojen käyttö Huoli itsestä*. Transl. Kaisa Sivenius. Tampere: Gaudeamus. (Originally. 1976 *La volonté de savoir*. 1984 *L'usage des plaisirs*. 1984 *Le souci de soi*.)

Garber, M., 1992. *Vested Interests*: *Cross-dressing and cultural anxiety*. New York: Routledge.

Koivunen, A, 1995. *Isänmaan moninaiset äidinkasvot Sotavuosien suomalainen naisten elokuva sukupuoliteknologiana*. Turku: SETS-julkaisu.

Meyer, M., 1994. Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp. In: Meyer, Moe, ed. *The Poetics and Politics Of Camp*. London and New York: Routledge.

Shattuc, J. M., 1997. *The Talking Cure*. New York London: Routledge.

Sontag, S., 1978. Notes on Camp. In: *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Octagon Books. (Originally 1964 *Partisan Review*.)

Tracking Shock: Some Thoughts on TV, Trauma, Testimony

Jane Kilby, University of Salford

J.E.Kilby@salford.ac.uk

> But surely there are moments which can be isolated from the fragmented flow of information, moments with an impact which disrupts the ordinary routine – moments when information bristles, when its greatest value is its shock value (in a medium which might be best described as a modulated, and hence restrained, series of shocks). These are moments when one stops simply watching television in order to stare, transfixed – moments of catastrophe. (Doane 1990: 228)

In her article 'Information, Crisis, Catastrophe', Mary Ann Doane raises the possibility of catastrophic moments, moments which leave one stunned by that which one is compelled to witness. These would be moments in which one finds oneself blinded by the sight of reality: an incomprehensible reality. Indeed, the intensity and force of these moments would be found in their ability to deny the viewer the comfort of saying "I see". These would be anxious moments in which the chance of insight is lost, and in so doing exposes the viewer to their inability to make sense of -- or 'make out' -- reality. These would be impossible moments, moments impossible to possess with any knowing, any understanding. To be shocked by what one is seeing is uncomfortable viewing to say the least.

For Doane, however, these are 'would be' moments in the strictest sense, since television deals with what is potential rather than what is actual. On the one hand, as she argues 'Televisions does not so much represent as it informs' (1990: 225), and as such it is not limited by the dictates of reality. Thus television 'strains to make visible the invisible', and 'While it acknowledges the limits of empiricism, the limitations of the eye in relation to knowledge, information is nevertheless conveyable in terms of simulated visibility – "If it could be seen, this is what it might look like." Television deals in potentially visible entities' (Doane 1990: 226). To this end, television functions precisely so that the viewer can see, at least potentially, at all times, even in times of catastrophe. This said, however, television also trades on the limits of its potential, which are, after all, the limits imposed by reality. On the other hand, then, a catastrophe acts to expose the limits of television, so while television works to extend all perceptible limits, there are times when it takes advantage of the lure exerted by what it cannot reveal for the viewer. The invisible becomes an opportunity for television, since it enables television to harness, if not generate, viewer interest. Indeed, Doane argues that the consuming desire of viewers is not for the immediate return (comfort or gratification) offered by information, but for the chance encounter with reality, for a 'real' moment.

Here, then, is a desire for what might be a 'reality check', although it is only desired because, in all actuality, it is 'a contact forever deferred' (Doane 1990: 233). In reality, it would be too much. The desire for 'eye contact' is for potential contact only. According to Doane, then, 'It is this remainder, this residue, which televisual catastrophe exploits. The social fascination of catastrophe rests on the desire to confront the remainder, or to be confronted with that which is in excess of signification' (1990: 236). Indeed, it is because television promises us the experience of shock in the comfort of our own homes that catastrophe can exact a constant hold over the viewer. As an impossible object the catastrophic moment allows TV 'to continually hold out to its spectator the lure of a referentiality perpetually deferred' (1990: 238).

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

To this end, the potential for exploitation is endless, with the viewer held spellbound, entranced by the promise of television. As a matter of routine, then, the viewer is repeatedly 'shocked', only to be (gratefully) restored by the power of television. As Doane concludes, 'Televisual catastrophe is thus characterised by everything which it is said not to be – it is expected, predictable, its presence crucial to television's operation' (1990: 238). Here, to find oneself staring blankly at the television screen is find oneself mildly shocked, only then to be restored as a television viewer. Thus television operates as a form of shock therapy; it is a technology for training the eye to see only with the aid of television.

But surely there are moments when we are shocked beyond recovery, moments where the detail is unthinkable and for which no amount of foresight can prepare one. These, then, would be what Avita Ronell (1994) refers to as 'fugitive' moments, moments which cannot be networked; elusive they just slip through the television network, and slip into and through one's consciousness. This aim of this paper is to track a 'fugitive' moment, but to the extent to which this moment works to elude attempts to trace it, this reading proceeds in the dark.

The Passage of Shock

During the BBC 1 broadcast of Childwatch+10, a current affairs programme that was concerned with whether enough is being done to protect children at risk of abuse, Sinead O'Connor was one of many survivors disclosing their experiences of childhood trauma. Seen sitting somewhat nervously (or absent mindly) picking at her head, O'Connor is prompted by the host – Esther Rantzen – when she asks her the rhetorical: "It was your mother who abused you wasn't it?" Suddenly taking her cue, O'Connor launches into a graphic detailing of "what had happened to her", proceeding to tell of how her mother used to make her "strip" and "kneel" before her with "legs apart" in order that her mother could "spit" on, and "kick" O'Connor in her "vagina". In concert with her words, O'Connor's body also comes into full play as she parts her legs, points and gestures to where her mother spat and kicked; and then shifts and arches her body to show where her mother used to punch her with the intention of "bursting her womb". These words are difficult enough to hear, to comprehend, but when they are matched by O'Connor's enactment of her childhood experiences, the action of directly pointing to the violated sites is shocking.

By taking the eye of the viewer to the parts of her body traumatised by her mother's sadistic assaults, O'Connor's testimony is impossible to contemplate: to be asked to look directly at the site of trauma hurts. Her action punctures and wounds the eye. Here, the catastrophe created by O'Connor's testimony functions in a manner akin to Roland Barthes' (1981) concept of the punctum in that it is 'violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on [this] occasion it fills the sight by force, and because nothing can be refused or transformed' (Barthes 1981: 91). There is no chance of looking away and no chance of altering what has been seen and heard. By pointing to the site of trauma, O'Connor delivers a blinding blow. At this point, then, there is no direction to be had, only a sense of profound disorientation. O'Connor's act is blinding precisely because there is no insight available; in a strange way, there is nothing to be gained by simply looking, or not at least in an immediately obvious way.

As a celebrity survivor, O'Connor was the first studio guest to give her testimony, and although the anchorman had warned viewers that they would be party to distressing and disturbing testimony (which by chance I had missed when first viewing the programme), and although O'Connor is renowned for her controversial stunts on television (which include tearing up a picture of the Pope), her testimony is memorable for being so shocking. But given time, I have since realised that the above testimony is not, as such, the punctum, or rather the shock I experienced was not actualised at the point of its announcement. Indeed, what ultimately delivers the

shock of O'Connor's testimony occurs in a later moment, after the testimony 'itself'. Toward the end of their dialogue, Rantzen turns to O'Connor and says, "Your mother's dead now, how do you feel about that?" O'Connor's response is somehow more than immediate – much, much more: "I'm delighted." O'Connor's declaration of delight is shocking because so unexpected, it is this stunning, unpredicted disclosure that forces the viewer to face the unimaginable horror of her mother's abuse.

The impact of her declaration is catastrophic, and this catastrophe is unrecuperable as it resonates as a palpable silence, for as Meaghan Morris argues, there is only 'a catastrophe of and for TV', when there are 'no pictures, no reports, just silence' (1990: 17). Only silence truly disrupts and interrupts the predictable flow of television (where the 'flow' of television is itself understood as fragmentary, or continuous discontinuity). A gulf of silence separates O'Connor and Rantzen, and in so doing it separates the moment from every other moment: to coin the cliché 'silence speaks louder than words'. As Ronell argues, television cannot 'communicate nor even telecommunicate a catastrophic knowledge, but can only – perhaps – signal the transmission of a gap (at times a yawn), a dark abyss (1994: 287). Thus the silence is explosive, and serves to register the incomprehensible nature of what is being heard and what is being imagined, there are no words to bridge the gap. This moment has amplitude that television normally lacks. It remains with the viewer and thus defies the amnesia normally associated with television, where each moment is swept away to make way for the next. Typically then the flow of television erodes and undermines the capacity of memory, but the silence opened up by O'Connor's disclosure of delight is unforgettable precisely because it was genuinely unpredictable.

The viewer is thus shocked by O'Connor's delight at her mother's death, which functions, I would argue, as the viewer's and O'Connor's own delayed shock to her testimony. Indeed, here is the key to its unpredictability: shock can be experienced later, or rather what one see's (or hear's) as shocking is experienced later, because in the first instance one is left paralysed by the impact. This interval or lag is impossible for television to predict because television typically relies on a calculated and instant return of interest, as Doane notes information is a commodity for television because it provides a quick return, hence 'Information must be immediately understandable, graspable' (1990: 227). Here, the shock of the disclosure is, indeed, somewhat elusive because it cannot be fixed in time. To this end, the experience of shock, the catastrophe, is not held in a moment in time, but is rather the disruption – or suspension – of time itself. Thus the catastrophic moment is impossible because it happens in 'no time at all', it is given in an instant; although as Barthes points out 'The effect [of the punctum] is certain but unlocatable […]; it is sharp and yet lands in a vague zone […]; it is acute yet muffled, it cries out in silence. Odd contradiction: a floating flash' (1981: 52-3). Indeed, it is because the punctum can 'lag behind time', that Barthes writes, 'Nothing surprising, then, if sometimes, despite its clarity, the punctum should be revealed only after the fact … however immediate and incisive it was, the punctum could accommodate a certain latency' (1981-51). Television cannot tame the unruly temporality of shock, for it runs on strictly economic time (epitomised by the ubiquitous signifiers for commercials: "Don't go away, we will be back in a minute" and "Let's take a break"). Time itself is arrested by shock; indeed, the very value of time is altered.

But what is finally shocking about O'Connor's symptomatic delight is that even O'Connor seems shaken by her it, or more pointedly, even she seems stunned by the history of trauma it gives voice to. The silence that yawns between and thus separates Rantzen and O'Connor is, nevertheless, the register of a collective shock, and as such it also belongs to her. Momentarily stopped dead in her tracks, it is as if she did not even see this moment coming, and shocked ultimately as she hears her own testimony, there is one further surprise: she laughs. O'Connor has made a name for herself as a confessional and shocking artist (Negus 1997), and she has done so via her television performances, politics, and song-writing, what Kevin Negus refers

to as the trio of 'images, words and sounds' (Negus 1997: 179), but for once even she is unprepared for the impact of her confession. Whether or not the disclosure of delight was a tactic, it still catches her unawares.

To the extent that television and O'Connor have traded on each other, their contract of spectacle breaks down, in a quiet yet spectacular fashion. Aware of the shock she has generated, O'Connor quickly mumbles an apology to Rantzen. But her delight at her mother's death remains resonant, and continues to disrupt Rantzen's attempt to have O'Connor rationalise her feelings (O'Connor is forced to explain that what she means is that she is happy her mother is dead because it means that she cannot harm O'Connor's own child, and that she does, of course, forgive her mother since she recognises that her mother was an ill woman). Departing from the sober, and decidedly liberal, discourse of Childwatch+10, O'Connor has the last laugh.

O'Connor's laugh is not, of course, a laugh for entertainment, but rather a laugh that signals 'a loss of balance or equilibrium' (Newmark 1995: 244). At this point, it might be fair to say that O'Connor has fallen upon her own history, as if for the first time. Up to this moment, it is as if O'Connor was blind to the trauma of her own childhood, and it is only through the act of giving testimony to others that she actually stumbles on the significance of what she is saying. In a pointedly relevant discussion of the trauma of laughter, Kevin Newmark writes then that 'The shock of laughter … designates the loss of equilibrium that is always entailed by an actual fall into history, where history itself can be experienced only nonteleologically, as constant falling' (1995: 244). In the face of childhood trauma, the passing of time makes little sense, which explains, then, the speed and ferocity of O'Connor's delight at her mother's death. For O'Connor there might, in fact, be no end to the descent into the personal hell of her childhood, just a perpetual falling. Here, then, the catastrophic knowledge of her childhood slips through time, through silence, through laughter, through television. Elusive testimony, indeed. But as Newmark (1995: 248) usefully reminds us, laughter is contagious, which means that there is an 'explosive potential within laugher once it has been unleashed', here then O'Connor's testimony finds itself an infectious form, which is to say a form associated with a potentially uncontained sociality, and whether one laughs or not, one remains potentially infected by its logic.

But as Newmark also notes, laughter is capable of 'infinite duplicity' (1995: 247), and O'Connor's delightful laugh is powerful because duplicitous: it is a laugh registering hate, both her mother's hate and O'Connor's reciprocating hate. O'Connor is not in mourning for her mother, she has lost her mother and is glad for it, and she remains so despite Rantzen's attempts to pull her within the legitimating frame of a respectful mourning. Hate is disconcerting and difficult to face. Indeed, as Shoshana Felman argues there is a 'cultural failure to acknowledge hate'; moreover 'when hate finds expression in the act of beating' neither can be seen (1997: 264). O'Connor's testimony is thus blinding because there is no cultural framework for seeing a mother hate and beat a child and a child hate and at least symbolically 'beat' (or get the better of) her mother. The mother-child dyad is meant to be a picture of domestic and sanctified bliss, not the image of a hell. Moreover, because this is a case of mother-daughter hatred there is, I would argue, a greater cultural blindness; it is virtually taboo for a mother to hate a daughter and for a daughter to hate her mother; and feminism in particular has difficulty in seeing this hatred. O'Connor's mother rained a hatred on her to which there is a culturally and politically blindness, and O'Connor, in turn, matches this with her own hate, the depth of which is also impossible to know (and in both cases, there is likely to little desire to know it). Yet there is nevertheless a duty to see her mother's hate, and to do so for the sake of her daughter's hate, for after all it is not a laughing matter.

The Drama Of Seeing

If hate is something one cannot grasp and does not understand, it is, then, 'something [one] can see only from outside' (Felman 1997: 777). There are no cultural and political mechanisms for gaining insight. Indeed, given the fact that childhood abuse is a private event, and given the fact that children are typically viewed as unreliable witnesses, there are also no social and legal mechanisms for gaining insight. By drawing attention to the inherently cultural and political nature of both beating and seeing, Felman highlights the extent to which hate is forced 'out of sight'. So how then does one begin to see? This is the question posed by the programme and is directed to O'Connor. In response then to Rantzen's enquiry "Was there anything that could have been done"?, O'Connor replies somewhat disconcertingly that it important to remember that children do not always tell the truth. Given already the cultural tendency to discredit children's testimony, Rantzen panics a little and suggests to O'Connor that she doesn't mean that children actually lie, but that maybe they cannot always be honest. O'Connor agrees and replies with a story about a policeman. Describing once how her neighbours had called the police after hearing the children screaming through the walls (O'Connor's brothers and sisters were also routinely beaten), O'Connor recounts how the police stood in the middle of their house and yet did not see that anything was wrong. O'Connor explains that the policeman stood before the children and asked whether there was anything wrong, but as O'Connor explains, the children were compelled to say "No" precisely because the policeman had failed to see that their mother stood just behind him, her presence effectively silencing the children. It would only have taken a little bit of thought on the part of policeman, O'Connor reasons, for the situation to have been different; if only, she laments, the policeman had insured that the mother was not in the room then he would have seen the situation for real. If only he had turned around.

So even though the policeman is right inside the home, he is unable to gain access to the truth, not at least by simply asking and looking. Here, then, it really is a case of not believing what your eyes tell you. O'Connor's narrative is interesting then for the fact that it symbolically demonstrates the ways in which the law cannot see domestic trauma and thus repeatedly fails to protect children. This is a familiar complaint, and a recurring theme of the programme was the extent to which there is little or no space in which children can safely speak about familial violence. But the narrative is also important because O'Connor places vested interest in the possibility of a policeman/a (cultural) law trained to see, and in harmony with the programme, O'Connor maintains the importance of a law capable of scrutinising the dynamics of private space in order to see childhood abuse. This is a more complicated vision since it allows for a less than evident truth, and thus a commitment to seeing (and hearing) differently. Making this point, Felman quotes Louis Althusser, who argues that 'To see this invisible … requires something quite different from a sharp or attentive eye, it takes an educated eye, a revised, renewed way of looking, itself produced by the effect of a "change in the terrain" reflected back upon the act of seeing' (Althusser quoted in Felman 1997: 264). Here, the eye has to be disturbed into thinking, speculating, perception is never enough.

What O'Connor leads us to see is that symptomatic blindness requires a cure, 'reality' does not simply avail itself to those who desire to see it, it requires a trained eye, a second look. As Avita Ronell writes 'In an era of constitutive opaqueness – we dwell not in transcendental light but in the shadows of mediation and withdrawal; there will be no revelation, can be no manifestation as such – things have to be tuned in, adjusted, subjected to double-takes' (1994: 281). Admittedly, this is not easy when the reality in question is resolutely catastrophic, but it is because the trauma in question is hidden from view that it is only accessible by taking a second look. There exists then an injunction to look again for there to be a history (or record) of

childhood abuse. For as Ronell argues, the catastrophe 'stops time by interrupting its simulated chronology in the event of an "event" that is neither of time or in time but, rather, something that depends upon repetition for its occurrence' (1994: 302). Insight has to be gained, and it can only by gained by looking back, by producing it for oneself and for others, while 'the first look' might ethically bind one to the scene, it does not guarantee that one will see anything. It is only by turning around that there is chance for second sight, for maybe a revolutionary turn of events.

In tracking O'Connor's testimony across the television screen, my reading has risked the same problem as O'Connor's performance: both are open to charge of being 'showy', O'Connor for having made a 'show of herself', and me for having made 'a showcase' of my own reading skills (I am second guessing here). With regard to O'Connor's performance, I have a confession, my initial reaction was a desire to 'cover her up', I felt it was exposing, that it was 'too much' for public consumption, wary that it would stimulate voyeuristic pleasure. There is always a potential that some viewers will find pleasure in the disclosure of pain, this is the permanent condition of the fact that shock relies on a principle of exposure. But whether O'Connor knows she is taking this risk does not change the fact that it is I who is responsible for her testimony, reluctant or not, which brings me to the question of my own reading. By invoking the notion of a 'fugitive' moment, I set myself up as a sort of reader-detective, where the truth appears dependent on my prowess; on my skills of tracking the truth down, where the pursuit itself appears to be the gain. This, then, can have the unfortunate consequence of elevating the process over the outcome, and in so doing install the reader at the centre of things. There is, here, a very real chance that my framework (which has, of course, performed O'Connor's testimony) nevertheless displaces its ostensible object. I am not blind to this possibility. But in keeping with O'Connor's performance, I have also sought to make a drama out of seeing. The dangers are clear, since television thrives on making a drama out of crisis, but maybe there is still potential in the odd, overstated performance.

Literature

Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Translated by R. Howard, London: Vintage

Doane, M-A. (1990) 'Information, Crisis, Catastrophe', in P. Mellencamp (ed.) *Logics of Television, Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London: BFI Publishing.

Felman, S. (1997) 'Forms of Judicial Blindness, or the Evidence of What Cannot Be Seen: Traumatic Narratives and Legal Repetitions in the O.J. Simpson Case and in Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata', Critical Inquiry* 23 (Summer) 738-788.

Mellencamp, P. (1990) 'TV Time and Catastrophe, or Beyond The Pleasure Principle of Television', in P. Mellencamp (ed.) *Logics of Television, Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London: BFI Publishing.

Morris, M. (1990) 'Banality in Cultural Studies', in P. Mellencamp (ed.) *Logics of Television, Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London: BFI Publishing.

Negus, K. (1997) 'Sinead O'Connor – Musical Mother', in S. Whiteley (ed.) *Sexing The Grove: Popular Music and Gender*, London and New York: Routledge.

Newmark, K. (1995) 'Traumatic Poetry: Charles Baudelaire and the Shock of Laughter, in C. Caruth (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations In Memory*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Nichols, B. (1994) 'At The Limits of Reality (TV)', in *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Robins, K. (1994) 'The Haunted Screen', in G. Bender and T. Druckrey (eds) *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology*, Seattle: Bay Press.

Ronell, A. (1994) 'Video/Television/Rodney King: Twelve Steps Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in G. Bender and T. Druckrey (eds) *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology,* Seattle: Bay Press.

Women's Magazines Meet Feminist Philosophy

Emmy Kurjenpuu, University of Helsinki

emmykurjenpuu@hotmail.com

The world we live in is filled with discourses, some of which are even in contradiction with each other. Of course there have been and there still are hundreds of ideas about what it is to be a woman, for example, and what it is like as well as how it should be. Media discourse is one of these realities that in our days has a very powerful effect on us.

The idea for my study arose from personal experience. As a feminist researcher, I have been affected by the feminist philosophy, which, for me, has opened an interesting perspective to the academic world as well as to personal life. I realised how funny it was that during one day I laboured on feminist philosophy and could read women's magazines and somehow believe in the world they created. I felt I was a crossing point between these two discourses—media discourse and the discourse of feminist philosophy. In my study I wanted to mix these two discourses, which to me appeared to be in complete contradiction with each other. I wanted to make it possible for them to meet. A person can be a crossing point to these different discourses, but the question is whether this will work in theory. I will now point out some of the main aspects from my study. Furthermore, I will try to provide an answer to this question that is obviously quite theoretical, i.e., is it possible for these two discourses to meet each other on paper.

In my study I analysed motherhood interviews in the Finnish women's magazines MeNaiset and Anna. I wanted to see what kind of conceptions they contained about womanhood and motherhood. In addition I compared these conceptions that women's magazines have to the conceptions about womanhood and motherhood in existentialist and post-modern feminist philosophy. I then debated on the journalistic code of ethics and commercial ideology in these magazines.

In Finland, women's magazines are very popular. In 1933, the fist so-called modern women's magazine appeared on the market on the side of the so-called traditional women's magazines, which focused on household chores and family and were directed to the housewives living in the countryside. The modern women's magazines were originally directed to the urban workingwomen (Jallinoja 1997:40-41). Some of the themes in the Finnish modern women's magazines have lasted throughout the decades. The modern women's magazines—to which the magazines I analysed belong—have always contained, for example, celebrity interviews, highlights, fashion and makeup tips.

Modern women's magazines like Anna and MeNaiset have always been interested in celebrities and their lives, which is not something new. But it is interesting that in approximately the last 5 years, there has been a boom of interviews dealing with motherhood. For example, in MeNaiset, a motherhood interview is the main story of the magazine nearly every week. In Finland where most of the women are working, motherhood, pregnancy, birth and childcare have become news. In other words, one can say, motherhood sells well.

The material of my study included 20 interviews in Anna and MeNaiset during 1998–2000. The professions of the mothers who were interviewed were typical to Finnish women's magazines: there were former beauty queens, comediennes, former models, former athletes, singers and, for example, a former beauty queen who was married to a former president's ex-son-in-law. I could distinguish three categories in the material I analysed. The categories were pregnancy, happy families and broken

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

motherhood, in this order. In every category, I pointed out the most usual themes of the interviews. It appeared that every category had its own 'story' or structure, which repeated itself in every single interview.

In the category pregnancy, the main theme of these interviews was the past of the interviewees. In all the pregnancy interviews, the coming motherhood and its pureness was contrasted with the dark colours from their past—a past which was always told to contain great difficulties, suffering, problems in work and relationships, even problems with mental health. Overwhelming joy of pregnancy was conceived justified because of the difficulties in the past. It was their destiny to become a mother and because of motherhood, because of this happy destiny, all problems in life would be gone. The future was only going to be happy because the coming motherhood had purified their life.

If pregnancy was described as a first stage of perfection, then in the second category, happy families, perfection was attained. In the happy family interviews, a baby was born and an iconified image of a family was built. Also in this category there were no contradictions—no problems with maternity. Motherhood was mainly a spiritual experience. In every interview, the reporter pointed out that there was no mark of tiredness in the mother despite of a small baby in the family. The physical side of maternity was faded out; it did not exist. There were only feelings like love, joy or pride. There was nothing inside the family that could threaten it—only the bad world, like drugs and crime could break the happiness.

The third category was broken motherhood. It presented a very new tendency in the Finnish women's magazines where the standard has been a presentation of happiness instead of failure. In this category, dreams and expectations of motherhood had been broken. In other words, the possibility of perfection was lost. The reasons for this varied from divorce to illness of child and to death of the child and, in one interview, even to disappointment in the interviewee's own motherhood skills. The tone of these interviews was mainly bitter. The promise of motherhood was gone.

In all, the discourse of the motherhood interviews was very fatalistic. It worshipped and mystified motherhood and presented it as a path to perfection. Most of the interviewees said that they had become mothers because it was their destiny. There was no doubt that motherhood was the crown of femininity in these interviews. But, on the other hand, to be a perfect woman did not only mean being a mother. To be a perfect woman meant being successful and to be successful meant mainly having a great deal of work. The idea was that despite of the wonders of motherhood, motherhood should not interfere with work. A really good mother was so energetic that she had strength even for work outside the home.

The creator of existentialist feminist philosophy, Simone de Beauvoir, would probably have been horrified, had she read the women's magazines of our days. For Beauvoir, woman was a slave of her ovaries. She saw that nature, the female sex, enslaves women. Because of her reproductive qualities, woman is doomed to otherness. Beauvoir thought in the 1940's that if women only could be liberated from their reproductive abilities, they could break the wall of *otherness* and come from immanence to existence (1949:29-34). If woman is a mother, it is even more difficult for her to become Subject and come from immanence to existence (Putnam Tong 1998:180). Beauvoir wrote that because of her *otherness*, woman has a narcissistic relationship with her own female image—she sees herself through the eyes of men and tries to fill the expectations that men and the society set to her femininity (1998:186). Esa Saarinen and Sara Heinämaa, late existential feminists, have pointed out that women are always defined through other people, through her husband and children, even if she did not have either of them (1984:112).

Beauvoir's conception of the possibilities that life offers to women was gloomy. Motherhood, reproduction, was for her the reason for women's slavery. When we read women's magazines through the lenses of existential feminism, we can see *otherness* represented in these papers especially in their visual impression. In the magazines,

beauty values are obvious and the appealing look that women have in the magazines does not differ much from the look that women in pornography have. Janice Winship writes that a woman's look does have an equal provocative sexual meaning in the magazines regardless of whether the reader is a man or a woman (1987:9). John Berger claims that the observer inside every woman is a masculine one and the one who is observed is always a feminine one. A woman's self-esteem is made up from the admiration from others (1991:46-47). It is obvious that one reason why the interviewees are so eager to give interviews to the magazines is their need for public acceptance.

Fifty years after Beauvoir wrote *Le deuxieme sex*, women celebrate motherhood in Finnish women's magazines. They do not see themselves as a slave of their ovaries. Quite the opposite, motherhood is the fulfilment of their dreams. It is obvious that the interviewees see themselves as real subjects because of the fact that they have been 'good enough' to get their pictures to the magazines. Perhaps they feel they are some sort of an authority as well, because they are given the possibility to tell about their thoughts in public. The interviewees emphasise their subjective position in their life. The structure of motherhood interviews is usually built so that in the end the interviewees remark that motherhood is mainly a new epithet in their subjectivity, perhaps deeper and more mystical than the others but still, the self, the Subject, has got a new epithet to the side of other epithets it had. E. Ann Kaplan has noticed the same tendency in movies—woman does not *have to* be a mother; maternity is not a duty anymore, but a complementary factor in women's lives (1992:194).

In the post-modern feminist thought not only women are repressed in our society, but all that is feminine as well. They claim that all feminine is repressed in language, philosophy and culture and is valued lower and more meaningless than anything masculine (Gatens 1991:113). If Simone de Beauvoir thought in her existential feminism that womanhood is a limitation, post-modern philosophy sees *otherness* as a possibility. All that is repressed in society is free to act against the dominating rules (Putnam Tong 1998:195).

Julia Kristeva has created the idea of women's symbolic revolution, which happens if women put their suppressed feminine powers to use (Braidotti 1993:184). When a child learns to speak s/he is forced to abandon the feminine, *the semiotic*, together with his/her symbiosis with mother and move to *the symbolic*, to the father's world. The symbolic represents a well structured language and society for Kristeva (Braidotti 1993:185). In the process of individualisation, the child 'forgets' the feminine that the mother represents. When *the symbolic*—language and society—is adopted, *the semiotic* and feminine cannot be reached any more. In this process all that is feminine becomes to be of secondary importance (Braidotti 1993:185). Post-modern feminist philosophers, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous claim that all the representations in the society are masculine ones. The language we speak is a masculine language, created by men. It is the conception of post-modern feminists that all thinking is based on language and if there is only a masculine language then there are only masculine thoughts (e.g., Grosz 1989). For post-modern feminists, women's liberation could be possible *if* women could 'find again' their own lost language (Gatens 1991:118).

Women's magazines are directed to women, they tell about women and usually women write them. Women's magazines could be a perfect place for the 'rise of semiotic' or a place where the women's lost language and lost thoughts could be created again. But can this 'new subjectivity' be seen in Finnish women's magazines? Well, in some interviews some sort of reconstructing can bee seen and as well some new ways of representing motherhood. But it is impossible to analyse whether these new types of images represent 'women's new subjectivity' as Kristeva put it, or if they are just reflections of new role models, new demands that society sets to women, demands that are not liberating in the first place. The consumerist ideology is of

course so strong in women's magazines that in reality they are not a place for 'the symbolic revolution'. As Nicole Brossard wrote: "Things that are real to her are not real to the society she lives in. …Women's reality is fiction in the mainstream culture" (1985, in Lappalainen 1996:133).

For post-modern feminism, the conception of motherhood in our society is also based on fiction. Julia Kristeva wrote that the idea of a 'good mother' is an illusion, created by the child when in symbiosis with the mother. The idealisation of motherhood is a child's unfulfilled dream from the pre-oedipal phase, but somehow the society keeps it alive. (1993:137) The image of a 'good mother' is an unrealistic one. This can clearly be seen in the Finnish women's magazines, where the idealisation of motherhood gets even ridiculous forms at many times. In the magazines, the laws of entertainment allow exaggeration. Richard Dyer writes that entertainment does not tell how things *are*, because entertainment is focused on making people *feel* good (1992:18; Nikunen 1996:52). In 1976 *Vogue*'s chief editor said that *Vogue*'s aim was 60% to sell dreams and 40% to give practical advice (Winship 1987:13). From the point of view of the code of journalistic ethics the idea of mass media is to provide citizens with information *that helps them to form a proper opinion of the reality they live in* (Vuortama 1983:67). But, the journalistic code of ethics does not actually have anything to do with women's magazines. This makes Nicole Brossardi's statement of women's reality as fiction to the society even more clear.

Back to the question presented in the beginning. Was it possible to make media discourse and feminist philosophy discourse encounter? To compare media texts or media discourses with other discourses is of course puzzling because the purposes and ideologies behind the media texts are so diversified that it is difficult to find out what these texts really 'mean'. Whose voice can be heard? Is it reporter's, the interviewee's, the publisher's or an advertiser's? Or is it all of them in the same text? Anyway, it appeared that existential feminism offered a very fruitful base to this study. Existential feminist discourse and women's magazines media discourse did encounter. Post-modern feminist philosophy and Julia Kristeva's opinions gave a very fascinating approach to my material, but it was difficult, even impossible, to make comparisons. The abstract of post-modern feminism made it difficult to make these two discourses to encounter.

In my dissertation I have continued my work with women's magazines. I research the conceptions about motherhood, marriage and sexuality from the 1930's to the 1970's in the modern Finnish women's magazines. This time I will compare these conceptions about womanhood to the socio-political situation of women in Finland during these years and study how the magazines have reflected the changing society and women's situation in it.

Literature

MeNaiset 45/1998 "Haluan olla hyvä isä" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 35/1999 "Nuori rakastettu ja vauva!" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 36/1999 "Suru pitää aina käsissään" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 38/1999 "Jarno palautti uskon ihmisiin" / Sari Parkkonen Helsinki. Media.
MeNaiset 40/1999 "Tissiä, äiti!" / Sari Parkkonen Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 41/1999 "Nyt olen kypsä äidiksi!" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki. Media.
MeNaiset 45/1999 "Raskainta on tuntea syyllisyyttä" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 46/1999 "Perhe kasvaa keväällä" / Sari Parkkonen. Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 47/1999 "Matiaksen ongelmat ovat lähentäneet meitä" / Sari Parkkonen.Helsinki Media.
MeNaiset 9/2000 "En kykene olemaan äiti ja uranainen" / Sari Parkkonen.Helsinki

Media.
Anna 22/1998 ”Tanja, Totti ja lapset ja elämän paras aika” / Mira Helstelä.Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 24/1998 ”Laura Voutilainen odottaa rantaleikkejä lapsen kanssa” / Marjaleena Tuppurainen.Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 19/1999 ”Äitiyttä ei voi suorittaa” / Tuula Kasanen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 23/1999 ”Caron Barnes: Olin valmis äidiksi” / Tuula Kasanen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 30/1999 ”Anu ja Robin-vauva Saarenmaan suvessa” / Marjaleena Tuppurainen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 7/2000 ”Äitiys on ihana vaiva” / Seppo Pietikäinen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 11/2000 ”Sari Puumalainen ja pökerryttävän ihana aika” / Miia Siistonen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 16-17/2000 ”Suukkoja ja halauksia ei voi tuhlata liikaa” / Marja-Leena Tuppurainen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 33/2000 ”Tuuli Matinsalon tervetullut täyskäännös” / Mirka Heinonen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.
Anna 44/2000 ”Elina Salovaaran yllättävän ihana raskaus” / Miia Siistonen. Yhtyneet kuvalehdet.

Beauvoir, Simone de 1949: Le Deuxième Sexe. Paris: Gallimard
Berger, John: Näkemisen tavat. Love kirjat: Helsinki.
Braidotti, Rosi: Riitasointuja. Tampere: Vastapaino
Gatens, Moira 1991: Feminism and Philosophy-perspectives on difference and equality. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Grosz, Elizabeth 1989: Sexual subversions- Three French Feminists. Sydney: Allen& Unwin.
Dyer, Richard 1992: Only Entertainment. London: Routledge.
Heinämaa, Sara & Saarinen, Esa 1984: Olennainen nainen –Naiskuvan filosofiset perusteet. Juva:WSOY.
Jallinoja, Riitta 1997: Moderni säädyllisyys. Aviosuhteen vapaudet ja sidokset. Tampere: Gaudeamus.
Kaplan, E. Ann 1992: Motherhood and Representation. The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama. London and New York: Routledge.
Kristeva, Julia 1993: Puhuva subjekti. Tampere: Gaudeamus.
Lappalainen, Päivi 1996: Rakkaudella –Julia Kristeva ja maternaalinen subjekti. In Päivi Kosonen (ed.): Naissubjekti ja postmoderni. Tampere. Gaudeamus.
Nikunen, Kaarina 1996: Pornokuva ja naisen siveä katse. In Marianna Laiho & Iiris Ruoho (ed.): Naisen naamio, miehen maski. Katse ja sukupuoli mediakuvassa. Tampere:KSL.
Putnam Tong, Rosemarie 1998: Feminist thought –A more comprehensive introduction. Kent: Routledge.
Vuortama, Timo 1983: Yksityiselämä ja joukkotiedotus. Rauma: Kustannus-Mäkelä Oy.
Winship, Janice 1987: Inside Women’s Magazines. London: Pandora.

"I Thought I Would Become a Millionaire" – Desire and Disillusionment in Silicon Valley, California

Minna Lahti, University of Helsinki

mslahti@mappi.helsinki.fi

The paper explores the connections between the market economy, narratives of success and everyday practices. It attempts to unfold some of the ways in which people replicate or criticize market place values through their narratives and practices. The paper is part of an ongoing research project and it should be read as such: it is a tentative attempt to give some form to first hand experiences in Silicon Valley, California.

I got to know Silicon Valley between 1998-2001 - exceptionally remarkable years for the US economy. In the latter part of the 1990s the technological expansion that started with the Internet, created wealth that was unforeseen in Silicon Valley. For instance, in the fourth quarter of 1998, venture capitalists invested $1,7 billion in Silicon Valley companies, which was 41 percent of all the money invested in the United States (see, Cohen & Fields 2000, p. 192-193). The boom continued until the end of 2000 when the economy started to slow down very rapidly. Soon after that the so-called "techno bubble" was history.

The paper is based on participant observation and interviews during this historical time.

In the spring of 2001 I lived in Palo Alto and interviewed more than forty people of different ages and ethnic backgrounds who worked in technology start-up companies.[1] In June 2001 I moved back to Finland and since then I have kept in touch with my informants by e-mail. I focused on start-up company experiences, because they reveal some of the most celebrated qualities of Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is repeatedly represented as the Mecca of the technological entrepreneurs. The area is described as an "ecosystem," a "social structure of innovation," an "incubator region". These descriptions aptly underline the way in which the Silicon Valley social structure supports the creation of new start-up companies that make the area exceptionally competitive, dynamic and market driven. (Kenney 2000.) "Start-up companies *are* Silicon Valley," as one of the engineers put it (*Randy, 30 years*).

The start-up company scene in Silicon Valley is a man's world and most of my informants are men, even if there are also women who have successful corporate careers. The power, however, is in the hands of venture capitalists – almost all of whom are men – who act as gatekeepers, deciding whether or not a new start-up company will get funding. (Rogers & Larsen 1984, p. 62, 71.) In addition, Silicon Valley is represented as a masculine place where young men – the famous nerds, who are more fascinated by their computers than the opposite sex – share long hours of work and a passion for advanced technology.

Most people, who succeed in Silicon Valley start-up companies, are highly educated, although, people emphasize that the only thing that counts is one's work performance. In other words, work rather than anything else is one's badge of honor. (See also, Rogers & Larsen 1984, p. 136, 154). Various ethnicities are present in the area, and during leisure time, or at work everyday, arrangements of various kinds are highly tolerated. According to Everett Rogers and Judith Larsen (1984, p. 157) the only life style alternative, that is not widely accepted, is a gay lifestyle. They argue that homosexuality may be widespread in Silicon Valley, but since being a gay is thought of as a serious career limitation, people prefer not to talk about it. The silence about homosexuality in an area that is geographically so close to San Francisco, where being gay is exceptionally tolerated, suggests that Silicon Valley shares

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the values of corporate America. These values are, however, not replicated in any straightforward manner. The management philosophy promoted in Silicon Valley is described as "flexible, informal, entrepreneurial and non-traditional" (Rogers & Larsen 1984, p. 145). Accordingly, Silicon Valley produces its own version of market economy on which I will elaborate in the following.

Heroic stories

The Silicon Valley start-up culture is produced through the interactions of people in the work places. Furthermore, it is constantly replicated in the discourse that circulates in the media, in the work places and private homes. This discourse represents Silicon Valley as "the place of deals and dreams" and it focuses on technology companies and their successes. The Silicon Valley version of the American dream unfolds around the millionaire who has earned his fortune as an entrepreneur. Several real life people qualify for this heroic role, for instance the Netscape founder Jim Clark, the Apple founder Steve Jobs, or the Oracle founder Larry Ellison who are among the most famous technology millionaires. These men are embodiments of the Silicon Valley dream, heroes who have built companies from scratch. (For heroic stories, see, for instance, Cringely 1992; Kaplan 1999; Lewis 2000.)

The circulating discourse tends to focus on the successes of the area. As one marketing director put it: "Who cares about those who did not make it?" (*Steve, 34 years*). Failures have little space in the Silicon Valley mindscape that concentrates on future successes. The usually cited figure estimates that nine out of ten start-up companies in Silicon Valley fail. And even this might be an optimistic estimate, and, more likely, nineteen out of every twenty companies are not success stories (Cringely 1992, p. 232). The proportion of people who actually have their dream come true is small. Yet the Silicon Valley logic suggests that failure is only beneficial. People *toughened* or *seasoned* by the experience of failure are often represented as more "savvy" than those, who have never failed. The Silicon Valley dream continues to imply that after few years of struggling and hardship rewards will accumulate, pay will increase, stock options will produce a substantial profit, and the company will perhaps even become another world-famous success story. Then life will be pleasant – a comfortable home, a new sports car or two, and money to do whatever one desires. (See also, Rogers & Larsen 1984, p. 154-155.)

Theresa De Lauretis, among others, sees narrative as a fundamental way of making sense of the world around us. To receive pleasure from a narrative, people must assume 'the positionalities of meaning and desire' made available by the textual structure (De Lauretis 1984, p. 196). The plot of the narrative, the dream story, or the adventure, binds fantasy and emotion. It feels good and worth pursuing. Narratives are, thus, effective on the personal level and powerfully participate in the production of forms of subjectivity that are individually shaped. Nevertheless, these forms of subjectivity that are also collective; textual structures that have the power to move people, are always historical, ideological and socially shared. They play with the collectively shared symbolic categories crucial for the reproduction of social structure (see, Lahti 2001, chapter 2).

During the years of the Internet hype, the success stories of millionaires became a means of discussing wealth. Young men interviewed in Silicon Valley identified themselves with the millionaire stories: if they worked hard, they too would become millionaires. As such, the hero acts as a "role model" who promises that if they just mimic him – work endless hours in a start-up company – they will eventually succeed. The identification suggests an affective encounter with the dream. Working long hours becomes a way to approach the dream: "I thought I would become a millionaire," a young guy explains his long hours at work (*Ryan, 24 years*). During the economic boom, in particular, stories abounded of hundred-hour workweeks and caffeine-addicted programmers tucked into sleeping bags in their cubicles.

The power of these stories can also be approached from the perspective of the recent theorization of the body that emphasizes that experiences are always corporeal and embodied. Although the body – feminine or masculine – is often described as an object of discourses and representations that attempt to render the body passive, the body is not just an object of knowledge. It is rather actively used in the production of meanings and it provides a space for a corporeal experience, which is shaped by socially circulating discourses. (Csordas 1994; Moore 1994, p. 17-21.) As such, the male or female body is engaged in representations; representations move people in their everyday lives. In other words, whatever moves a person, does so physically and emotionally. When one identifies with a powerful story, it is not only a matter of fantasy and feeling. It engages the whole body and daily practices. The more realistic or believable the narrative is, the more likely it makes the agent act.[2]

In light of start-up company experiences, Silicon Valley is fundamentally imagined as a place where one needs to believe in the future successess, whether technological or economical. What is important is *The New, New Thing* as suggested by the title of the book that describes the adventures of the Netscape founder Jim Clark (Lewis 2000). Thus the first step in becoming a member of the male community is to be convinced that Silicon Valley is the place to be, even if the apartment prices are high, traffic is nightmarish at times and the wealth is very unevenly distributed. One who believes in a place, believes in the dreams of that place and acts accordingly. This explains why Silicon Valley is often not considered a geographical place at all, it is rather defined as "an attitude." A thirty-year-old engineer who has worked in Silicon Valley for four years explains: "You have to believe in success. Even if you were a small company of 50 people, you would have to behave as if you had already made millions. You throw big parties and spend money. Otherwise nobody will take you seriously." (*Gai, 30 years.*) In other words, one has to "project an image of success at all times." This means that people rarely complain about the long hours at work; rather, they love their work. For instance, a wife of an engineer, who answers her husband's e-mail, because he has no time for non-work related correspondence, describes his work in a new company: "He works endless hours, and still enjoys every minute of it" (*Patricia, 27 years*).

Narratives of success are essential for companies, because they make people work long hours with no summer vacations or retirement benefits.[3] In start-up companies there is no need to manage people in a traditional sense; workers are engaged in making a success story. They are passionate about the cutting-edge technology and they have a stake in the company through their stock options, although the sum of their options is minimal compared to that of the venture capitalists or company founders. John Seely-Brown (2000, p. xiii) who has made a career in the famous Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, describes the Silicon Valley spirit that forces people to succeed: "This dynamic that drives you, drives your competition, haunting both of you. It haunts people, in particular, with the unsettling fear of becoming a has-been. Things happen so fast that the step from being ahead to being passé happens in the blink of an eye."

Critical Voices

Yet this is not the whole story. Time and again the critique of the market-driven culture of Silicon Valley searches for a collective arena (Stacey 1990). The celebratory talk about Silicon Valley also becomes less intense during the slow downs in the economy. Some people openly admit their disappointment. "The quick money days are gone forever," complained a company founder in October 2001 (*Hannes, 31 years*). Nevertheless, even during financially insecure periods, people often remember to mention that "the old Silicon Valley self-confidence – that high tech will always triumph – is still firmly in place." They remind us that history has taught us that Silicon Valley depressions[4] are followed by economic booms generated by new tech-

nological innovations. Po Bronson (2000, p. 231) who has written one of the most interesting pieces about Silicon Valley describes this belief: " -- Silicon Valley workers have a muscular faith in their industry, a deep optimism that they will be able to continue to find work for many more years. They have loyalty to the whole process. Their need to see the altruism in their efforts is supplied by implicit deduction rather than explicit hype; the industry is good; I work in the industry; therefore, I am good."

Consequently, critical voices that suggest that there is something fundamentally problematic in Silicon Valley, are consistently ignored. A journalist who has written a mildly critical book about the Valley explains his position: "I am a failure, of course. It takes a failure – someone who is not quite clever enough to succeed or to be considered a threat – to gain access to the heart of any competitive, ego-driven industry."(Cringely 1992, p. 11.) He writes with the assumption that anyone who tells a Silicon Valley story that does not fit into the dominant structure is inevitably treated as marginal.

On March 27th 2001, another critical voice appeared on the Internet when an "un-wanted list" of participants of the Internet economy was posted on the website of www.netslaves.com. The twenty people listed were formerly admired Internet heroes, such as the Netscape founder Jim Clark, whom the authors of the list considered most responsible for the fact that so many employees of Internet companies were suddenly unemployed. Men, such as Clark, were described as unethical, because they "unleashed the dotcom beast." The technological industry is, however, inherently volatile and defined by boom-bust cycles. From Silicon Valley's point of view nothing extraordinary was occurring. The area has the highest concentration of "temporary" workers in the nation and every economic slowdown is marked by extensive layoffs (see also Stacey 1990, p. 23). As before, when the last period of prosperity took a downturn, thousands of people lost their jobs.

Emily Martin (1994) has suggested that globalization and the introduction of new worldwide technological systems have promoted a new notion of the body. Technological and economic development embraces bodies that are flexible and dynamic, and similarly, some workers in Silicon Valley who lose their jobs, expect themselves to be *flexible* in relation to their loss. A company founder who was pushed aside and fired in September 2001, explains in an e-mail: "Just remember our formula for success - take control, don't be a victim, plan it well and do it well " (*Cary, 44 years*). The voices that appeared on the Internet were, however, unwilling to carry this burden: they behaved like victims and blamed somebody else for the situation – the former heroes were turned into villains.

In conclusion, the manner in which the critique of Silicon Valley start-up culture is disregarded, highlights the way in which narratives replicate the structures essential for the reproduction of social order. People who are perceived as dysfunctional are treated as marginal. Critical voices attempt to address the tight rules of the market driven game, but they often end up working exactly like the dream of sudden wealth. The critique personalizes collective processes that take place and ignores the structures in which both the losers and the winners of Silicon Valley operate. The alliance between market economy and the American dream remains untouched.

Nevertheless, the criticism still serves as an attempt to rethink and criticize the structures of power in which the circulating discourse of Silicon Valley is embedded. Narratives of wealth – in the media and elsewhere – reinforce desires and create dreams that move people in an economically functional manner. In other sites of the media, such as the Internet, people continue to criticize such processes as they take place, or at least, after the fact when their desires have been transformed into disillusion.

Endnotes

[1] My husband is a software engineer and some of my interviewees had worked with him: as a technowife I was an insider in Silicon Valley. Yet, I was also an outsider, a newcomer, like so many people who end up in Silicon Valley, which is frequently described as an area of independent – even isolated – agents. Kinship relations rarely tie people together and hardly anybody knows any other person's mother. (Cohen & Fields 2000, p. 191.)

[2] Or, as Greg Urban (1996, p. 250) has put it: "the more serious the talk is, the more likely it is to be lived in actual behavior.

[3] Most companies in Silicon Valley have no retirement plans (Rogers & Larsen 1984, p. 147).

[4] Since the beginning of the 1970s, Silicon Valley has experienced several economic downturns.

Literature

Bronson, P., 2000. *The Nudist on the Late Shift and Other Tales of Silicon Valley.* London: Vintage.

Cohen, S. And Fields, G., 2000. Social Capital and Capital Gains: An Examination of Social Capital in Silicon Valley. *In*: K. Martin, ed. *Understanding Silicon Valley: The Anatomy of an Entrepreneurial Region*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Cringely, R. X. 1992. *Accidental Empires: How the Boys of Silicon Valley Make Their Millions, Battle Foreign Competition and Still Can't Find a Date.* New York: Addison Wesley.

Csordas, T. J., ed. 1994. *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Lauretis, T. 1984. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema.* London: Macmillan.

Kaplan, D. A., 1999. *The Silicon Boys and Their Valley of Dreams.* New York: William Morrow & Company Inc.

Kenney, M., ed. 2000. *Understanding Silicon Valley: The Anatomy of an Entrepreneurial Region.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lahti, M., 2001. *Domesticated Violence: The Power of the Ordinary in Everyday Finland.* Research Series in Anthropology 2. Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki: Helsinki.

Lewis, M., 2000. *The New, New Thing.* New York: Penguin Books.

Martin, E., 1994. *The Flexible Bodies. The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of Aids.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Moore, H., 1994. *A Passion for Difference*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rogers, E. M. And Larsen, J. K., 1984. *Silicon Valley Fever: Growth of High-Technology Culture.* London: George Allen: Unwin.

Seely-Brown, J., 2000. Foreword. *In*: K. Martin ed. *Understanding Silicon Valley: The Anatomy of an Entrepreneurial Region.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Stacey, J., 1990. *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America.* New York: Basic Books

Urban, G., 1996. *Metaphysical Community: The Interplay of the Senses and the Intellect.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

www.netslaves.com

Ladies for Sale. The Finnish Press as a Profiteer

Mari-Elina Laukkanen, STAKES

mari-elina.laukkanen@stakes.fi

Abstract

This paper is based on the study on advertising for commercial sex services in Finnish newspapers that was conducted as a part of the national Finnish Programme for the Prevention of Prostitution and Violence against Women. The data were compiled during 1999 from interviews with 33 editors-in-chief and from a one-week sample of the commercial sex advertising material published in 35 major newspapers throughout the country.

Every week the classified sections of newspapers are filled with thousands of ads that are coloured with derogatory language about women and that support the pornographic fantasy of ever-eager female sexuality. The proceeds accumulated by the papers through sex advertisements are considerable. The sex trade uses marketing effectively in order to normalise the consumption of the products and services it offers as an unquestioned part of ordinary life and the public sphere. With its prevailing policy regarding sex advertising, the daily press contributes to this process of neutralisation of the sex trade, where mostly women have become sexually stimulating products to be sold, bought and consumed. It follows that the press can be demonstrated to be an institution that perpetuates the sex industry by offering a forum for sex advertising.

Today I am going to talk about commercial sex advertisement, or more specifically about the study on Finnish daily newspapers as a forum for the sex trade. The study was conducted during 1999—2000 as a part of the national Programme for the Prevention of Prostitution & Violence Against Women[1], that is implemented by the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES). The study supports the goals of the programme especially by drawing attention to the structures and mechanisms of the sex industry, to the various interest groups involved and to the money circulating in this trade. Before discussing any results or themes that came up over the course of my investigation I will set out the study context, objectives and methodology.

In Finland one encounters commercial sex advertisements not only in actual pornographic material, such as sex magazines, but also in daily newspapers published throughout the country. Since the beginning of the 1990s classified sections of the newspapers have become a major meeting ground for the promoters and the consumers of the sex industry. At present the classified sections of newspapers are daily filled with hundreds of ads that are coloured with derogatory language about women and that support the given fantasy of ever-eager female sexuality.

The primary objective of the study was to highlight the money flows related to commercial sex advertising and its significance for the economy of the Finnish daily press. An attempt was made to get a comprehensive picture of the real volume of the sex advertising in the press at the national level. The secondary objective was to examine the manifesting trends in sex advertising, that is to say, the diversity of content and the discourses used in the advertising. For this purpose I examined the advertising policy of each paper and its impact on the material which was published in the paper in question. By these means I outlined some patterns in the ways the sex trade is evolving and responding to demand in ever-increasing ways.

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

The methodology used was twofold. Firstly, I took a one-week sample of the commercial sex advertising material published in 35 major newspapers throughout the country. The papers selected for the study were prominent newspapers in their specific market areas, published 5—7 times a week. The analysed advertising material comprised the 3,500 separate sex service advertisements published in selected papers during the ninth week of 1999. This data formed a representative cross-section of commercial sex advertising in the Finnish daily press. Secondly, I sent out a mail questionnaire in the second half of 1999. The inquiry was directed to the editors-in-chief of the 35 biggest newspapers covering each marketing region in the whole country. The final data included the responses of the editorial or administrative management of 33 newspapers. Only two papers refused to give any information.

In the study I looked at advertising for the whole range of sex services in the sex industry. The concept of *sex service* was extended to cover the entire variety of commercial services that are intended to generate erotic or sexual gratification or stimulation for the purchaser. The advertisement of the promoted service did not necessarily entail a promise of a potential physical contact between the performer and customer, even though prostitution is a significant part of the trade in sex services. Sex service advertisements covered prostitution, escort services, sex shops and sex bars as well as pornographic publications and telephone sex lines.

Approximately half of the revenues of newspapers come from the sale of advertisement space (Finnish Mass Media 1999). Undoubtedly, revenues from commercial sex advertising represent significant income for certain papers. Of the 35 newspapers examined, 24 published commercial sex advertisements in 1999. The results of the week-long close investigation on the published sex advertising material indicated that these newspapers publish some 180,000 separate sex service advertisements each year, yielding proceeds worth about FIM 47 million (7.9 million Euros). The biggest selling daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, which is regarded as a quality newspaper, seemed to lead the field in terms of the volume of published sex ads. During the week of examination the paper published some 900 advertisements promoting sex services.

Telephone sex lines (with the code 0700) constituted the largest group of sex service advertisements in daily newspapers. It has to be remarked, however, that the advertising language used by phone sex providers appeared to be suggesting that their activities involved or were accompanied by prostitution to a significant extent, i.e. the services offered were not limited to "verbal" ones.

The sex trade uses marketing effectively in order to normalise the consumption of the products and services it offers as an unquestioned part of ordinary life and the public sphere. With its prevailing policy regarding sex advertising, the daily press contributes to this process of neutralisation of the sex trade, where mostly women have become sexually stimulating products to be sold, bought and consumed. It follows that the press can be demonstrated to be an institution that perpetuates the sex industry by offering a forum for sex advertising.

By advertising in newspapers, the sex trade normalises the consumption of its products and services as an unquestioned part of everyday life and the public sphere. Societal arrangements, like media policy regarding sex advertising, make a key contribution to the expansion of the *eroticised consumption culture*. The predominant policy in the papers I looked at is to publish sex ads as an integrated basic material of the paper so that they are vaguely segregated from other editorial or commercial material. Sex ads are usually located in the section entitled "entertainment lines" — a practice that has played a role in launching the concept of "adult entertainment" in Finland. This signifying practice has resonance with the libertarian sexual ethics, where free commercial sex is presented as harmless, high-quality, and enjoyable entertainment (Seidman 1992; Noppari 1996, p. 55). These kinds of placing and classification practices actively contribute to the neutralisation process of the sex trade.

The press has traditionally served as an institution that primarily distributes essential information for the mass audience, and provides a public arena for discussion. For these reasons the existence of the press has been regarded as the cornerstone of the foundation of liberal democratic states. (McNair 1996, p. 23—24). It is important to consider the controversial roles of the press — firstly as a mediator of information for all citizens and therefore used by all age groups, and secondly, as an underwriter of the sex industry. When the press is harnessed for the needs of sex industry, everyone — voluntarily or not — is exposed to explicit pornographic marketing messages, to the promotion of the sex industry. Hence, the perception of the daily press as a public sphere provides a valuable framework for examining sex advertising as *structural sexual harassment* of all women.

My theoretical approach to the theme has a lot in common with discursive approaches. The press is seen as a re-enforcer of prevailing cultural values and as a constructor of social reality, rather than as a neutral mediator of new information. For instance, I was interested in how particular discourses constructed in the print media are connected with power. How are they shaped by ownership of publishing houses and other economical arrangements of the paper in question?

The suppliers of the sex industry have been allowed to create their own marketing vocabulary and culture in the papers without interference from authorities. Mainly because of the feedback from readers, some newspapers have internally regulated the marketing expressions and images that they publish. Yet, a general review on the ads indicates that the representations of sex service providers, generally women, are commonly stereotyping and demeaning. Sex service advertising perpetuates the value structures prevalent in the sex industry, where *sexism is combined with market ideology*.

The advertising language is pornographic and detailed in its descriptions. For example, imaginary sounds and the condition of female genitalia at the moment of intercourse are described in the ads. Some phone sex lines have used marketing slogans portraying a scene where those involved are a young girl and 16 men (Iisalmen Sanomat, 2.3.1999). These kinds of settings are undeniably referring to the extremely unequal situations of the participants and the deprivation of power. The ads create a fictional scene of a gang rape to the readers or spectators.

Over the course of the year-long study process I found that the marketing images used by sex traders had a tendency to get more and more harsh. For instance, a year after the actual investigation period, ads that referred to female anus and anal intercourse had became part of the marketing themes used. Marketing lines that suggest sexual harassment or abuse taking place in professionally confidential relations had also been established as part of commonly used marketing themes of the phone sex lines.

In the sex advertising the sex service providers — women — are objectified at many levels: firstly as a product of the sex trader, secondly as an object for the spectator of the ad (an object of the "male gaze") and thirdly as a concrete object of the purchaser. The only subject-position which sex advertising constructs for the woman is the discourse of the sexually ever-eager female who consents to anything with anybody at any time in order to provide maximum pleasure for the customer.

This indiscriminate blanket marketing of the sex industry fulfils the main characteristics typical to *sexual harassment*, and therefore it could be examined as *institutionalised violence against women*. The public gaze is repeatedly directed at women as sexually stimulating commodities to be consumed by the masses. Communication culture saturated by the promotion of the sex trade invites the readers – adults and children – to share the ideologies favourable to the sexual exploitation of women.

Representations of gender relations in sex ads are not depreciating just for women. They also violate men in taking all men as potential marketing targets for the fantasies that are for sale. They carry assumptions about a driven, uncontrollable and monolithic male sexuality that forces men to endlessly seek impersonal sexual satis-

faction. (*See* Burrell & Hearn 1989, p. 1—28). Hence, the images and messages used in advertising mediate ideological constructions that play a significant role in shaping and creating the demand itself (*See*, *for instance*, Truong 1990, p. 373—374).

Among the readership, there have arisen separate demands to reduce sex traders' freedom to trade. For instance, according to the editors-in-chief, the majority of the papers have received negative feedback regarding the publication of commercial sex ads from their readers, and sometimes also from their own personnel. Correspondingly, the papers that do not publish any sex ads have got messages of thanks on their policy, from both their readership and from the staff of the paper.

Some 11 newspapers have implemented a policy of not selling advertisement space for the marketing of sex services of any kind. Nevertheless, the study indicates that self-regulation performed by most newspapers is clearly inadequate. Restriction measures parallel with those that have been recently proposed must be given serious consideration. In Iceland, an amendment to the General Penal Code provides sanctions that apply to persons responsible for advertising pornography and various forms of sexual favours in the media or in public. The proposed amendment mainly involves sanctions directed at the purchase of sexual services or promotion of the sex industry.[2] When restriction measures are considered it is necessary to delegate the task to quarters that are not linked to the various interest groups of the sex industry.

I would like to conclude my presentation by remarking that sex advertising is a part of rapidly expanding global operations that create new demands and needs in order to maximise the consumption of sex services. However, the subjects of the eroticised trade are human beings. The interests of the sex traders remain contradictory to the human right to be free from sexual exploitation and from harassment[3].

Endnotes

[1] In compliance with the obligations set by the United Nations, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland launched two national five-year projects – Prevention of Violence Against Women and Prevention of Prostitution. The program is put into practice at the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health and is chaired by Mr. Osmo Soininvaara, Minister of Health and Social Services.

[2] Legislative Bill on an amendment to the General Penal Code No. 19/1940, as amended. Halldórsdóttir, K. & Sigfússon, S. J. & Backman P. 2001.

[3] *See* United Nations 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, *and* the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Literature

Burrell, Gibson & Hearn, Jeff (1989): The sexuality of organization. In The Sexuality of Organization, Eds. Hearn, Jeff et al., London, Sage.

Finnish Mass Media 1999. Statistics Finland, Culture and the Media 1999:1, Helsinki.

McNair, Brian (1996): Mediated Sex. Pornography and Postmodern Culture. Arnold, London.

Legislative Bill on an amendment to the General Penal Code No. 19/1940, as amended. Halldórsdóttir, K. & Sigfússon, S. J. & Backman P. 2001.

Noppari, Elina (1996): Kaupallisen seksin käsittelyä suomalaisessa lehdistössä. Sukupuolten esittämisen problematiikkaa. [*Reporting of Commercial Sex in the Finnish Press. Problematisation of Representation of Gender*]. Erikoistyö, Kandidaatin tutkiema, Tampereen yliopisto, tiedotusopin laitos.

Seidman, Steven (1992): Embattled Eros. Sexual Politics and Ethics in Contemporary America. Routledge, New York.

Truong, Thanh-Dan (1990): Sex, Money and Morality: Prostitution and Tourism in South East Asia. Zed Books.

United Nations 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

United Nations 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Do Muscles Have a Gender?
A Female Subject Building Her Body in the Film *Pumping Iron II: The Women'*

Ilmari Leppihalme, University of Oulu
ilmari.lppihalme@oulu.fi

My paper will examine the competing aesthetic strategies of women's bodybuilding expressed in the bodybuilding film *Pumping Iron II: The Women* (1985), which is written and directed by Charles Gaines and George Butler. I divide these strategies roughly into two categories: first, the conservative *aesthetics demanding femininity* and, secondly, the *aesthetics of extreme or hardcore bodybuilding*, which transgresses borders of the gender. In the film *Pumping Iron II* these opposite aesthetics are embodied by two very different bodies. The other one belongs to Rachel McLish, a very feminine competitor and the first Ms Olympia from 1980. Her challenger – and the challenger of the feminine aesthetics – is Bev Francis, whose first appearance as a professional bodybuilder was a shocking aesthetic manifestation. Her extremely muscular body was years ahead of her time, and the bodybuilding community was not ready for it.

Women's bodybuilding is a mishmash of different ideological functions and signifiers. It is very ambiguous and open enough to offer quite opposite meanings to the audiencies with very dissimilar orientations. (Schulze 1990, 78). For example, the feminists' reactions to women's bodybuilding vary from scepticism to celebration (Moore 1997, 74-75; see also Grosz 1994, 224; Nead 1993, 8).

My presentation is based on this interprepative tension. I will consider the representative strategies, which domesticate and eroticize female bodybuilders for the object of heterosexual gaze. On the other hand, I will also consider the cultural displacement and resistance of their bodies. I will try to deconstruct this tension between domestication and resistance by analyzing the ideas of body drag and gender blending. In addition, I will discuss the relationship of women's bodybuilding to the utopias of the cyborg aesthetics. Finally, I will link women's bodybuilding to the gendered concepts in the tradition of aesthetics, the beautiful and the sublime.

The Competing Aesthetics of Women's Bodybuilding

1) *The aesthetics demanding femininity* was dominant in the early stage of women's bodybuilding, in the beginning of the 1980's. It could even be characterized as antibodybuilding, because it warned women, that they should not build their bodies too much, because in that case they might lose their femininity. So we can say, that also in bodybuilding femininity is an aesthetic category, which effectively maintains and sanctions the gender difference. As Marcia Ian (1991; see also 1995, p.78) asks, "in what other sport could a female competitor be expected to limit her achievement for fear of losing her proper gender"?

2) Another tendency in women's bodybuilding can be called *extreme or hardcore bodybuilding*, which tries to achieve a maximal muscle development. Since the middle of the 1980's we have witnessed an appearance of more and more muscular female bodybuilders on the stage. If maximal muscle development is accepted as a goal of female bodybuilding, the relationship to men's bodybuilding and, after all, to masculinity will become problematic. However, by the mid 1990's women's bodybuilding lost much of it's popularity to fitness competitions. It was also influenced by more conservative fitness aesthetics, which once again emphazises femininity, sexual appeal and performance. (Heywood 1998, p. 27-33, 43-44, 90; Todd 2000, p. 307).

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

Body Drag

The film *Pumping Iron II* is a documentary about a real competion of women's bodybuilding in Las Vegas in 1983. The film focuses on the preparation of some competitors and especially on the debut of an Australian former power lifter, Bev Francis, as a bodybuilder. Bev's debut was a sensation, because her body seemed to lack all femininine signifiers – except bikinis. In their book of the same subject, *Pumping Iron II: The Unprecedented Woman* (1984), Gaines and Butler tell, how they found Francis by accident, when they happened to see a small picture of her in a bodybuilding book:

> The caption claimed the subject was a woman, but though her posing suit clearly included a bikini bra, your eyes told you this person had to be a man. No woman could have thights like that, your eyes said, or shoulders or arms like that, not to mention the abnominal muscles. No woman has a stomach like that, your eyes insisted: it has to be a man dressed, for some weird reason, like a woman. (Gaines and Butler 1984, p. 145).

Would it be so, that Bev made visible what the marketing machinery of bodybuilding industry and many female bodybuilders themselves desperately try to hide, namely that both the bodies of female and male bodybuilders are seen as culturally masculine bodies, because muscularity and power are associated to masculinity (Ian 1990, p. 72)? Anyway, also the more "natural" femininity represented by Rachel McLish proves to be a construct, which is very difficult to maintain. For example she loses points in the competition, because judges notice, that she has stuffed her bras. She is also warned that she should not flirt too much on the stage, when one of the judges shouts, "no extra movements Rachel!"

However, when watching the film, it is easy to be amused by Rachel's games or to be terrified by Bev's muscles, and at the same time, it is too easy to forget that actually both bodybuilders call into question the naturalness of the gender. Both performances make visible the fact that gender is maintained by posing, by representing and performing, or as Judith Butler (1990; 1993) states it, by *performativity*.

Now, we can suppose, that what makes it so difficult and uneasy for some of us to look at very muscular female bodybuilders, is that their representation of femininity is not convincing enough and in this way they happened to reveal the representative nature of gender, its performativity. But after all, the feminine signifiers (like make up, varnished nails, bikinis, gestures, hairstyle) are always non-natural signifiers, whether they are carried by a markedly feminine woman in a traditional sense (like Rachel McLish) or by a markedly muscular woman (like Bev Francis). Very muscular female bodybuilders just use these signifiers in a way, which is confusing, because they combine culturally masculine muscles and traditional feminine signifiers. This might make the audience associate them rather with drag queens than with women. (Moore 1997, p. 83). As the film makers describe their first impression of Bev Francis, "it has to be a man dressed, for some weird reason, like a woman." However, it is paradoxical, that just when a muscular female bodybuilder is trying to conform to the heterosexual norm, she breaks and makes visible cultural practices, which we use to gender the body.

But when we discuss about the possibilities of counter aesthetics in women's bodybuilding, we must remember, that the experienced, inner, subjective bodyimage of the female bodybuilder might be very different compared to the interpretations, which others state about her body. Drag is many times in the eye of the beholder and the body of the female bodybuilder is contextual.

Female bodybuilders have to negotiate between conflicting cultural demands on their bodies and consider very carefully the strategies, that they use to construct

and represent their bodies. But at the same time they create new representational space for the gender. (Johnston 1996, p. 327). Bodybuilding mixes the signifiers of the gender in a way, which resembles gender blending so fashionable in present day popular culture. For example, Marcia Ian (1995, p. 75) – herself an academic female bodybuilder – talks about the ”polymorphously sexed and gendered” body of the bodybuilder, which combines and extends many elements of the conventional male and female body, but cannot any more be reduced to either of them. (see also Dutton 1995, 293-300).

The Feminization of a Female Bodybuilder and Compulsory Heterosexuality

This chapter considers the representational and discoursive strategies by which a female bodybuilder, although she transgresses the limits of the normative female physique, can be contextualized back to familiar representational space, to the place of a traditional woman. As Laurie Schulze (1990, p. 59-60) states it, ”rather than claiming that she redefines the idea of femininity, the notion of femininity is deployed to redefine her in hegemonic terms.” Schulze calls these strategies domestication. (see also Mansfield and McGinn 1993, p. 54).

Pumping Iron II also utilizes soft porno conventions like lightning, effects of certain environments, framing and camera movement, which focuses to erogenic body parts, as well as heterosexualizing posing, hair styles, make up and clothing. The film also utilizes voyeristic shots of competitors in shower room and in swimming pool. As we know, in this way Western art has for centuries described women as water nymphs and utilized mythology to legalize soft porno representations for men. (Holmlund 1997, p. 93-95). These waterly images hide and veil the hard, sharply defined and dry, low fat bodies by steam and soap-lather and reduce them to oceanic obscurity, moisture and fluidity, which have traditionally been associated to female corporality (Schulze 1990, p. 70-71; see also Dyer 1986, p. 57-59). The body built female body realigns gaze from tits and ass to pure muscles, so the erotization of this body tries to direct the gaze back to an object of the heterosexual gaze. Also the competitors themself emphasize their heterosexuality, because if a female bodybuilder confesses openly that she is homosexual, she will probably lose her sponsors. And because her muscles confuse gender definitions, she must also overemphasize her femininity and heterosexuality. (Heywood 1998, p. 33-35; 97-110; see also Pally p. 1985, 60-62).

The film also uses secondary characters to underline the heterosexuality of the competitors, namely boyfriends – or we can even say compulsory boyfiends – as well as conventional romance plots. For example, Bev Francis – who was single when she arrived in Las Vegas – starts a relationship with her male trainer and another female competitor is even offered a marriage in front of the cameras. In general, the film’s representational strategies try to prevent the threatening association of muscularity, masculinity and lesbianism in the case of female bodybuilders, and this is the way how compulsory heterosexuality works, through never ending negation of every doubt, that one might be homosexual. (Holmlund 1997, p. 93-94; 96-97).

The film is directing, manipulating and protecting the gaze and desire in order to prevent an uneasy feeling, that to be interested in female bodybuilders might have something to do with the spectator’s lesbian or homosexual impulses. But, we can ask, if the pleasure that the male or female fans of women’s bodybuilding get from this heterosexualized spectacle, might still not be fully in balance with heterosexual ideology (Schulze 1990, p. 261).

Cyborgs

The film’s gym episodes depict a body technology, a kind of erotic union of steel, light, mirrors and muscles. The pleasure and pain of bodybuilding is associated to a woman

in labour, when competitors who train for the contest are represented as if they were giving birth to themselves. The film shows how they work inhumanely hard in the gym supported and encouraged by their trainers and boyfriends. They breathe, cry and groan with pain to be able to push one more repetition. These gym episodes combine two very contradictory discourses, namely, a traditional discourse, which sees woman first of all as a woman in labour, and a technological cyborg discourse, which refers to the transgression of a biological body. The discourse of the birth-giving considers the female body in the first place as a motherly body, and a womb as a primary signifier of femininity. Whereas the cyborg discourse, in this case the bodybuilding, tries to manipulate bodily processes.

Anne Balsamo (1995, p. 229-230; 1997, p. 329) has considered the possibilities that the biotechnology, for example body building, offers to the redefinition of woman's body and identity. Donna Haraway (1990, p. 149-181) on her part has used cyborg, the union of human being and machine or animal, as an ironic myth and a metaphor for possibilities to build future identities. So, following Balsamo and Haraway, we can ask, if women's body building can be interpreted as a hybrid discourse, which constructs cyborg bodies, that resist definitions and naturalizations.

Beautiful Girls or Sublime Women?

The film emphasizes the greatness of Bev Francis' body by connecting it to natural forces and proportions, which in the tradition of Western aesthetics have been classified as sublime (and now I refer to the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke). The sublime and the beautiful are gendered categories. The sublime goes beyond understanding and the mind cannot find expression to it, it is awesome, distant and masculine and arouses terror. Whereas beauty with smaller proportions has been associated to femininity, it is intimate and intelligible, and arouses our love. (Burke 1967, p. 51, 91, 115, 124; Armstrong 1996, p. 215, 217, 221).

Modern bodybuilding continues the tradition, that represents the male body as heroic, when it identifies masculinity with physical size and power. But at the same time it calls into question this tradition by connecting to female body such sublime features, which have earlier been reserved only to men.

The film links Bev Francis in the same way to sublime dimensions and depths by representing her standing alone on the top of Hoover Dam near Las Vegas. This dam built in the desert is a sublime monument, that symbolizes power, isolation, vastness and its construction has demanded a huge amount of trouble and suffering. The film refers also directly to Francis' personal affection towards sublime phenomena, when she says, "I like climbing things and I always admired strenght in anything, whether it was human or animal or weather – I like thunderstorms, anything that's big and strong and powerful."

My point is, that the representation of Bev Francis' body as sublime breaks the hierarchy of the beautiful and the sublime and drives the male subject of this aesthetics to confusion. In general, the body of a female bodybuilder feminizes masculinity and masculinizes femininity. This inversion and drag form a double movement, which makes her body homeless in the heterosexual system, which is based on the binarity of the man and the woman.

I interpretate the body of a female bodybuilder at its most radical as an meta-body, which goes beyond itself and is conscious of its own construction. I suppose that this body makes it possible to see beyond the binary logic of the gender, to the other side of the sublime and the beautiful, to the postmodern sublime and to the crisis of representation. In this sense, the key words of the film *Pumping Iron II* might be found from the dialogue of Bev Francis and her boyfriend.

– Do you think I am a girl?
– What do you think? Do I have to answer that?

Literature

Armstrong, M. 1996. ”The Effects of Blackness”: Gender, Race, and the Sublime in Aesthetic Theories of Burke and Kant. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 54 (3), 213-236.

Balsamo, A. 1995. Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture. *Body & Society*. Nov., Vol. 1 (3-4), 215-237.

Balsamo, A. 1997. *Technologies of the Gendered Body. Reading Cyborg Women.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Burke, E. 1967/1757. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. *Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies that Matter*. *On the Discoursive Limits of ”Sex”.* New York: Routledge.

Dutton, K. 1995. *The Perfectible Body: the Western Ideal of Male Physical Development*. New York:: Continuum.

Dyer, R. 1986. *Heavenly Bodies. Film Stars and Society*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.Gaines, C. and George, B. 1984. *Pumping Iron II: The Unprecedented Woman*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Grosz, E. 1994. *Volatile Bodies*. *Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. London: Indiana University Press.

Haraway, D. 1990. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.

Heywood, L. 1998. *Bodymakers: a Cultural Anatomy of Women’s Body Building*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Holmlund, C. 1997. Visible Difference and Flex Appeal: the Body, Sex, Sexuality, and Race in the Pumping Iron Films. In: P. Moore (ed.) *Building Bodies*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 87-102.

Ian, M. 1991. From Abject to Object: Womens Bodybuilding. *Postmodern Culture*. May, vol. 1 (3).

Ian, M. 1995. How Do You Wear Your Body? Bodybuilding and the Sublimity of Drag. In: M. Dorenkamp and R. Henke (ed.) *Negotiating Lesbian & Gay Subjects*. New York and London: Routledge, 71-90.

Johnston, L. 1996. Flexing Femininity: Female Body-Builders Refiguring ”the Body”. *Gender, Place & Culture: Journal of Feminist Geography.* September, vol. 3 (3), 327-341.

Mansfield, A. and McGinn, B. 1993. Pumping Irony: The Muscular and the Feminine. In: S. Scott and D. Morgan (ed.) *Body Matters: Essays on the Sosiology of the Body*. London and Washington D.C.: The Falmer Press, 49-68.

Moore, P. 1997. Feminist Bodybuilding: Sex, and the Interruption of Investigative Knowledge. In: P. Moore (ed.) *Building Bodies*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 74-86.

Nead, L. 1993/1992. *The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*. New York: Routledge.

Pally, M. 1985. Women of Iron. *Film Comment.* Vol. 21 (4): 60-64.

Pumping Iron II: The Women, 1985. Film. Directed by George Butler. Written by G. Butler and C. Gaines. USA: Bar Belle Productions. A White Mountain Film (in association with Gym Tech USA).

Schulze, L. 1990. On the Muscle. In: J. Gaines and C. Herzog (ed.) *Fabrications. Costume and the Female Body*. New York and London: Routledge, 59-78.

Todd, J. 2000. Bodybuilding. In: T. Pendergast and S. Pendergast (ed.) *St*. *James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*. Vol. 1:A-D. Detroit: St. James Press, 305-308.

The Three Faces of Eve: the post-war housewife, melodrama and home

Justine Lloyd and Lesley Johnson, University of Technology, Sydney

Justine.Lloyd@uts.edu.au

Introduction

In this paper we wish to trouble a received history of popular cultural narratives which understands all cultural production in the 1940s and 50s as underpinned by dominant ideologies of the home as women's proper place. In a longer study, which discusses several post-war films that feature housewives as main characters, we show that these films are not so much concerned with promoting domesticity as women's proper social role as arguing with it (Johnson and Lloyd forthcoming). We suggest that these housewife characters must work through a problematisation of the home; that is, the discourse of self-determination that requires the individual to leave home behind, while still maintaining a gendered identity. These women must be modern citizens, yet still feminine. We suggest that popular films of the 1940s and 50s therefore express an historically formed emotional ambivalence to the figure of the domestic woman.

In this respect, our analysis differs from the analysis of the woman's picture discussed in Mary Ann Doane's book, *The Desire to Desire*. In 1940s films aimed at a female audience, Doane identifies narrative conventions operate to exclude women from occupying identities of maternal reproduction and economic production simultaneously (Doane 1987). We instead redirect this debate about the representation of women in film to focus on the ways that the domestic has been figured as a contested space of subjectivity for both women and men. The home in film offers a space of realisation for female identity, and in the films that we study, embodied the place at which modern life was articulated and could be 'brought home', representing the fragile locus of a new world that had been promised before the war. Films produced for a female audience in the 40s and 50s worried over the questions that also concerned women's magazines and marriage guidance manuals: how much should a woman care about her home? how should she deal with the tension between for her desire for own identity as a modern individual and the inevitable sublimation of her self into her social roles as mother and wife? what did the good (and bad) housewife do and what did she look like?

Here, in a comparison between two films, one from the 40s and one from the 50s, we wish to suggest that transformations in the figure of the 'housewife' during this period represent an important shift in women's a shift in housework as a kind of gendered *labour* to housewifery as a solidified gendered *identity*.

The average woman does put her life completely in her husband's hands...[1]

Representations of home in the films of the 1940s and 50s can be read as suggesting ongoing changes to the identity of the housewife. Popular films demonstrated the contemporary changes in the agency of the housewife, debated the cultural value of her work in the home, and showed how femininity was an identity constituted and interrupted by other political forces (particularly class, race, nation). These tensions were developed through a melodramatic structure of feeling, that is manifest in characters' lives as an emotional economy of excess and lack: either the housewife was tragically indifferent to, or over-invested in her home and family; she was either insufficiently open to modern ideas of the home or marriage, or she was a victim of

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

modernisation by embracing it too intensely.

This problematisation of the housewife -- as a mode of femininity caught between tradition and modernity -- certainly contributed to the devaluation of women's work and the projection of negative traits of over-mothering, immersion in the private sphere and excessive consumption onto the figure of the domestic woman. Yet this problem of modern womanhood also revealed the dimensions of social change and the new role of women in the market economy of the post-war period.

The narratives of the films we examine construct the married woman as facing a series of limited options. At the one extreme, she can become like a man and express an autonomous self, which means she must be opposed to her family and focused on the world of work. At the other end of the spectrum, she can throw herself into femininity and her own identity in her family to the point of living her life through others and circumscribing their own expression of autonomy. The equivalence of the role of housewife with a feminine identity is the exact problem of these films, and one that their main characters must resolve or resign to by the end of the last reel. The 'desire to desire' , named as the subject of these films by Mary-Ann Doane, is the problem of the fictional housewife, yet it also the desire to desire 'properly', that is her task. Through the plots and twists of these films, modernity is also problematised, and an alternative experience of modernity is shown to operate for women. The desire to be modern, while maintaining links to family and tradition are the terms of women's modernity, constructed through the opposition that Nancy Armstrong has identified of the household as a centrifugal force tempering the effects of the marketplace as a centripetal force (Armstrong 1987, p.95). In her study of women's writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Armstrong observes that the "writing of female subjectivity opened a magical space in the culture where ordinary work would find its proper gratification and where the very objects that set men against each other in the competitive marketplace served to bind them together in a community of common domestic values." (Armstrong 1987, p.95). These films open up a similarly 'magical' space in which both feminine faults and virtues were magnified into entire characters, and the home became the site of a problematisation of the divisions between the public and the private, the marketplace and the domestic.

This problematisation is not equivalent to the notion of the housewife as an embodiment of feminine pathology that emerged in a number of key texts before and after the 1950s. From Freud's essay on the hysterical teenager, Dora, and her house-obsessed mother, to Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*, the persona of the frustrated housewife displays the projection of lack and a devaluing by both women and familial experts of the home (Freud 1977;Friedan 1983). The home, while modernised and brought up-to-date in the 1950s by the latest domestic and communications technology and the popularisation of techniques of child-rearing, relationship management, dietary and health advice has remained unassimilable to the site of the real action of modernity: the public sphere figured in the world of work and the streets of the modern city. But in the 1950s a dissatisfaction with the capacities and responsibilities of housework cast the emotional state of the housewife as a case of arrested or incomplete development within the terms of modernity: her daily life characterised by repetition rather than progress; her association with cleaning, child-rearing and dreary routines of shopping a worker who produced no product; and her spatial confinement to the home crucially outside the urban and public world of mass culture and the dynamics of spectacular changes and developments in modernity. As this paper on the films of the period will show through an account of representations of this space, any vision of the domestic as temporally and spatially other to modernity was not easily accepted by women who occupied and shaped it.

Definitions of Melodrama

The prolific feminist criticism of melodrama in the 1980s was significant for historicising of categories of feeling and sentiment (Gledhill 1987). Drawing on Raymond Williams' recognition of the salient relationship between political change, social categories and emotions, feminists investigation of the structures of feeling in the genre emerged at the same time as the appearance of the domestic as a setting and women as protagonists (Williams 1966).

Because melodrama as a genre works through an opposition between romance and the ordinary, it takes the material of everyday life and expands and hyperbolises emotions contained within it. Thus the emotional mode of melodramatic heroines has been called 'hysterical' by Lacanian-influenced feminist theorist Joan Copjec, in an interesting discussion of melodrama as a feminised sublime (Copjec 1998). However, the ways that melodrama uses a hysterical mode to amplify "the gestures of suffering", according to Copjec, is not a sign of women's irrationality or the text's unreality, but "like wrestling", "in a world which is unsure what justice should look like" the genre "manages justice… so that virtue always wins out" (Copjec 1998, p.260). When Richard Dyer reflects on his mother's pleasure in watching and identification with the very British melodrama, *Brief Encounter*, he seeks to understand the ways that the film's main character yearns for, and ultimately is refused, the possibility of passion in stable, normal, middle-class culture (Dyer 1993, p.38-40). He also comments, in a section of his essay titled 'So English', on how the film claims to observe the social world of post-war Britain, through its outdoor locations and use of the signs of everyday repetition and the authentic speech of characters culture (Dyer 1993, p.41-65). Erica Carter, in a study of women in 1950s German melodrama, comments on the ways these films develop melodramatic plots through a social realist style (Carter 1997, p.182). So despite the Hollywood film representing the most 'over-the-top' form of melodramatic mise-en-scene, other examples of melodrama exist that contest its separation from everyday life. Boredom, as much as sentimentality, has been a feminised affect, emerging at a historically specific moment of the gendered subject.[2] Copjec explains,

> My initial premise is this: crying was an invention of the late eighteenth century. I offer as proof of this thesis the fact that at this precise historical moment there emerged a brand new literary form -- melodrama -- which was specifically designed to give people something to cry about... I suggest... that we pay closer attention to this modern social imperative in order to distinguish crying in the modern sense... and for the wholly new emphasis in art and art criticism on the sentimental, emphatic relation between spectator and character -- to distinguish this modern crying from all the lachrymation of earlier times. (Copjec 1998, p.249)

Critics who have written about the classical Hollywood cinema, with some notable exceptions, have tended to read them as either damning critiques of the status quo, or as morality tales that punish deviant or rebellious characters. Peter Biskind in his extensive and detailed analysis of films of the 1950s judges the message of films as either conservative or pluralist (Biskind 1983). These responses are influenced by subsequent ideas that seek to reclaim these critically devalued texts, to re-code them with value as critical and subversive of mainstream culture. Feminist critics have been keen to read the kinds of stories that they tell as forms of resistance.

In a more complex analysis, Kathleen McHugh in her very thorough and complex discussion of housework in Hollywood films has shown the kinds of sublimation of other differences, specifically, class and race that gender performs in these films (McHugh 1999). McHugh argues that the prominence of the figure of the middle-class woman in melodramatic genres elides the representation and real labour of black or

working class women in the home. Yet, the challenge remains to understand these films as simultaneously social and textual, as working towards a set of meanings at the same time as these meanings were shaped by forces outside the text. As Barbara Klinger has noted in her study of Douglas Sirk, the context of reception, or the ways in which we view film at any given time, are always guided by "systems of intelligibility and value" that rather than offering one true reading over another, "help us understand the role history plays in negotiating and renegotiating meaning" (Klinger 1994, p. xvii).

By the 1950s, individual imperatives to monitor one's own life and ensure that all the aspects of housewife's life were kept in check intensified in magazines and domestic management guides. Kathleen McHugh observes that the housewife, as a construction of a white middle-class, heterosexual femininity has often been taken as the feminine per se (McHugh 1999, p.19). The housewife, as a highly visible figure of the modernisation of gender during the twentieth century, in the 1940s and 1950s came to stand for the completion and assumption of a proper feminine identity, of the natural completion of womanhood. McHugh quotes Angela Davis on this point: "Although the 'housewife' was rooted in the social conditions of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes, nineteenth century ideology established the housewife and mother as universal models of womanhood." (Davis 1983, p.229) As our study is concerned to show, the gendering of women's work in the home created some unstable and untenable divisions between public and private, home and work. While acknowledging the invisibility of issues of class or race in the image of the happy, clean, post-war home, this paper departs from some of these assumptions about the housewife as a stable, unchanging figure of gendered culture, and asks instead what shifts and changes representations of women in the home occurred during this period. The role of popular culture and the new media of television, popular film genres such as the melodrama and address to a female consumer through advertising and magazines was crucial in constructing a sphere of difference and distinction for women's agency in the 1940s and 50s. Feminist historians and cultural studies scholars have argued that consumption became a new form of labour, a second-order yet increasingly important form of productive labour in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Nava 1992;Nava 1996). The production and care of the self in modernity is articulated through popular culture and narratives of the personal. Consumption as a specifically modern and uniquely gendered activity was figured across a wide variety of social and textual spaces: cinema, fashion, popular magazines and music. Associated with the sites of consumption in the modern city such as the arcade and the cinema, this emotional space offered a way for women to be involved in modernity through particularly female codes of address and movement in urban space. The motion picture industry built on pre-war spheres of women's cultural consumption, as Marie La Place has argued:

> …the film industry, needing to formulate a genre to attract female audiences, drew on a 'circuit of women's discourse' circulating on the margins of the mass media and traversing women's fiction, pamphlets, magazines, journalism, and more ephemeral forms, much of which is generated for and by women. While such female cultural practices do not operate in some free 'feminine' space, they are produced from the different social and psychical positioning of women within an overall complex of social relations and discourses. (Gledhill 1987, p.35)

In the films analysed in this paper, anxiety about consumerism and its effects is allayed either by rewarding heroines who consume after a career of work and thrift, or by punishing murderous and corrupt characters who achieved wealth through criminal activity. In this respect, the films of the period offered a way to describe and articulate the thoughts, dreams, ideas of women of the 40s and 50s. They bridge

the gap between the women's magazines and women's everyday lives identified by Friedan, at times confirming it as irresolvable, and at others offering a means of its transcendence. But, no one film can be judged as ultimately conservative or progressive, as the films are complex, open texts. The characters that are often contradictory and non-heroic, and their motivations are often multiple and obscured by their circumstances. Most of all, they show the domestic as an ambiguous and liminal space, in need of constant work to maintain its value as a home, or a psychical and emotional space, and not just a house, which is just a physical location. We will now examine some of these aspects in a film from the 1940s and one from the 1950s,

Putting on the Apron

Instead of an inherent criminal tendency or evil in the heart of men, the novels and films of film noir that deal with women characters emphasise the ordinariness of crime, rather than diagnose its cause as moral decay. All of James Cain's three novels that were made into classic film noir -- *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Garnett 1946), *Double Indemnity* (Wilder 1944) and *Mildred Pierce* (Curtiz 1945) -- involve strong female characters with men who work intermittently or in very mundane occupations. The couples commit murder or embezzlement because of love and lust mixed with a desire for the freedom that money brings rather than a pathological need to murder or destroy. The novels emphasise the ordinariness and prevalence of violence, and rather than its connection to the public sphere, locate it in the suburbs and small towns rather than the big city. The housewife-next-door is just as capable of murder if she is pushed by circumstance and the lack of a good male provider.

Like melodramas, these films show the housewife dealing with life with an absent or inadequate husband, most usually widows and divorcees. They explore the question of how these women might deal with the modern world on their own, while still maintaining the image of domestic womanhood. These women use their experiences in the private sphere to their advantage in the public, becoming waitresses, restaurant and service industry entrepreneurs. They negotiate the damning diagnosis of an employment agent's assessment of Mildred Pierce, expressed when a character in the novel explains to Mildred why as 'just a housewife' (Cain 1985, p.401) she is only offered demeaning jobs as a domestic worker rather than her desired goal of becoming a receptionist:

> All right, you wanted to know why that lady offered you a job as a waitress, and why I recommended you for this. It's because you've let half your life slip by without learning anything but sleeping, cooking, and setting the table, and that's all your good for. So get over there. It's what you've got to do, so you may as well start doing it. (Cain 1985, p.361)

This merging of melodrama with film noir, because it places married women as protagonists -- rather than central characters who are private detectives or policemen -- allows the films to displace the public violence at the heart of the film noir plot onto the domestic and the ordinary women and men rather than the *femme fatale*. This focus on failed men (rather than good & bad girls) makes femininity distinctly more ordinary and less threatening to the social order than the dangerous love the women display for shiftless, over consuming and un-productive men. These gendered types appear in films that depict the massive social changes associated with the economic depression of the 1930s and the transitional period of work and thrift during the 1939-45 war, and then the relative affluence of the 50s.

The film production of *Mildred Pierce*, directed by Michael Curtiz in 1945, and also adapted from a James M. Cain novel of 1941, exemplifies this merging of melodrama with film noir. Cain's novel recounts a classic melodrama in realist style, but the film frames the melodrama with two noir segments depicting a murder and the

hunt for a killer. In both the book and the film, Mildred, like Eve White and many other women of the 1930 and 40s, suddenly has to survive after her marriage ends and she is left with two children to support, Kay and Veda. Mildred left school at seventeen to get married to Bert, who loses his fortune when his speculation in property development in a new suburb in Los Angeles comes unstuck in the early 1930s. Bert, unlike Mildred who is a semi-skilled labourer in the home, still sees the home as a site of leisure, lazing around reading the newspaper and resenting Mildred for nagging him about his household duties.

Mildred is determined that her children will have greater opportunities in life than she and Bert have had. In the first flashback sequence which allows her to tell her story, she explains:

> I was always in the kitchen. I felt like I'd been there all my life except for the two hours it took to get married. I married Bert when I was seventeen. I never knew any other kind of life … Just cooking and washing and having children. (LaValley 1980, p.97)

Following Bert's departure to live with the other woman, Mildred finds work as a waitress and saves enough money to build up her own chain of highly successful restaurants. Because of her experience as a wife and mother, she extends her domestic duties efficiently and professionally into the public sphere. She quickly figures out that despite ready cash and perhaps because of wide-spread economic hardship, people want home-cooked food in an atmosphere of domestic comfort. She senses, however, that there is a sense of shame associated with serving food to other people, and hides her waitress uniform from her children, only working when they are at school.

Catharine Turney believed that the noir framing story was introduced for several reasons, the first an attempt to attract a wider audience, the second because the plot did not seem particularly suited to a feature film, and thirdly because of the censorship which meant that Mildred's daughter had to be punished for the crime of sleeping with her mother's second husband. Turney explained in an interview in the 1980s that the studio would not film the script if it was directly adapted from Cain's realist style:

> … I had to compress it quite a bit, but I wanted to stay with the novel the way it was as much as possible. I liked the novel very much. But the property went on the shelves for a time because nobody wanted to do a movies about a housewife who made pies. It wasn't very glamorous or interesting to people at the studio. No actress wanted to play it, no director wanted to do it period. It was finally {producer} Jerry Wald who revived the project and talked Joan Crawford into doing it…. She was in her mid-thirties at the time and didn't want to play the mother of a sixteen-year-old daughter who stole the man from her. (Turney 1987, p.234)

Turney also credits Wald with turning "the thing into a murder mystery":

> The novel is very different from the movie. In the book, Veda, the bitchy daugher, really does have a good voice, and she comes through in the end, so you have the feeling that she's really going to go on and accomplish something. Which makes Mildred's sacrifices for her and belief in her worthwhile. But Jerry didn't want that. He wanted the murder. And then, the flashback structure was his idea as well….
>
> I think his approach had something to do with the censorship that was in force. If a girl transgressed, she had to be punished, according to the framework of the Johnson-Hays office. (Turney 1987, p.235)

What does remain in both the Cain novel and the film is the firmly fixed occupation and location of the main character in the home, although she becomes more than a housewife by the end. Yet, as Turner suggests above, this posed a problem in that the film's star had to be attractive and glamour while she was playing a housewife. Mildred's fur coat and makeup solves this tension, and the housewife-turned-business woman played by an established star must constantly maintain her distance from the frump. Veda, during a fight about her marriage to the son of a rich family, actually tells Mildred that despite her "new hairdo and some expensive clothes", she is nothing but "a common frump, whose father lived over a grocery store and whose mother took in washing" (LaValley 1980, p.201). Particularly telling, given our focus on home as a contested site, is the appearance of the apron that Mildred wears when working in the kitchen, both at home and in her business, which allows kind of manual and dirty work that she does to be distanced from the love scenes. The apron in the film moves around characters, as the material symbol of both maternal labour and an eroticisation of the domestic scene anticipating the 'new look' which emerged in the mid-40's as a mode of a sexy yet domesticated femininity.

This is most explicit in the novel, when Veda reveals to Mildred, that is exactly her *lack* of class sophistication and role as a domestic worker that her shiftless playboy lover, Monty Beragon fetishises:

> Really, he speaks very nicely about your legs. He has a theory about them. He says a gingham apron is the greatest provocation ever invented by women for the torture of man, and that the very best legs are found in kitchens, not in drawing rooms. "Never take the mistress if you can take the maid", is the way he puts it. And another thing, he says a pretty varlet is always agreeably grateful, and not too exacting, with foolish notions about matrimony and other tiresome things. I must say I find his social theories quite fascinating. (Cain 1985, p. 463)

Monty deals with the problem of his own ambigous social position and lack of traditional masculinity by sexualising Mildred's lower-class identity. Yet this speech obscures the real dilemma of the downwardly mobile post-war gentleman: Monty is unable to provide, so Mildred must work. Her management of the 'Pie Wagon' causes her constant preoccupation with smelling of grease from fried chicken, so her lavish spending on clothes and cars her ambitions for her daughter to achieve fame as a singer or movie star are both the sign of her need to escape the domestic and abject nature of her work. This constant energy required to maintain her new middle-class status is also held responsible in the film for the way that Veda has turned out. When arrested for Monty Beragon's murder, Veda blames Mildred: "It's your fault I'm the way I am -- Help me."

The maternal drive to express love through the mother's sacrifice and class transformation of the family is considered to be antithetical to the puritanical notion of spirituality through hard work. Published in 1942, the same year as the release of Cain's book but before the film in 1945, Phillip Wylie's book, *Generation of Vipers*, demonstrated an emerging anxiety about the influence and role of mothers in the modern family (Wylie 1955). Wylie claimed that American women's tendency to emotionally over-invest in their children's success was a widespread social problem. Controversially, Wylie accused contemporary mothers of living through their children to a degree that was detrimental to their development of an independent and healthy identity. This paradox of the modern mother is embodied in Mildred's story of self-actualisation through her daughter, especially after the younger tomboy daughter dies of pneumonia. Her story is actually about a stark lack of choice and limited options in the face of husbandly desertion, that force her to transgress several social conventions in her divorce, successful working life, economic support and then remarriage to an unemployed man of higher social standing than herself, and finally in pre-

tending to be Monty's murderer. Mildred refuses the domestic-angel model of womanhood, but she still makes many instructive mistakes in her rearing of her children. *Mildred Pierce* suggests that domestic labour, when transposed to the public sphere, loses its gendered nature. This is literalised in a scene that shows Mildred putting Wally, Bert's former business partner, and investor in Mildred's business venture, to work in the restaurant kitchen. By putting on the apron, Wally figures ongoing shifts in gender, and gendered work that had existed since well before the 1939-45 war created new possibilities for women and men. Yet *Mildred Pierce,* both film and novel, the merging of the codes of film noir with the narrative of maternal melodrama complicates any simple story of maternal sacrifice. This new post-war development indicates that rather than a clear separation of good and bad mothers, these discourses could be embodied in one character at different times. Posing some bother for feminist film critics, the film's final shot reunites the glamorous fur coat-wearing Mildred with the scene of the domestic abject: when Bert and Mildred exit the Justice building to the left of screen into a new post-noir dawn, two women wearing headscarves and pinafores scrub the hallway on their hands and knees. This shot foreshadows the re-displacement of housework onto a low 'other' and the complex relationship of the middle-class woman to the household economy in the global economy. The outsourcing of domestic work, mainly provided by migrant and undocumented and sometime unpaid labour betrays the narrative of second-wave feminism as privileging race and class over gender (Joseph 2001).

A Doubled Plot of Femininity

Reflecting the intensification of the gendered identity of home in the 1950s, and the increasing separation of the identity of the housewife from the figure of the modern woman is the 1957 film, *The Three Faces of Eve* (Johnson 1957). The film tells the story of Eve White, played by Joanne Woodward, who is a "rather sweet, rather baffled young housewife" living in a small southern American town with her husband and a young daughter. This description of 'Eve' is from Alistair Cooke's introduction to the film. After unsettling her husband by behaving completely out of character, and suffering migraines and blackouts, Mrs White visits a psychiatrist. During these sessions another personality reveals herself within the body of Eve White: Eve Black, a sexy, uninhibited, outspoken and glamorous woman who supposedly expresses those parts of Eve White's personality that she has repressed. Eve White is demure, married and modest in her desires; Eve Black is outrageous, single and consumes irrationally and behaves irresponsibly. Eventually, guided by the therapist and by the end of the film, a third self called Jane emerges as a new persona, 'born' during the sessions; an intelligent, sensible, educated woman, who helps resolve and integrate the different facets of Eve's personality into a "whole and healthy human being".

The film is based on a case history of multiple personality written by two psychiatrists, Doctors Thigpen and Cleckley, who bestowed the names of Eve, White and Black, on their patient. Their popular book documenting the analysis was published in the same year as the film was released. Both book and film represent the story of Chris Sizemore, a woman with what is now called dissociative identity disorder. Ian Hacking discusses the ways in which Eve White's story and Chris Sizemore's diagnosis diverge in his magisterial study of multiple (now dissociative identity disorder), *Rewriting the Soul* (Hacking 1995). Here, we do not want to take issue with the truth or falsity of the psychiatrist's story, but to look at how these personality fragments are used to narrate a story of a gendered identity in the film.[3]

These mismatches between the figure of Eve turned into case history and the person of Chris Sizemore occur through the dynamics of an encounter between madness and housewifery in the popular imagination of the 1950s. Both the biographical persona of multiple personality in the case history *and* the feature film reflect significant assumptions about women's position between the worlds of work and home.

These changes indicate that a sense-making structure, emerging from social and cultural conventions of femininity, overlaid the unnarratable or unacceptable parts of her story. This generic structure created resonances between her biography and wider concerns and anxieties over women, mass culture and the domestic. The *Three Faces of Eve*, as well as the book upon which it was based, can be located not just as pop psychology, but also under the rubric of the woman's film and, more specifically, within the genre of the maternal melodrama that emerged during the high point of classical Hollywood production in the 1930s and 40s (Kaplan 1987;Viviani 1987).

The story of *Eve*, as a sub-genre of melodrama, emerges from the fascination of the woman's film with a doubled female identity in the many 'twin sister' plots of the gothic melodramas in the 1940s. *Eve's* multiple identity resonates with, and may explain the attraction of producers and audience to, the story of Sizemore a decade later. Identified by film historian Lucy Fischer as a "canon of texts on the female *doppelganger*", the emergence of the genre of "double films" in the late 30s was marked by a divergence from the male double (Fisher 1983) narratives in that they "reflected established patriarchal assumptions about women" (Fisher 1983, p.26). With titles such as *A Stolen Life* (1939 and 1946), *Cobra Woman* (1944) and *Dark Mirror* (1946), Fisher argues that rather than reflecting an eternal conflict in the feminine psyche, the production of these films should be historicised to show that their generic features "do not represent real poles of the female psyche but rather two opposing *male* views of woman." (Fisher 1983, p.34 emphasis ours) In these films, these two views were embodied by the same actress playing two separate characters. These stories represent a materialisation of a discourse on femininity as split into either the good twin --- who was able to form properly managed heterosexual desires and a domestic identity by the end of the film -- or a deviant twin -- who loved excessively or obsessionally, and was disposed of by murder, accident or suicide.

Fisher's argument about the misogyny of this concept is persuasive. Despite being understood and discussed as the 'woman's film' this description of the genre was certainly misleading, because of its notable absence of women screenwriters or directors. The popularity of these stories for female rather than male audiences challenges Fisher's reading of the films as misogynist, however.

A more nuanced understanding of these films is hinted at by Fisher, that this 'male' view of women in the 1940s "would seem to have cultural determinants -- since woman's *persona* was seen as divided, and its aspects as mutually exclusive" (Fisher, 1983, p.38). By the 1950s, this division fell across a different line, as 'normal' femininity was increasingly represented not just by a woman who loved and was loved, but by the middle-class housewife. Rather than the good and bad twins of the war period, of whom the evil one had to die to resolve the narrative, the post-war period established the housewife as the central figure of women's modernity inside these divisions. Thus in the 50s, a story as bizarre as Sizemore's could be efficiently transposed to a cinematic narrative as an *internal* conflict in women's identity: taking place in the same body, and the 'split' personality resolved by psychic integration into a 'whole' person rather than an exorcism of the evil element.

Despite their decline in the 1950s beside the new cultural forms of television soap opera and drama, the ways in which such melodramatic narratives organised and literally plotted out women's lives in the post-war period allowed Sizemore's story to pass from an untidy and undirected sequence of events of suffering and trauma. Both the film and the book combine these scenes into a plot with fixed entry and exit points into Eve's inner life. Indeed, Thigpen actually advised Chris against revealing the persistence of her illness in her own book because it would create a confusion for the reader if it lacked a neat and tidy ending (Sizemore and Pitillo 1978, p. 371). In *his* story, like the dirt that the housewife expels from the domestic, the therapist performs a cleaning process on Eve's psyche to unearth and re-organise her traumatic memories; thereby maintaining the boundaries between self and other, inside and outside, health and sickness. In *her* story, the combined stresses of financial prob-

lems, her husband's unemployment, miscarriage, forced abortion, strict social restrictions on what constituted a proper feminine identity, and her own fragile sense of home overwhelm her daily life and prevent any realisation of her desired capacity to love and build a safe place for her family to grow. According to Sizemore, these factors, rather than any inherent conflict in femininity or the female psyche, forced the different 'personalities' to take on the un-safe areas of sexuality, anger, work and child-bearing; thereby creating unstable and uncanny boundaries between the boundaries that Thigpen's version maintains. This sense of an uncanny and transgressive selfhood is reflected in the title that Chris had wanted to call her 1950s book, *Strangers in my body* (Sizemore and Pitillo 1978, p.368).

The film uses flashbacks and special effects to portray the forces that "fractured" Eve's self into "two personalities battling for dominance". The film also gives the viewer access to a panoptic yet intimate outsider's perspective on Eve, a perspective unavailable to Eve herself. Hacking also establishes that at its very earliest diagnosis in the 1880s, multiple personality was visually recorded by Charcot using photographic techniques (Hacking 1995, p.5) Similarly, by keeping a diary and writing notes and letters, Chris Sizemore forced her personalities to communicate and demonstrate awareness of each other, and actually watched the documentary films that the psychiatrists made of her separate personalities in order to 'introduce' her two 'sides' to each other for therapeutic purposes. These splits and separations create suspense and fascination for the audience in the film because, as many critics have noted, melodrama, works through a tragic structure of feeling that "grants its audience greater knowledge than its characters possess, and this disparity produce pathos" (McHugh 1999, p.94).

For 'Eve White', later observed by 'Jane White', reading sentimental poetry and classical literature offered a way of transcending her unhappiness and personal problems. Eve Black, however, finds her alter ego's reading habits "the quintessence of dullness. They leave her cold in the literal sense as well as the spiritual" (Thigpen and Cleckley 1957, p.158). Eve Black prefers to spend her evening leisure time in nightclubs and afternoons in movie theatres, and actually participates as a performer in clubs by singing and dancing to the amusement of her suitors and the displeasure of her husband (and Eve White). In a therapy session she takes pride in her role as amateur nightclub singer and pop chanteuse:

> "Her face will be a sight to see if you tell her about the time I was out at the Lido Club. Has some champagne cocktails with a fellow there. I like to sing you see…I put some charge into it when I got to 'rockin' and rollin''—Rockin' and rollin'/All night long…"
> With a little toss of her head she carried a snatch of the tune for a moment.
> "But what really sent 'em," she said, "was when I stood there in the middle of that dance floor with the spotlight on me and let 'em have 'Sixty Minute Man.'"
> (Thigpen and Cleckley 1957, p.69)

The split between different areas of everyday life is figured here in the separation of black popular culture from white culture, regional tradition from urban modernity. The story of the two *Eves* embodies uneven development of the northern and southern United States, associating the 'lowly' and primitive Eve Black with the South as the excluded subtext to the American narrative "of capitalism and modernisation, of individualism, materialism, education, reason and democracy" (Stewart 1996, p.3). In the film, as 'Eve's character becomes less dominant, her southern accent, more noticeable in Eve Black, fades until it is almost gone in the speech of the educated Jane. However, because the film figures this national and economic difference as a split between housewife and her 'others', it subsumes these national and racial tensions within a feminine struggle for identity. This gendered narrative constructs the conflict between incompatible elements of the female persona as primary and prevail-

ing over other social and cultural divisions.

Both film and Thigpen's book strongly textualise and generate the particular historical circumstances of Chris Sizemore's life as romance narrative and journey of discovery. Both stories coerce the details of a still living woman with a psychiatric disorder into a kind of uber-narrative of feminine identity and ego psychology that stands for all women—most strikingly in Thigpen's re-naming of Sizemore as the essential, eternal and biblical 'Eve'. The notion of Eve's deeply split and contradictory 'immature' feminine identities as either saintly housewife or good-time bad girl works in Thigpen's version because it operates from widely-held understandings of these subject positions as conflicting social imperatives of womanhood: one could be either one or the other in the same body, but never both in the same self.[4]

As a fantasy of the power of love and self-transformation to transcend these particularly female dysfunctions -- rather portraying them as social conflicts -- the film can thus be firmly located within the genre of maternal melodrama, still popular in the 1950s and widely analysed by feminist critics in the 1970s and 80s. For the female viewer, the story of the fictional 'Eve' offers a resolution of all these tensions in the figure of a 'modern woman' (Jane) who manages these multiple and conflicting pressures and finally integrates all aspects of her sexual, maternal and economic identities as a wife, mother *and* worker. Her character only achieves this difficult task of completion through self-understanding and with the help of analytic techniques mediated by her psychiatrist. These changes are visually expressed in her assimilation of both good and bad Eves into a sexy yet sophisticated style of dress and a modest beauty. Jane's labour thus becomes a self-surveying one involving her keeping up with the latest fashion and beauty (at this point in the film her hair-do rises abruptly upwards into a back-teased and lacquered beehive anticipating the styles of the early 1960s), through proper expression of her femininity in re-marriage and reunion with her child, and most crucially through the articulation of her personal and most interiorised life story with familial and public History through memory work and analysis.

Yet in one very striking way, this film—highly popular although criticised at the time and later as unbelievable and ridiculous—represents a very important shift away from aspects of the woman's picture discussed in Mary Ann Doane's book, *The Desire to Desire*. In 1940s melodramas and film noir aimed at a female audience, Doane identifies narrative conventions that exclude women from occupying identities of maternal reproduction and economic production simultaneously (Doane 1987). By the mid-1950s, this exclusion did not seem to be so obvious or easily held in representations of women in films and other texts.

This extrapolation from a unique, individual case to a foundational dilemma for all modern women points to some key tensions around the figure of the housewife in popular culture in the 1940s and 50s. These tensions revolve around a series of shifting balances between social, family and individual desires and constraints for women. The film plays out these desires in the tensions between the housewife as figure of lack and boredom against the domestic woman as feminine fulfilment and self-actualisation; between women's struggle for economic independence and self-determination against their primary roles as carers and home-makers; and within the zone of popular culture itself as a problematic source of pleasure and consumption in opposition to the moral and upright institution of the family.

Conclusion

Our account of these films show that what is the unrepresentable material of the maternal melodrama is what is lacking from Eve White's life as a drab housewife. What 'Eve Black' enjoys and excels at is everything that everyday life is not: glamourous clothes, dancing, flirting, singing, travel, fame, attention. Located outside the everyday yet taking it as a departing point, these films examine the competing dis-

courses of a gendered modernity. Thus the figure of the housewife was posited as an ideal of the rational consumer and expert shopper. Such activity, shopping and proper cultural consumption was offered as a 'cure' to the previous diagnosis of the bored housewife. Yet it also drew women into the flawed distinctions between the notions outlined above.

This insight into the stories that melodrama tells, of the ways that this cultural form, by representing collective dreams and problems for women, negotiated the possibilities of self-formation through family, work and love that were often shown as mutually exclusive. Because these films were grounded in realism and the everyday, they show women in the home and the practice of everyday life. Herein lies a paradox which resonates throughout the history of the housewife. Because domestic labour is invisible to the economy and to culture, because it is part of the backstage operation of the production of the self and life, such labour is vary rarely documented on film, unless it is aberrant, unusual or strange. Thus many of the housewives on film are troubled, lazy, bored or mad. This is precisely because despite the claims of realism to represent things as they are, realist codes cannot represent 'everything' that happens, because that would no longer be cinema, nor even documentary. All film, whether realist or not, aims instead to find the moments of emotional truth within narratives that start from everyday life, but diverges towards the strange or unusual. The films usually end with a return to domestic reality, but with a change or transformation taking place in the characters who have realised an essential error that they have made or given up one of the conflicting needs so that happiness is possible. In *Three Faces*, Eve must give up both the dependency and passivity of her housewife persona and the irresponsibility and autonomy of her single girl persona so that she can take up the correct, modern femininity of the mature Jane and so be a good mother. Although the films set up contradictions between women and work outside the home, they do not necessarily accept them, but show that they exist and relate examples of how these social and political conditions impact on women's lives. Because these films, and other popular cultural forms that engage melodrama, "speak beyond the capacities of representation" (Byars 1991, p.167) they offer alternative visions of present conditions, and, for our purposes, give up a method to track the ambivalences that the housewife represented in this period. By looking at changes across the period of study in these texts the figure of the housewife as "woman as wife-companion" (Byars, 1991, p. 156) and the home as a space of self-completion asks us to see things that have been left out of other genres and histories. The material presence of the home "a significant insignificance" effected through the suburban house as setting and locus of action in these films uncovers the relationship of representation and the everyday (Barthes 1982): these things are so taken for granted that they do not warrant filming or narration. The figure of the housewife gathered up all the contradictions of modern life, and bears the traces today – like those other contraband of modernity, dirt, repetitive time and ritual that exist outside time and resist transformation into their other.

Between the two films can be seen a transit from housewifery as a form of work, to housewifery as identity, although one that has to be cast off: an 'inadequate human being'. This shift from a material economy of housework to an economy of the subject is an important one to pause at, because feminist critiques have to work within as well against it.

Endnotes

[1] Joan Crawford in *Harriet Craig,* 1950. Film. Directed by Vincent SHERMAN. USA: Columbia.

[2] Our larger project examines the way that boredom and entertainment have been interelated: Patricia Meyer Spacks has noted in her book, *Boredom*, the emergence of the description of person or text as 'interesting' came at the same time as someone or something could be called 'boring'. Spacks, P. M., 1995. *Boredom: the literary history of a state of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[3] In her own accounts of her treatment, she indicates that Thigpen neglected the persistence of several other selves (up to 22) associated with her identity disorder during this period, leaving her far from "resolved" into a single identity at the end of his treatment. Unhappy with Thigpen and Cleckley's version of the events of her life and highly critical of the psychiatric treatment she received in the 50s and after, she twice attempted to correct this misunderstanding of her condition and its 'cure'. She first tried to publish her own account of the analysis in the late 50s, in *The Final Face of Eve*, but her co-author and publisher changed her version of events to more closely resemble the film. On Thigpen's advice, she did not reveal her identity to her closest friends and family as the subject of the film and did not see the film herself until the 1970s. Finally, her cousin published a book based on her diaries and interviews in 1977 in *I'm Eve* which she provided an alternative ending to the 1950s books and film. Sizemore, C. C. and Pitillo, E. S., 1978. *Eve*. London: Victor Gollanz.

[4] Actually Chris Sizemore had several personalities around this time and after, many of them unamed as they were not truly separate 'personalities' but could only be identified by their significant objects and hysterical obssessions: Freckle girl, Turtle lady, Bell lady, Banana Split girl, Strawberry girl, Blind lady, the Virgin, etc.

Literature

Armstrong, N., 1987. *Desire and domestic fiction: a political history of the novel*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barthes, R., 1982. The Reality Effect. *In*: *French Literary Theory Today*. T. Todorov, Ed. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press,, 11-17.

Biskind, P., 1983. *Seeing is believing: how Hollywood taught us to stop worrying and love the fifties*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Byars, J., 1991. *All That Hollywood Allows: Re-reading Gender in 1950s Melodrama*. London: Routledge.

Cain, J. M., 1985. *The five great novels of James M. Cain*. London: Pan.

Carter, E., 1997. *How German is she?: postwar West German reconstruction and the consuming woman*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Copjec, J., 1998. More! From Melodrama to Magnitude. *In*: *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*. J. Bergstrom, Ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 249-272.

Davis, A. Y., 1983. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Vintage Books.

Doane, M. A., 1987. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dyer, R., 1993. *Brief Encounter*. London: BFI.

Fisher, L., 1983. Two-Faced Women: The "Double" in Women's Melodrama of the 1940s. *Cinema Journal,* 23 (1), 20-38.

Freud, S., 1977. *Case histories. I. 'Dora' and 'Little Hans'*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Friedan, B., 1983. *The Feminine Mystique*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Gledhill, C., Ed., 1987. *Home is where the heart is: studies in melodrama and the woman's film*. London: BFI.

Hacking, I., 1995. *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Johnson, L. and Lloyd, J., forthcoming. *'Sentenced to everyday life': Feminism, the housewife and the modern self*.

Joseph, B., 2001. Gendering in Globalisation. Unpublished conference paper presented at *Globalicities Conference*, 20 October. Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Kaplan, E. A., 1987. Mothering, Feminism and Representation: The Maternal Melodrama and The Woman's Film 1910-1940. *In*: *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and Women's Film*. C. Gledhill, Ed. London: BFI, 113-137.

Klinger, B., 1994. *Melodrama and meaning: history, culture, and the films of Douglas Sirk*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

LaValley, A. J., Ed., 1980. *Mildred Pierce*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

McHugh, K. A., 1999. *American domesticity: from how-to manual to Hollywood melodrama*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nava, M., 1992. *Changing cultures: feminism, youth and consumerism*. London:

Sage.
Nava, M., Ed., 1996. *Buy this book: studies in advertising and consumption*. London & New York: Routledge.
Sizemore, C. C. and Pitillo, E. S., 1978. *Eve*. London: Victor Gollanz.
Spacks, P. M., 1995. *Boredom: the literary history of a state of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Stewart, K., 1996. *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an 'Other' America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Thigpen and Cleckley, H., 1957. *The Three Faces of Eve*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Turney, C., 1987. Interview with Catharine Turney. *In*: *Screenwriter: Words become Pictures*. L. Server, Ed. Pittstown: Main Street Press.
Viviani, C., 1987. Who is Without Sin: The Maternal Melodrama in American Film, 1930-1939'. *In*: *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and Women's Film*. C. Gledhill, Ed. London: BFI, 83-99.
Williams, R., 1966. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Chatto and Windus.
Wylie, P., 1955. *Generation of Vipers*. New York & Chicago: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Filmography

Double Indemnity, 1944. Film. Directed by Billy WILDER. USA: Paramount.
Harriet Craig, 1950. Film. Directed by Vincent SHERMAN. USA: Columbia.
Mildred Pierce, 1945. Directed by Michael CURTIZ. USA: Warner.
The Postman Always Rings Twice, 1946. Film. Directed by Tay GARNETT. USA: MGM.
The Three Faces of Eve, 1957. Film. Directed by Nunally JOHNSON. USA: Twentieth Century Fox.

Re-reading digitality through scientific discourses of cybernetics: Fantasies of disembodied users and embodied computers

Tapio Mäkelä, University of Turku

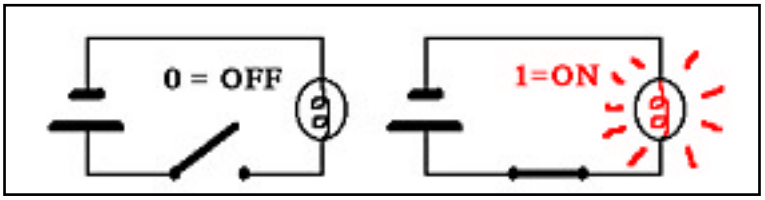
tapio@translocal.net

What kind of starting point could re-reading digitality be, since digitality is often referred to as a capacity to infinitely re-write without error, without changes in the stored information? I am proposing that the "error-freeness" of digital media is a paradox, which interestingly links digital media into the history of cybernetics. A pre-conception of technical devices as error-free has extended its reach to grasp the computer user as if within the system into a position of command and use, rather than to the position of interpretation, intuition and experience.

In my current research I have examined how the concepts "a computer user" and "interactivity" are constructed in discourses of computer science, system design, media arts and contemporary media theory. This approach is motivated by a realisation that recent interdisciplinary research has for the most part been uncritical about the differences that various genealogies bear on central concepts used in the field of new media. In this paper, I will discuss how cybernetics and cyber discourses construct both mechanistic and disembodied user positions while anthropomorphising computers. This is partly due to an understanding of human-computer interaction as a form of communication.

In the late 1940s and during the 1950s scientists and mathematicians, among them Vannevar Bush, Claude Shannon, Alan Turing and John von Neumann worked on computing and informatics, an area of research and technical development, which their contemporary Norbert Wiener coined as cybernetics. Cybernetics was anglicised from a Greek word for steersman, kybernetes, which Wiener chose to represent control (Wiener 1961, 11). One of the foundations of cybernetics was Claude Shannon's *Mathematical Theory of Communication* from 1948, where he wrote:

> "The fundamental problem of communication is that of reproducing at one point either exactly or approximately a message selected at another point. Frequently the messages have meaning; that is they refer to or are correlated according to some system with certain physical or conceptual entities. These *semantic aspects of communication are irrelevant to the engineering problem*. The significant aspect is that the actual message is one selected from a set of possible messages" (my italics, Shannon 1948, 1).



An illustration of a switch, which is an analogous mechanical system based on binary logic. (For Shannon's relay switch algebra, see http://www.cs.tufts.edu/~karen/ES4/workbook/gates.pdf).

In this and other essays, Shannon laid foundations for digital computing, according to which messages are delivered based on binary mathematics using logical switches that are on or off. He had arrived to this concept based on his work with telephone switchboards. (For a very articulate critical history of early cybernetics, see Hayles

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

1999, 1-24) In an ontological sense, digitality is a representation of the logic involved in a mechanical system.[1] He stressed the fact that his theories should not be applied to other fields of communication where semantics play a role.

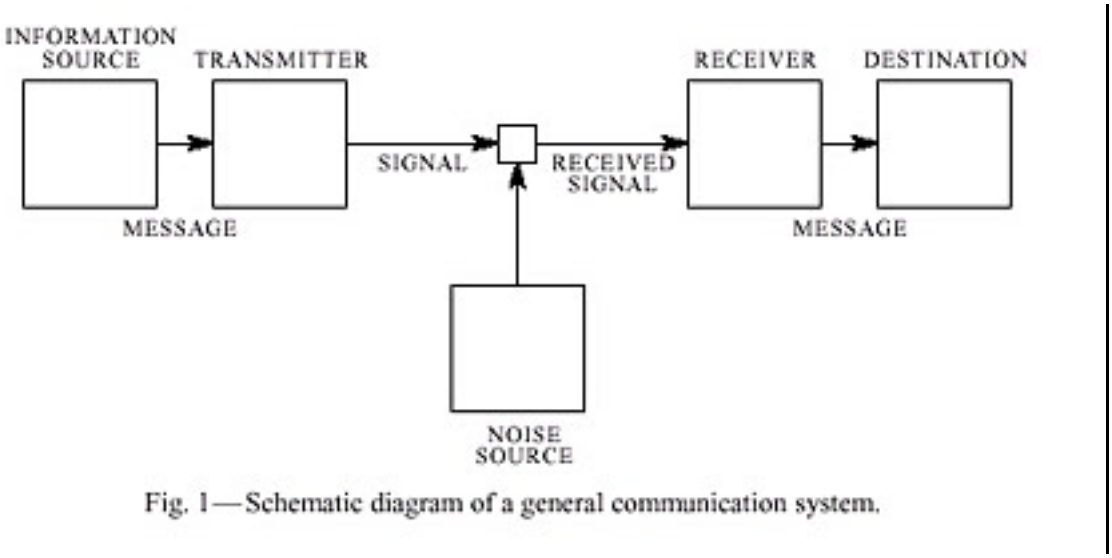


Fig. 1—Schematic diagram of a general communication system.

General communication system according to Shannon (Shannon 1948, 2).

Apparently Shannon's warning was not taken seriously. Communication models up till late last century were mostly variants of his 1948 model.[2] Reader and reception theories within comparative literature, and what interests me here, the user in relation to a computer have been understood as situations of communication. In literary theory, an implicit author was invented into the text thus enabling usage of a communication model. A cultural studies classic, Stewart Hall's essay on encoding and decoding marks a point of departure towards contextual communication models within the humanities, and a beginning for media studies paradigm within cultural studies. He emphasized the act of decoding as an act of interpretation by saying that "decodings do not follow inevitably from encodings" (Hall 1980, 136). Computer science on the other hand, placed a symbolic marker of a subject as part of the system. The user was seen as the computer operator and controller and later as a user of hardware and software.

The main problem of the digital system design or that of cybernetics is that the user is seen as a receiver of an unaltered message.[3] In other words, a computer is assumed to be a mimesis engine, where the user is not offered a position of interpretation or translation, but that of command and use. In a fundamental sense, a shift from analogue systems to digital ones in cybernetics meant managing noise, avoiding interpretation and by and large, denied that a computer would be a representational machine. It was not until 1991, when Brenda Laurel argued that the computer is a meta medium combining various previous media types, yet for the user "representation is all there is." Thus the user was not seen only as functional but also as experiental (Laurel 1993, 18-21, 32). Katherine Hayles writes about Shannon and his contemporaries in her essay *The Condition of Virtuality:*

> "Information conceived as pattern and divorced from a material medium is information free to travel across time and space. Hackers are not the only ones who believe that information wants to be free. The great dream and promise of information is that it can be free from the material constraints that govern the mortal world. If we can become the information we have constructed, we, too, can soar free, immortal like gods." (Hayles 2000, 75)

Digitality as a fantasy of information without errors and of a storage space indestructible in the course of time runs parallel with what Hayles criticizes as the disengagement of information from a material base and its cultural contexts. An underly-

ing assumption is a will for disembodiment through technology. Norbert Wiener for instance anticipated in 1950 that the telegraph would be able to transfer human beings (Hayles 2000, 75).

The dichotomy information/matter of information theory, according to Hayles, reflects an older dichotomy of spirit and matter. This is one of the underpinnings of cybernetics that have influenced several theories of interaction with computers. The assumption, by for instance Sherry Turkle, is that the user's identity is split between the corporeal body and the windows on a computer screen, which in turn represent the user's actions. Or more concretely, the user's identity would according to her be split between different agent selves on the Internet. (Turkle 1997, 178.) "The computer takes us beyond a world of dreams and beasts because it enables us to contemplate mental life that exists apart from bodies" (Turkle 1997, 22).

To enable the communication model of interaction, the computer is portrayed as an anthropomorphic object if not a subject, which assumably has a dialogic relationship with its user. Or, if one would think about dialogicity in Bakhtinian and Vygotskian terms, the interaction would be an act of inner speech or a kind of a monologue with a projected self on the screen. (On dialogicity, see Cheyne and Tarulli 1999, passim., on inner speech see Vygotsky 1994, 67-69). To be able to approve of such a model of interaction between two entities, one human, one an advanced calculation machine, one would have to accept Shannon's underlying notion that information *is* disembodied, or with Turkle that one's self partially migrates into the screen of the "beast", or with Alan Turing that the computer is a thinking machine. What kind of desires and economies are at play? Why is digitality represented as an enabling and empowering technology, with promises of eternal and immediate memory? What is gained by mystifying the computer as an anthropomorphic entity instead of an advanced calculating machine?

The computer seems to offer a slippery platform of interdisciplinary discourse, where embodiment and situated subjectivities are often ignored since there is no situation or location for representation in the cybernetic system. Looking back at post photography discourse of the 1990s, I wonder whether it is this denial of representation and assumption of a mimesis effect by computer science which "as if" seemed to be a paradigmatic shift in how to understand representation within digital environments?[4] I have not developed this thought very far, but I am also curious whether this claim of a paradigmatic shift in construction of meaning within new media acted as a claim for a radical break with identity politics of representation? In quite a few conferences a league of new media gentlemen have so often waved their hand at postmodernity as a post mortem condition, as if it was a fly bothering their pure digital discourse, a reminder of identity politics. The metaphor of digitality as a form of re-mixing and as a state of desirable being seems to have suggested that subjectivity would also be a digital technology of re-modelling, rather than a complex embodied construction.

In order to further discuss desires for disembodiment, I want to move forward from early cybernetics to brief overview on cyber and cyborgian popular discourses that have appeared in three main popular genres over the last decades.

Popular cyber imaginaries

Cyborgian popular discourse in film, animation and media art seem to offer a ground for contrastively different politics. Science Fiction narratives provide fantasies of omnipotent re-engineered male techno bodies in films such as Terminator (1 and 2) and Matrix. Re-modelled female bodies are spectacularized in such Manga animations as Ghost in a Shell, where a female cyborg emerges from liquid data as if from a total cosmetic surgery. In these narratives, cyborgs are presented as sexed-up combinations of flesh and robotics and varying degrees of artificial intelligence. A cyborg mannequin from media arts, who has appeared in several book covers with the prefix

cyber-, Stelarc describes his attempts to embed nanotechnology into his own body as "end of the Darwinian evolution as we know it". (Video interview, Mäkelä 23.8.1994) Popular imaginaries at first seem to suggest that cybernetic technologies are embodied rather than disembodied. Actually cyborg narratives suggest an ultimate dream of cybernetics engineer come true – a computer combined with bio-mechanical system not only may look human, but act and almost feel like one.

Cybernetics did not begin as a discourse within arts in the 1980s. Nam June Paik talked about Cybernated art in 1966, where he pointed out that Marshall McLuhan's Medium is the message was formulated by Norbert Wiener, for whom "the signal, where the message is sent, plays equally important role as the signal which is not sent" (Paik in Jordan and Packard 2001, 41). With television series such as The Six Million Dollar Man from the 1970s and cybernetics in popular psychology, control over and exceeding the limits of the human body have been central themes.

Another popular cyborgian genre emerged in the late 1980s, where rather clumsy virtual reality systems ignited dreams of total immersion with the computer interface. Cyber referred to a mystified understanding of computer imaging, as if another inhabitable dimension distinct from embodied reality would have become an every day life experience. Cyberpunk from Gibson's 1984 Neuromancer onwards found its way to other forms of fiction including strands of cultural studies. Magazines such as Mondo 2000 celebrated cyber sex, while artists and theorists considered that a radical paradigmatic shift in the history of representation had occurred (On Mondo, see Sobchack 1994, passim.). Whether due to the failed attempts at cyber sex or the fact that VR technologies did not provide support for the fantasies, the word Cyber was soon directed towards networked computing, especially the World Wide Web. Cyber would refer to various popular versions of net cultures, "being part of a larger network". In 1991 Tim McFadden elaborated on Gibsonian cyberspace by linking it to Shannon and Weaver. For McFadden, cyberspace was an information space, which is connected by information channels, through which exchanges are done by protocols between agents. Curiously enough, he says that:

> There are agents that can transform, abstract, and represent the information in the cyberspace so that a human can experience it as humans experience the space and "everyday" objects of the world. Humans may be "in" cyberspace as they are in space. This is the "delusional" part of the original definition (McFadden 1993, 341).

Cyberspace in McFadden's analysis anthropomorphises a technical network, by claiming that it provides similar every day presence as lived space. Cyberspace has provided a popular mythology that cyberpunk authors, researchers, and other fans have shared not only as a fantasy, but almost as if it was an immaterial fact, a space with dimensions. Indeed, it seems that a will to dematerialise what is known as human is met with a will to anthropomorphise technology, and thus to give it an imaginary physical, as if living sensibility or affectivity.

There are at least these three parallel genres of contemporary cyber or cyborgian discourse: human-machine, human-computer and human-network relationships. In addition, (bio) medicine and military are often discussed as separate genres of cyborgian discourse. In most cases narratives and theories about cyber or cyborgs appear without an explicit connection to cybernetics of 1950s to 1970s, but rather build links to cyberpunk fiction.

Anthropomorphic technologies

In his book *Turing's Man* David J. Bolter foregrounds a view on the history of technology quite parallel to the above described popular imaginaries, where what he calls "defining technologies" have played an important role in understanding what const-

tutes the human being. In a chapter titled "The Electronic Brain," Bolter explains how computers succeed clocks and steam engines ad "the defining technology and principal technological metaphor of our time...". He argues that this is a result of computer's capability to reflect the versatility of human mind. (Bolter 1984, 40.) He makes a prophecy: "With the computer, another step has been taken in this evolution of ideas, for we now have an inanimate metaphor for the human mind as compelling as the clock was for the planets" (Bolter 1984, 41). Bolter indeed depicts computers as animate objects, and even beyond that, he sees a miniature animate society within the electronic circuits: (Bolter 1984, 41.)

> "For the ancient mathematician, the world itself was composed of geometrical elements; for the computer mathematician, however, numbers are embodied in only a fragment of the world, within the cabinet of a digital computer. But within this tiny cosmos, numbers possess a life of their own. They rest in the core memory waiting to be called upon, they move into the central processor, combine with other numbers, and moves back into memory. They impress us constantly with their reality as they spinout answers to our queries." (Bolter 1984, 64.)

The body, having in earlier technical eras been represented as both an engine and as a clockwork system (Descartes), was now represented as a body of neurons that communicated with one another, a system of information. Warren McCulloch and Ralph Pitts demonstrated with their theory of neurons how a neural net could calculate any number that a Turing machine can. This, according to Hayles, "joined a model of human neural functioning with automata theory" (Hayles 1999, 59). The cultural perception of digitality of today is comparable to the secrets of the early automata machines that excited many generations in the 17th and 18th centuries. As a technology, a digital computer follows simple logics, but the Deus et machina nature of the invisibility of its action makes it into an ideal mythic object. Early automata were marvels and "believable" precisely due to their mechanical structure being hidden, mysterious. The machines imitated human or animal actions and thus reproduced the living world (see Stafford 1994, 88-103). The digital automatons, personal computers and the "drama of interactivity" are like a classical automata turned inward. The World Wide Web is often talked about as an imitation of the course of the world. One of the most used books on interface design teaching, Ben Scheiderman's Designing the User Interface, equals the pixels in the computer with atoms, interface metaphor with the universe, clicks on the screen with steps in actions (Schneiderman 1998, 206).

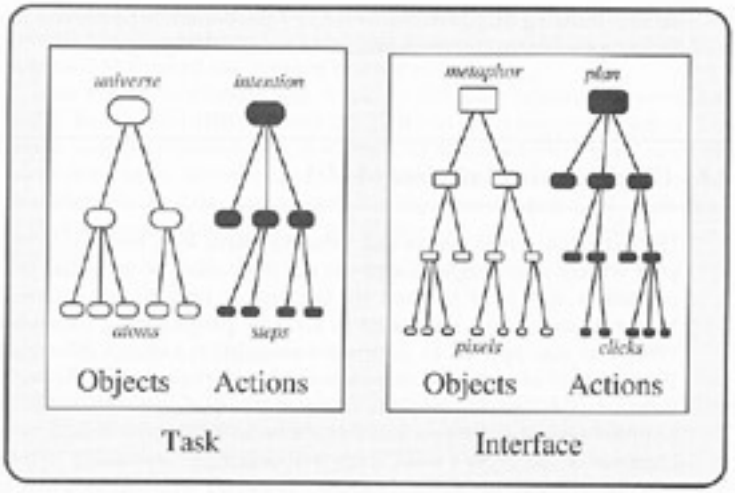


Figure 2.2

Task and interface concepts, separated into hierarchies of objects and actions.

(Schneiderman 1998, 206).

Erkki Huhtamo points out accurately, that automation is not the opposite of interactivity, but its precondition (Huhtamo 1997, 26). If a doll pouring a cup of tea was automated with wooden clockworks, then binary processes and algorithms, boxed as computers, have automated the feedback that a user receives to the actions done by an input device such as a mouse. Theodore Roszak quotes Wiener saying that "to live effectively, is to live with adequate information." And further. "In my thesis that the physical functioning of the living individual and the operation of some of the new communications machines are precisely parallel in their analogous attempts to control entropy through feedback." (Wiener, quoted in Roszak 1986, 9-10). One of the issues to discuss further between system and communication theories, and how subjects are positioned in relation to computers as users, is to look at the Taylorisation of the subject. In the recent years of new media industry growth both leisure and work have become characterised by not automation, but new media as a creative environment. By saying that work is more or at least as much fun than leisure within new media, writers such as Pekka Himanen have valorised the optimised labour as "hacker culture" (Himanen 2001, 12, 24). Both hacker and cyborg have been considered to be politically subversive subject positions. While not denying that the possibility for subversion through those figurations exists even though in practice it would not have been proven true, I would like to call into question the interdisciplinary mobility of these terms as well as their ahistoric uses.

Cyborg figuration: to connect or not to connect

In her critique of Sadie Plant, Sarah Kember talks about "anti-politics of connectionism", a critique of theories that "proclaim autonomy of organic and inorganic systems from external, socio-historical forms of control" (Kember 1998, 102). Furthermore she suggests that contagion, alongside with connectionism, coexisted in the phenomenon of computer hackerism in the 1980s, which emerged at a time when biological and computer sciences converged to claim that humans and computers were regarded as information-processing systems suspectible to disease. (Kember 1998, 103) This transition from contagion to connectionism, according to Kember, has taken place via the concept of the cybernetic organism or a cyborg. (Kember 1998, 104) She considers Haraway's account of the cyborg to be most useful and authoritative because of the ways in which it "refigures the terms of knowledge, power and subjectivity" and provides "a productive conflict of its allegiance to science and objectivity and to postmodern theory and the politics of difference." (Kember 1998, 110) Kember agrees with Claudia Springer that popular cyborg images are masculinised and do not live up to Haraway's cyborg, which is genderless, feminist and socialist ideal with a modus operand of connection, not connectionist.

While not challenging Haraway's cyborgology as a critical figuration, I would like to understand why Haraway does not seem to provide an account, a deconstruction, a history, or hardly a connection with other discourses on cyborg or cybernetics. In her 1997 book there is a footnote where she talks about postmodernity's practice of flexible accumulation, where "the database is to the filing systems of monopoly capital as the computer is to the typewriter and cyberspace is to mundane space." (Haraway 1997, 291 60n) Her reference to the cyborg emerges from laboratory experiments of Clynes and Cline, who used rats to test self-regulating chemical injection systems for bodies to enhance space travel (Haraway 1995, xv). Cyborg anthropology examines boundaries between humans and machines, and from a cultural studies perspective explores "the production of humanness through machines" (Downey et.al. 1995, 342).

I find interesting here Chela Sandoval's remark about Haraway's cybergology and its connections with third world feminisms, and with indigenous figurations of resistance such as the trickster and mestizaje, which Haraway later herself talks about as "a family of displaced figures, of which cyborg is only one" (Sandoval 255).

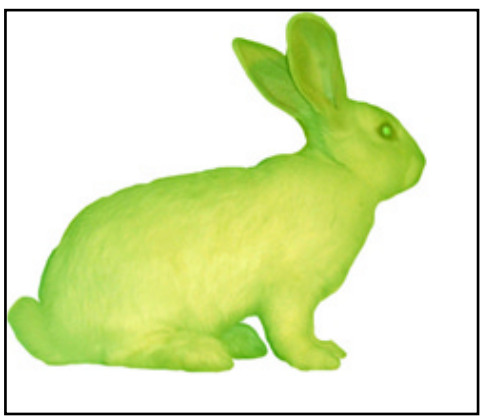
While taking the viewpoint of the chemically enhanced rodent, she stares back at mammals. In some sense, her rhetoric does remind as Sandoval says, the ways in which indigenous cultures, for example Native American fiction, address contemporary phenomena through animist characters such as the Coyote. Trickster figures can be seen as catalysts for semiotic re-arrangements, making sense of relations by contrasting narratives against one another. If this is the case, Haraway has perhaps constructed an alternative mythology for non-indigenous techno cultures. In relation with narratives of digital technologies and new media culture, Cyborg Anthropology seems like an important narrative to think with, but lacking tools, tactics and strategies to deal with historical consructedness of digitality and cyber discourses and gender within them. I would like to illustrate my difficulty with projects that do take the position of rodent as a subject.

Media artist, Eduardo Kac, talks about his project GFP bunny, a rabbit that has been genetically modified with transfluorescent effects:

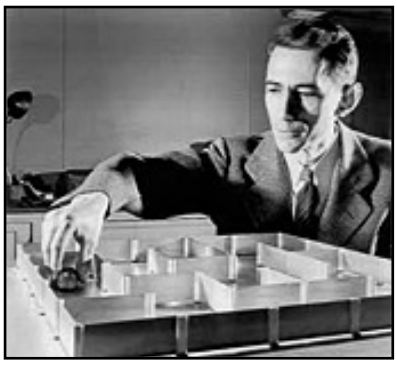
> "One very important aspect of "GFP Bunny" is that Alba, like any other rabbit, is sociable and in need of interaction through communication signals, voice, and physical contact. As I see it, there is no reason to believe that the interactive art of the future will look and feel like anything we knew in the twentieth century. "GFP Bunny" shows an alternative path and makes clear that a profound concept of interaction is anchored on the notion of personal responsibility (as both care and possibility of response). "GFP Bunny" gives continuation to my focus on the creation, in art, of what Martin Buber called dialogical relationship [9], what Mikhail Bakhtin called dialogic sphere of existence [10], what Emile Benveniste called intersubjectivity [11], and what Humberto Maturana calls consensual domains [12]: shared spheres of perception, cognition, and agency in which two or more sentient beings (human or otherwise) can negotiate their experience dialogically. (Eduardo Kac, GFP Bunny, http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html)

The problem with GFP bunny as a critical partner in a dialogue is somewhat similar as what I have described as problematic by assuming a communication model paradigm in trying to understand interaction or a complex user position with personal computers or computer based applications. One easily forgets that computers are machines and pet bunnies are animals, yet the narratives, which anthropomorphise both technology and animals, are constructed by humans.

If the argument of this paper holds, binary logic has been the basis for mass communication theories, not only that of digital media. Thus the communication model with encoding and decoding processes is primarily based on a technical medium, not on messages, interpretations or contexts. I hope to have been able to point out that digital communication theory is applicable to automata, but not adequate to describe the user experience of situated subjects.



Alba, the fluorescent bunny.
Photo: Chrystelle Fontaine.
(Eduardo Kac, GFP Bunny,
http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html)



Claude Shannon and his Theseus,
electromechanical mouse
Image Copyright, 2001 Lucent Technologies, Inc.
(http://plus.maths.org/issue15/features/shannon/)

Endnotes

[1] Digitality in a tehcnical and logical sense means storing binary information as ones and zeroes. What a digital computer does, as it is often expressed, is based on logical algorithms and varying layers of representational programmig languages, ie "machine language" as well as "natural language" commands that refer to stored functions and algorithms, which in turn operate with bits, which again are construted of ones and zeroes. A computer is thus a representational machine in many layers, of which the end user only sees selected parts. "User friendly" interfaces hide digitality of the machine from the end user. In other words, end users rarely operate with digital, but logical machines, or furthermore, with conceptual or narrative machines. Unless the electronics break down, logical machines still never make errors, programmers do. Unless the interactive game fails to entertain the user with its narrativity, its interaction logic, or its mobile visual immersion, the very construction of the game is supposedly not present in the experience. One aspect of mystification and antropomorphization of computers is related to this aspect of "error-free": since there is no person to blame, the computer did it, or the software is stupid. If human-computer interaction was to be represented as a form of communication, it would be much more accurate to represent it as a communication between programmers (or interaction and content designers) and end users than between a machine and a human being. However, as I am pointing out later on, the very model of communication is problematic for interaction theory.

[2] In Finland, literally all communication students still read Osmo A. Wiio's Introduction to Communications, which use Claude Shannons and Warren Weaver's models as well as the input-output models of cybernetic machine theory (See Wiio 1980, passim).

[3] Usage of Shannon's theory of communication, originally intended to be used with logical mechanical systems only, as a basis for human driven interaction would be today equivalent of using the logic structure of tcp-ip networking as a basis of journalism. Communication as signal processing versus a complex semantic act of interpretation parallels the often found paradox between information and knowledge, which is met within such contemporary contexts as "information society" or "information technology".

[4] Kevin Robins has argued in the post-photography debate that digital revolution in imaging has been yet another step in the rationalisation of vision, rather than a radical break from photography (Robins 1996, 167).

Bibliography

J. David Bolter, *Turing´s Man. Western Culture in the Computer Age*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

J. Allan Cheyne and Donato Tarulli, "Dialogue, Difference, and the "Third Voice" in the

Zone of Proximal Development". *http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~acheyne/ZPD.html*. A revised version of this paper is available in Theory and Psychology, 9, 1999, 5-28.

Gary Lee Downey, Joseph Dumit and Sarah Williams, "Cyborg Anthropology". In Chris Hables Gray, ed., *The Cyborg Handbook*. London: Routledge, 1995, 341-346.

Hall, Stuart, "Encoding/decoding". In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Ed.): *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. First published 1973. London: Hutchinson, 1980, 128-38.

Donna J. Haraway, "Introduction: Cyborgs and Symbionts. Living Together in the New World Order." In Chris Hables Gray, ed., *The Cyborg Handbook*. London: Routledge, 1995, xi-xx.

Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness @ Second_Millenium. FemaleMan © _Meets_OncoMouse™. Feminism and Technoscience.* London: Routledge, 1997.

Katherine Hayles, "The Condition of Virtuality". In Peter Lunenfeld, ed*., The Digital Dialectic. New Essays on New Media.* Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 2000, 68-96.

Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Pekka Himanen, *The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age.* New York: Random House, 2001.

Erkki Huhtamo, "Odottavasta operaattorist kärsimättömään käyttäjään. Interaktiivisuuden arkeologiaa." In Kari A. Hintikka and Seppo Kuivakari eds., Mediaevoluutioita. Lapin yliopiston taiteden tiedekunnan julkaisuja C. Katsauksia ja puheenvuoroja 9. Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopisto, 1997.

Sarah Kember, *Virtual Anxiety. Photography, new technologies and subjectivity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

Brenda Laurel, Computers as Theatre. First published 1991. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993.

Tim McFadden, "Notes on the Structure of Cyberspace and the Ballistic Actors Model". In Michael Benedikt, ed., Cyberspace: First Steps. First published 1991. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993, 335-362.

Tapio Mäkelä, Interview with Stelarc. ISEA 94 Exhibition, Ateneum, Helsinki, Finland, 23.8.1994.

Kevin Robins, *Into the image. Culture and politics in the field of vision.* London, Routledge, 1996.

Theodore Roszak, The Cult of Information. The Folklore of Computers and the True Art of Thinking. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Shela Sandoval, "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed." In Chris Hables Gray, ed., *The Cyborg Handbook*. London: Routledge, 1995, 407-422.

C. E. Shannon, ``A mathematical theory of communication,'' *http://cm.bell-labs.com/cm/ms/what/shannonday/shannon1948.pdf*. Reprinted with corrections from *The Bell System Technical Journal*, Vol. 27, pp. 379–423, 623–656, July, October, 1948. Page numbers in notes refer to the PDF file.

Ben Schneiderman, *Designing the User Interface. Strategies for Effective Human-Computer Interaction.* Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1998.

Vivian Sobchack, "New age mutant Ninja hackers. Reading Mondo 2000". In Mark

Dery, ed., Flame Wars. The Discourse of Cyberculture. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. 11-28.

Barbara Maria Stafford, *Artful Science. Enlightenment entertaniment and the eclipse of visual education.* Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994.

Turkle, Sherry. *Life on the Screen. Identity in the Age of the Internet*. First published 1995. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Lev Vygotsky, "The problem of the cultural behaviour of the child". In René van der veer & Jaan Valsiner, eds., *The Vygotsky Reader*. Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1994, 46-56.

Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and the machine*. First edition published 1948. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1961.

Osmo A. Wiio, *Johdatus viestintään.* Porvoo: WSOY, 1980.

E/motional Machines: Esprit de Corps

Norie Neumark, University of Technology, Sydney

Norie.Neumark@uts.edu.au

Emotions are feelings that are in bodies and that move bodies. We *jump* with joy, we *recoil* with fear and when sadness weighs down our hearts, our limbs turn to lead. E/motions move between bodies and machines. Understanding emotion as the movement of embodied affect-- within and between bodies -- has engaged various theorists, such as Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank, Manual De Landa and Gilles Deleuze. And working with embodied affect as e/motion has animated the work of media artists working in video, radio and new media/installation, such as Kathy High, Bill Vorn and Louis Phillipe Demers, Kenneth Rinaldo and my own work. In this paper I will discuss e/motional machines -- affective encounters between people, animals, and machines. By machines I am referring to objects -- from tools to vehicles to media instruments -- as well as Deleuzian *assemblages* of the organic and the mechanical. I will also try to attend to how these e/motional relations are experienced and expressed, within and across cultures, and whether they work differently in digital culture.

I want to begin by questioning why e/motional machines are perturbing art and media at this time and how they are reverberating in theory? Is it part of a more general disturbance in our bodily relations with machines? Up to now, much of critical theory's concern with machine relations, it seems to me, has been focussed on the senses and changes of perception rather or more than on emotion. This is understandable in that the organisation of perception has changed radically in the post-industrial, information era. Lev Manovich argues that whereas in the first half of nineteenth century, the organisation of workers was through their bodies' efficiency, now it's also about the organisation of their minds, senses and perception ("The Labor of Perception", http://www apparitions.ucsd.edu/~manovich/text/labor.html). Similarly, theorists working in a different, Deleuzian, paradigm, such as John Johnston (1999,passim), have also focused their approach to human/machine interfaces on perception and the senses. Johnston works with the concept of 'assemblages', which are (contextually and historically) specific, literal rather than metaphorical connections between humans and machines. However, like much philosophically based critical theoretical work about people and machines, Johnston overlooks emotions, which have been left to psychology and cognitive science.

While critical theory may be somewhat blocked on the emotional front, the perturbations of everyday life by e/motional machines are undeniable. Some people explode light bulbs with their anger. Others report their cars blowing their gaskets when the mutual flow of fury becomes too much. And of course anyone who has used a computer can relay stories of anxiety, frustration, and surprise crashing between themselves and their machines. Historically in relation to people and computers, David Rokeby suggested that there has been a "' shift in the sense of what was being most challenged by the computer. In the 80s it seemed to be... the material body. In the 90s it seem[ed] to be the notions of intelligence and consciousness'" (Huhtamo, 2000b, p.24). I would suggest that at that same time, and particularly at this moment, it's also been the emotions that computers have challenged -- as did so many machines before them. Indeed, it's striking that emotion is now being brought into Artificial Intelligence to increase intelligence and to facilitate relations with machines. This is part of an attempt to make up for the failures of AI through what is called 'affective computing'. For instance, at MIT's Media Lab, Rosalind Picard

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

(2000) bases her work in AI on an understanding of emotion by theorists such as psychologist Antonio Damasio, who investigate emotions as motion, as physical forces.

Though interesting for its recognition of emotion, the creativity of affective computing is itself blocked by its instrumental logic. It is this logic that produces the famous emotive talking computer, Kismet, as blandly 'cute' and what is called 'expressive synthsized speech' as dully functional. Even in much media art, the attempt to simulate and "model how objects and human act, react, move, grow, evolve, think and feel," is been driven by the logic of realism, as Lev Manovich notes (2000, p.30). However, there are artists who are exploring the edge of AI with works which are not about the instrumentality of either cuteness or realism, but which express startling and frightening and bizarre and other irreducibly intense, if strange, emotions. These are the works I want to discuss today.

To explore the emotional relays between bodies and machines in specific works of electronic and digital media/art, I will work with four figures, namely: *affection*, *oscillation*, *projection*, and *contamination*. These figures are expressive of literal and physical as well as metaphorical emotional connections between people, animals and machines, and also attend to psychological, scientific, and aesthetic dimensions. And, I hope, they also enable an analysis that bypasses the binary mind vs. body discourses, which underlie and undermine so much research into human/animal/machine relations. [1]

Affection is a figure for re(p)laying psychological factors, *affects,* through a cultural studies framework. Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank have worked with Silvan Tomkins' concepts of affect to make psychology, psychoanalysis and critical theory interrogate each other. They value Tomkins' work for its "layering and constant mutual interruption of biological and machine models" (1995, p. 15).· A question that can be asked with the figure of affection is, what attracts affect to certain machines? Is it to do with functionality or sensual engagement or the articulation of these two together? For instance, do the 'faces' of certain machines affect emotions differently? If a machine has joints between its moveable parts, do people encounter it as vulnerable, say, or lovable or surprising even? What else about machines provokes affection? Issues such as these particularly engage robotics – both in art and beyond.

One of the most affecting robot/art works I've encountered is Louis-Phillipe Demers and William Vorn's *La Cour des Miracles* -- a sort of robot freak show from the 16th century, figured via a Hollywood post-nuclear post-industrial sordid future. It is the Hollywood of post-apolcalyptic films such as *Bladerunner* and *Terminator* that, to me, help shape this work's sensory imaginary. (On *Bladerunner*, by the way, it's interesting how affective encounters between humans and machines... and animals...are the central and starting point of the book which inspired the movie, Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968). Yet these seminal and powerful episodes are absent from the movie.) In contrast, *La Cour des Miracles* holds together affective agitation with disturbing aural/visual intensities. A multiplicity of 'exchanged of bodies'. In a dark, smoke filled room this controversial piece was the loudest at ISEA 97 where I experienced it. Although I wasn't a robot lover at that time, there was something about these metallic skeletal pieces, caught in cages, chained to walls, freakishly dismembered, screaming and writhing their agony (frantically responding to sensors) that engaged me despite my prejudice. The sensors and programming of the work were extremely successful in achieving the aim "to trigger empathy in the viewer". I should point out here that it's not just in this work that sensors play a significant role in the relay of e/motion --they are increasingly an important part of digital media installation, a major form of interaction. Sensors -- an ambivalent term -- do they sense you or do you sense (through) them? Or does e/motion relay back and forth through them as they sense *your* movement and presence, and you sense their effect/affect.

I'd like to show a bit of the video documenting *La Cour des Miracles*, though it doesn't really convey the intense affective encounter of the work as an installation.

I can't show the whole thing but it's worth noting that they say at the end that the work is "an attempt to express the humanity of the machine world and the profound machinism of humanity"

Play Video: *La Cour des Miracles*

La Cour des Miracles played at an edge of human-animal-machine with its whispering, howling, groan-like sounds and the pained distortions of the movements. The robots evoked a disturbing border state of affect that much cyborg work misses. There were six different characters -- 'The Harassing Machine', 'The Begging Machine', 'The Limping Machine', 'The Heretic Machine', 'The Crawling Machine', and 'The Convulsive Machine' -- each with its own particular look, movement, sound; each with its own persona and affections. *La Cour des Miracles* explored the dirty, hazy, noisy, out of control – repressed?- aspect of digital life. The miraculous horrific ugly-beautiful simple and strange machines/animals/ freaks expressed and evoked an alienation from the smooth high tech control-desire of the computer world as well as the impossibility of escape.

In *La Cour des Miracles*, Vorn and Demers created a robotic assemblage that trembled and vibrated with the irreducible intensity of affection but whose e/motion took them nowhere. In this way, they poetically brought forth the disconnection of the digital era where the promise is speed and arrival but the reality is deferral and waiting, as W.J.T. Mitchell points to (2001). This is the increasingly familiar experience of work relations with machines, which is now about watching and waiting as well as interaction/response time, according to Lev Manovich . And it's the everyday leisure experience of the WWW, which is training people to watch and wait, just as cinema in its early days trained people for the shocks of the 20th century, in Benjamin's perceptive analysis ("The Labor of Perception", http://www-apparitions.ucsd.edu/~manovich/text/labor.html). And these moments of unreliable relay, which are as common as those of on-time delivery, are amplified by affection.

Oscillation, my second analytical figure, provides a model for examining physical forces and e/motion. Electromagnetism and its oscillations have attracted interest throughout the 19th and 20th centuries from scientists and artists trying to understand the connections between people and machines. Oscillation suggests the physical effects of emotions on machinery and vice versa. It is also an analytical figure which resonates with the work of Deleuze and Guattari, who were concerned with understanding forces and intensities rather than intentions or fixed meanings. In *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari expressed their concern with "movement and rest, slowness and speed" (1987, p. 254), particularly as qualities of machinic assemblages. [4]

Kenneth Rinaldo's 2000 installation, *Autopoesis* creates a multiplicity of moments of oscillation of emotion between and within the audience and the pieces that make up the installaltion. I encountered this work in Sydney but have subsequently learned that it was commissioned by Perttu Rastas of Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki for the extraordinary exhibition, *Alien Intelligence* in 2000.

Let me show you a few minutes from the artist's video.

As Rinaldo said, *Autopoesis* was named after the concept developed by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, in what Katherine Hayles calls the 'second wave' of cybernetics. With the concept autopoeises, "they probed deeply into what it means to acknowledge that the observer... does not so much discern preexisting systems as create them through the very act of observation" (1999.p. 131). In Maturana's words:

> "'The living organization is a circular organization which secures the production or maintenance of the components that specify it in such a manner that the

> product of their functioning is the very same organization that produces them'" (Hayles, 1999,p. 139).

In autopoetic processes, Hayles explains, "the observer can observe only because the observer is structurally coupled to the phenomenon she sees'"(1999, p.142). Following Maturana and Varela's rejection of (external) causality and their interest in *process* as recursively generating behaviour, Rinaldo's work oscillates with emotion within a system of which the audience and robotic arms are all part. The reflexivity of Rinaldo's autopoetic system is e/motional. Further, and similarly with Vorn and Demers, Rinaldo uses sensors not for direct cause-effect interactivity, which so often has the regressive effect of re-centering the subject in control. Instead in *Autopoeisis*, the sensors transmit and amplify emotions between the audience and the arms, amongst the multiplicity of arms. As partial objects these arms -- pathetic reminders of war-torn and severed limb? -- both have their own life and also somehow become our arms as the emotion oscillates between us/them. Again, there is a similarity to the partially severed bodies of *La Cours des Miracles.* Indeed this partiality of the robots creates a sense of the integral necessity for the human body to make a 'whole' body for the emotion to oscillate through in these assemblages. Given that computer doubles are always, according to Lev Manovich, "incomplete, partial, awkward and surreal"(2000, p. 32) [3], it is all the more appropriate to encounter partial bodies oscillating so affectively in these works.

In both these works, the oscillation of e/motion is a motion *within* and *between* rather than to a fixed destination. As emotions oscillate between people, animals, machines, all are swept away in a relay/tionship of becoming that is neither imitation nor indentification. Discussing this sort of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari allude specifically to the instance of the tarantella as

> a strange dance that magically cures or exoricises the supposed victims of a tarantula bite...[where] the victim...becomes a dancing spider only to the extent that the spider itself is supposed to become a pure silhouette, pure color and pure sound to which the person dances. One does not imitate, one becomes a block of becoming (1987, p. 305).

I'd like next to play something Tarantata'd from a radiophonic work of mine from 1999, *Esprit de corps -- oscillating with emotion*.

Projection, my third analytical figure, addresses the imaginary and psychoanalytic dimensions of affective encounters: the movement of desires between persons, animals, and machines. The idea that people project emotions onto animals and machines is, of course, not new. But rather than the common understanding of such desire as, say, perverse or neurotic, I want to go with this emotional flow of desire, as everyday and contributing to the aesthetic and sensual meaning people make of themselves and their worlds. In this sense, e/motional projection sheds light on the landscape of the cultural imaginary. "A machine corresponds necessarily to a call of the imaginary" ... affirming the subject's "unthought, its unthinkable", according to Charles Grivel (1992, pp. 35, 58). "A machine is a... body.... We only invent machines that are bodies; we invent machines after our bodies; we recognize ourselves through them...Machine-mirrors...(Grivel, 1992, p. 31).

Projection, mirrors, doubles. The figure of projection also presents a way to rework the uncanny concept of *doppelgangers,* strange yet familiar doubles, onto which emotions are projected. Friedrich Kittler discusses the Double in "Romanticim-Psychoanlysis-Film" as a figure that arose with reading, as a means to identification. He describes a subsequent connection between film, mechanization, trains, doubles and psychoanalysis, which came to light in Freud's work, though Freud himself failed to see it (1997, p. 92). [4] Kittler projects the bodies of early silent films as "the shadow of the body of the one filmed, or in short, his Double"(1997, p. 93). For

Kittler, "Cinematic Doubles demonstrate what happens to people who get caught in the way of mechanical media's firing line. Their mechanized likeness roams the data banks that store bodies"(Kittler, 1997, p. 96). While robotic partial bodies form oscillating and affective assemblages, the double's body comes to light through projection. Yet this flow of desire and imagination and emotion does not necessarily run freely. Doubles are also threatening in being both so like us, but also different, according to Margaret Morse (2000, p. 35)

I'd like to deviate from my concern with media art for a moment and draw my example of projection from a different screen - tv. Inspired by Kittler and his concern for materiality, I want to explore the very material aspect of projection – the photons and light beams. According to the holographic Doctor on *Star Trek Voyager*. the photons and light beams are 'just like flesh and blood'. I feel compelled to say a few words about the Doctor in part because he's one of my favourite characters, in part because projection as a figure is particularly useful for approaching screen images, and in part because I think the relays between art, everyday life and popular culture are as important as those between science and science fiction. I won't be able to show an example of *Voyager* here, but it is available at some video stores. *Voyager*'s Doctor, a holographic projection is the embodiment of intellectual, corporeal, and *emotional* subroutines. It is this projection, the Doctor, who teaches Seven of Nine, the once-machinic Borg how to have emotion. It is this projection, the Doctor, who communicates with an out of control Smart bomb that can't be reasoned with by intelligence, but does respond to the Doctor's emotional call to ethics. The Doctor, the creation of a real life doctor, Zimmerman, figures more as an uncanny double than as a controlled electronic creation. In the episode where the Doctor treats the dying Zimmerman, it is their emotions that first block and then transmit the cure. In the end, what is striking is not only that the Doctor is created in Zimmerman's image, but that he is also the projection of Zimmerman's emotions.

Computers are another obvious but still important area for investigation through the figure of projection. Given the time constraint, I can't detail the ways people project emotions onto computers, both in art, media and everyday life, but I will mention my favourite example -- my friend who bored her computer to death during the final stages of her PhD. I think most of us could add countless other examples, hopefully not as dire as that one. Finally, in terms of projection and computers, I would also note that the e/motion is projected onto the machine/object rather than the images that appear on its screen (Manovich, 2000, p. 32).[5]

Contamination, my final figure, is useful for thinking the flows between the borders of people, animals and machines, especially through language, speech and voice. Inspired for me in part by the work of William Burroughs (of 'language is a virus' fame), contamination opens new possibilities to examine how the language of and around machines becomes the language of human behaviour (and vice versa), relaying with it an e/motional inf(l)ection. What happens to our emotional relations to machines, for instance, when metaphors of programming and hard wiring replace figures of pumps and plumbing to describe how bodies work? When we 'feed' paper into copiers, do we feel that we *nourishing* them in an intimate way? Is contamination through the flow of language one of the ways in which machines that are experienced as new and alien are brought into the 'familiar' and connections established with them?

Contamination is also a figure for exploring how people talk to machines to express/construct their emotions. The emotionally expressive aspect of language reveberates here -- the irreducible intensities of the voice. Contamination infects analysis with language's sensual and asignifying elements of sound and voice. Contamination moves through the air, and the airwaves --unseen, but heard. In the ether, ghosts and spirits are airborne contaminants. Little wonder that telepaths and psychics are having a major comeback on the electronic airwaves -- phone lines, television, on the web -- where psychic energy is 'constantly exchanging with electronic

energy' in the words, and work of electronic artist Julia Scher, maker of numerous 'Dirty Data' works (Neumark, 1996).[6]

We are living through an era reminiscent of an earlier moment in technological culture where sound waves bounced through a ghost filled ether to attend the birth of the telephone. It's the voice - the mechanized voice - the telephonic voice, which most readily contaminates and is contaminated by affective encounters with the spirits of the ether it passes through. "The telephone grew out of a mysterious coupling of art and occult", in a relay of uncanny contaminations, as Avital Ronell explored in*The Telephone Book* (1989, p. 366).

This same contamination circulates through the bodies and telephones in a disturbing and affectively powerful work by Kathy High, an episode from her series, *Everyday Problems of the Living, a serial*, of which I'll play a few minutes. The tape is part of "a year long project about the maker's anxieties surrounding living and dying...Thinking that she might die in the year 2000, High decided to 'perform her death,' creating a different tape around the topic each month". This one, "Domestic Vigilancia" is from January.

Play *Domestic Vigilancia*

Kathy High, aka Kitty High, contaminates her kitty with her existential and emotional anxiety. The call that does not go through sickens the cat, producing a gut reaction, which we know from Terry Eagleton is the original aesthetic response, 'in the body' (1990, p. 13).[7] Kitty contaminates kitty through her voice, via the **medium** of the telephone via the **medium** on the telephone -- and sickens us, via the **medium** of video. A reframing of the telephone's long established role in film -- contaminator of domestic bliss -- disruptively setting the action in motion -- spreading life and death news, in real life as in film. According to Ronell,

> The telephone ... is to be plugged in somewhere between science, poesy and thinking. Insasmuch as it belongs in its simplest register, to the order of the mechanical and the technical, it is already on the side of death. However, the telephone cannot be regarded as a 'machine' in the strict sense of classic philosophy, for it is at times 'live'...The telephone flirts with the opposition life/death by means of the same ruse through which it stretches apart receiver and transmitter or makes the infinite connection that touches the rim of finitude (1989, p.84.)

The life and death phone call that does not get through -- a moment of gut wrenching anxiety in High's film. Waiting ... again. The phone is a relay point, both of connection and transfer, but also possibly a site of e/motional blockage -- the call that is not answered. "The relay is not only the nexus of power in the economies of transport and circulation but also potentially the least secure point in the entire communications system, according to Bernhard Siegert" (1999, p. l1.).

The history of the telephone contaminates High's film in even further uncanny ways. In a chapter entitled "Birth of the Telephone: Watson - Dead Cats", Ronell conjured up Thomas Watson, poet, spiritualist, inventor (1989, p. 240). Watson was the electrician who produced the "'electrically carried ghost of a twang [which Alexander Graham] Bell ... shaped [into] the first electric speaking telephone'"(Ronell, 1989, p. 229). It was the dead beloved cat of Watson's childhood, stuffed for the mourning family, whose "'fur" he said, "I used a few years later as an exciter for a frictional electric machine someone gave me.'"(Ronell, 1989, p. 239). The mouth of that dead cat had been particularly frightening to the young Watson. (Ronell, 1989, p. 238) [8]. Yet another toxic, silently emoting feline mouth. "The telephone makes you swallow what is not there" says Ronell. "At the same time, you spill out a part of you that contains the other; in this way, it is a vomatorium"(Ronell, 1989, pp. 341-2). And so

says Kathy's cat, in not so many words.

Thomas Watson claimed to be the first person to *listen to* noise (Ronell, 1989, p. 259). Asignifying noise ... the mess that spews out of Kathy's cat's mouth. The cat contaminates us with a mouthful beyond a gutwrenching scream ... just pure gut wrenching. The more Kathy's distant voice is --even, flat, detached, already dead? -- the more present are the cat's outpourings.

Kathy High's work is a literally sickening expression of the contaminating affective encounters, which ooze across the borders between people, animals, machines. High's astonishing video inflects Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming animal' with a stunning intensity. And her attention to animal contamination is timely. W.J.T. Mitchell has noted the spreading presence of animals in the art world, as compared to a decade or two ago (2001). He argues that in this 'biocybernetic age'there has been a breakdown of barriers between anthro/animal/machine. In Mitchell's view, animals have become a new other: "the animal replaces the racialized or sexualized other as the frontier of cultural difference" (2001). Even *Star Trek* has been contaminated and in *Voyager*, for instance, it's notable that rather than nonspecific 'aliens' functioning as THE Alien -- generalized Other -- the series is littered with myriad distinctly*specified* 'species'.

In a sense, what we are encountering is a strange reversal of the 17thcentury paradigm where animals were machines, without sentience or emotion, according to Matt Cartmill:

> In the mechanistic philosophies that came into fashion among Europe's intellectuals in the seventeenth century, the natural world came to be seen as a vast machine, in which human beings were the only conscious entitities and animals were nothing but robots made of meat. (1993,pp. 92-3.)

In that paradigm people "kicked about their dogs and dissected their cats without mercy, laughing at any compassions for them and callling their screams the noise of breaking machinery"(Cartmill, 1993, pp. 95-6). In today's West, on the other hand, machine animals evoke emotion in a way that exceeds anthropomorphism. For instance, emotions of love and care contaminate across the borders between computer scientists and their robot dogs in the increasingly popular Robotgames. In Japan, nurtured by an animistic tradition and hothoused by limited domestic spaces, such affective encounters spread through everyday life, according to Yuji Sone[9].

> E/motional movement of contaminations between humans, animals and machines -- leaky borders. These encounters recall the becoming, including becoming animal, which Deleuze and Guattari figured as movements by contagion, movements that are not about pity or identification, nor analogy or imitation"(1987, pp. 258, 272.).

Becoming is to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity. Or it is to emit particles that enter that zone becuase they take on those relations. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 273).

This is "a proximity'that makes it impossible to say where the boundary between the human and the animal lies'"[10]. In this zone of proximity – the terms of becoming do not exchange places nor identify (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 306) -- they infect each other, in an e/motion of contagion.

In conclusion, I have tried to relay some of the ways that e/motion moves bodies and machines in media/art -- ways which I have also implied resonate with the familiar affective encounters of everyday life. As Erkki Huhtamo noted "media artists do not work in a vacuum; their activity is always related to the ideas, both accepted and controversial, within the space of culture…. media artists comment on

and criticize existing ideas, but also develop them further and anticipate things to come"(2000, p. 23).

Endnotes

1. Most previous studies have either accepted the mind/body split or critiqued it; however, the problem is that critique effectively re-asserts it (to critique it), as Sedgwick and Frank note (20). Terry Eagleton begins his The Ideology of the Aesthetic with the statement that, "Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body" referring "to the whole region of human perception and sensation" (1990, p. 13).
2. "The plane of consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the artifical and the natural…. It is a fixed plane, upon which things are distinguished from one another only by speed and slowness." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 254).
3. He notes that they are also affected/effected by art history's long tradition of simulation and doubles. I take up the question of doubles below in the section on Projection.
4. "If the Double, named the self, that poetic-philosopher phantasm, originated in the general literacy campaign of Cental Europe, then the shabby figures [their mirror images/doubles seen on bus and train] that appear before Mach and Freud are the products of Central Europe's general mechanization.... [T]he mobile mirrors, the passing panoramas and the innumerable Doubles named commuters only came into existence with the train and the spark-ignition engine. " (Kittler, 1997, pp. 91-2).
5. Manovich argues that rather than a projective mirror, computer based simulation imagery is like a virus, "which reflects who we are, while infecting us with its own alien logic". (2000, p. 32)
6. Julia Scher speaking in Norie Neumark's, *Separation Anxiety.* One of her works I recall hearing in the toilets of the Whitney Museum, during their Century of American art show.
7. The "territory" of the aesthetic is "nothing less than the whole of our sensate life together - the business of affections and aversions, of how the world strikes the body on its sensory surfaces, of that which takes root in the gaze and the guts and all that arises from our most banal, biological insertion into the world". (Eagleton, 1990, p.13)
8. Watson said of himself, in relation to a foul mouthed workmate whose nauseating language he vomited forth, "'I was more easily contaminated'". (Ronell, 1989, p. 242)
9.Yuji Sone, in personal discussion with the author, August, 2000. Sone pointed out that the Japanese animistic tradition usually referred to a relation with nature but is also relevant to understanding the relation of respect between humans and their tools and other machines. The relation is not that they are human, says Sone, but 'asif', with relations of appreciation and respect, which are embedded in the language and culture. The tendancy to get into robotics is not due to traditions of animism, but also related to the current environment and a certain sense of inevitabililty.
10. Scherer and Hocquenghem, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.273.

Literature

Matt Cartmill, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep,* New York: Ballantine Books, 1968

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (transl. Brian Massumi) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

Charles Grivel, "The Phonograph's Horned Mouth", transl Stephen Sartarelli, in Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead (eds.), *Wireless Imagination: sound, radio and the avant-garde,* Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1992

Erkki Huhtamo (a) (ed.) *Alien Intelligence, Catalogue,* Helsinki: Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.

Erkki Huhtamo, (b) "The Prehistory of Alien Intelligence, or How an Exhibition found its 'Final' Form", *Alien Intelligence, Catalogue* Helsinki: Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.

John Johnston, "Machinic Vision," *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn, 1999, v.26 issue 1.

Friedrich A Kittler, *literature, media, information systems: essays*, Amsterdam: OPA, 1997.

N. Katherine Hayles, *How we became posthuman: virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Lev Manovich, "Alien Vision: Simulation of Life and the History of Illusion" in Erkki Huhtamo (ed.), *Alien Intelligence, Catalogue* Helsinki: Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.

Lev Manovich, "The Labor of Perception", http://www-apparitions.ucsd.edu/~manovich/text/labor.html

W.J.T.Mitchell, "The Work of Art in the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction", paper delivered at Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, August 2001, accompanied by "Biocybernetic Reproduction: Theses", Revised 8/7/01.

Margaret Morse, "Gort! Klaatu Barada Nikto on Alien Intelligence", in Erkki Huhtamo (ed.), *Alien Intelligence, Catalogue* Helsinki: Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.

Norie Neumark, *Separation Anxiety*, The Listening Room, ABC Classic FM, 1996.

Rosalind W. Picard, *Affective Computing*., Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000.

Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technolog-Schizphrenia-Electric Speech*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989

Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank (eds.) "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," in Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank (eds.) *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader,* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.

Bernhard Siegert, *Relays: Lieterature as an Epoch of the Postal System*" transl. Kevin Repp. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Dangerous Emotions? Finnish Television Fans and Sensibilities of Fandom

Kaarina Nikunen, University of Tampere

kn27827@uta.fi

"It would be terrible to be always serious,
never to be able to just throw oneself in..."
Eija, Xena-fan

In my paper I will discuss fan culture and more specifically the feelings of fandom among Finnish television fans. This paper is part of a larger work, my Ph.D. that I am writing on Finnish fan culture and television.[1] In this paper I focus on the irrational side of fandom and the process of desire and identification among Xena and Ally McBeal fans. The material consists of interviews and letters I have received from fans during 1999 and 2001. [2]

My theoretical framework is based on the tradition of cultural and women's studies that emphasise the cultural construction of meaning. I use Jackie Stacey's (1994) work on female spectatorship and her argument on desire and identification as intertwining to explore the desires of fandom.

My aim is to explore the emotions involved in fandom: How does fandom feel like? How are these feelings constructed?

I argue that fandom creates a certain space where desire can be abundant and exceed many limits experienced otherwise outside this space. I will also argue that the process of identification is layered and multiple.

Fandom is constructed at certain time, in a certain place. It is intertwined with a net of meanings created through different public and private discourses. It is constructed through these and other representations of fandom - from traditions of fan culture. Therefore to be able to understand fandom, it is necessary to study different discourses that define fandom.

Defining fans

We may have a quite clear idea about fandom, but when it comes to defining fandom it appears to be more complicated. Who is a fan? At what point consumer becomes a fan? Is intensive television watching fandom?

The word fan itself is an abbreviation from fanatic, which comes from a Latin word fanaticus. Fanaticus meant literally "a temple servant, a devotee" but it was used on persons "inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy". In the course of time the word fanatic was used in a reference to any "excessive and mistaken enthusiasm", not only religious worship. (Jenkins, 1992, 12)

The abbreviation "fan" was first used in a journalism describing sports, especially baseball followers. According to Jenkins (ibid.) the term fan never fully escaped its earlier connotations of religious zealotry, false beliefs, orgiastic excess, possession and madness. These connotations are present even today in the representations of fans and fan culture, as many studies like Jenkins's Textual Poachers (ibid.) and my own notes have showed. Because of the bad ring of the word, not everyone is ready to accept the definition even though they would realise different practices of fandom.

In contemporary culture fans are usually represented as unbalanced, mad and obsessed. The most common picture of a fan is probably a group of screaming teenage girls - fans of the Beatles or the Backstreet Boys. Fan culture is considered to be feminine culture even though there are many male fans as well. The media texts

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

tend to emphasise the feminine side of fandom ignoring often the male fans. (See Jenkins 1992, 15; Ehenreich et al. 1992; Robertson 1999) Interestingly the comic and dangerous fans are usually depicted as male and erotic, orgiastic fans as female (Jenkins 1992, 15).

Fandom seems to consist of something strange and unfamiliar for the ”ordinary” audience. In Jenkins’ words, ”fans seem to be dangerously out of touch with reality”(ibid).

Joli Jenson (1992, 13-16) points out that there are actually few examples in contemporary literature that explore fandom as a normal, everyday cultural or social phenomenon. Instead fans are described as obsessed and potentially dangerous. Jenson links these representations with the concept of modernity as disjointed (urban) society. In the early 20th century American critics have been particularly concerned about the decline of community and the increasing power of mass media. Since the communal bonds get loose individuals have no reliable orientation in the world and appear open to irrational appeals. Fans were seen as displaying symptoms of wider social dysfunction - modernity - that threatens us all. The view of community where social relations are created more and more through mass media is present in theories of post modern society – but instead of talking about the masses these theories emphasise individuality, difference and active audience (See Ang 1985; Press 1991; Fiske 1997).

In the academic research fans have long been ignored. The interest towards fan culture in the field of cultural studies rose at the time when overall interest in television and audience studies was increasing. Ethnographic studies and audience research began to see audience as active in producing their own meanings. Housewives watching soap operas were no longer considered as passive viewers.(See Ang 1985; Seiter et al. 1989) This shift in academic research gave fans a chance. Different studies criticised now the view of fans as obsessed and easy to manipulate and stressed the activity and creativity of fan culture (Lewis 1992; Jenkins 1992). Fans were therefore seen as part of popular culture and targets of the mass culture criticism in the same way as soap opera viewers. The point of view may have been reactive towards the earlier criticism in fan culture studies such as in Adoring Audience edited by Lisa A. Lewis (1992) emphasising the problem of stereotyping and active roles of fans. Other aspects of fandom have been present but not as emphasised.

Henry Jenkins (1992) on his research on Star Trek and the Beauty and the Beast fans , writes how fans challenge the traditional cultural hierarchies by selecting inappropriate texts, intensive interpretative practices.

> ”Rejecting the aesthetic distance Bourdieu suggests is a cornerstone of bourgeois aesthetics, fans enthusiastically embrace favoured texts and integrate media representations into their own social experience.”(Jenkins 1992, 18)

Jenkins (1992, 24) sees fans as textual poachers, using Michel de Cearteau’s characterisation of active reading. Poaching characterises the ongoing struggle between readers and writers over the control of the meanings of texts. Therefore fans make their own meanings and even their own stories. In his study Jenkins explores fan fiction written by fans and the sexual images in fan fiction. It is quite interesting that many of the stories contain eroticization: fans want to explore the erotic dimensions of characters or realise the sexual subplots or in slash fiction the homoerotic passion of characters. These stories are read by fans not so much to relive their own experience of the programme but to explore the different possibilities the same material can give. (Jenkins 1992, 175-177)

Jenkins’ work stresses the creativity of fandom which seems to be especially intensive among science fiction fans. It is important to remember that fandom is originated in response to specific historical conditions and is constantly in process. It has roots and traditions that guide and direct new fans. Therefore different fan

groups have different traditions and these traditions are connected with idols: different idols construct different type of fan culture. For example Finnish Ally McBeal fans do not write fan fiction but Xena fans do.

Although there are different types of fan groups and practises of fandom may vary, there are attemps to define fandom. Lawrence Grossberg (1995, 49) sees fandom as something more than consuming because fan has a certain actively produced view on popular culture. Grossberg points out that the relation between audience and popular texts is usually always active and productive and to separate fans from consumers on the bases of activity would mean elitist view on fandom. According to Grossberg fandom can be defined as an affective relation to cultural texts. Affect is not the same as emotions or desire, it is socially constructed from cultural effects and it describes the intensity of experiences. A fan does not only celebrate cultural texts but actively uses them to create a view on popular culture and a place to speak from. Therefore fandom contains critical attitudes towards cultural texts as well. For Grossberg fandom (because of the affectivity) can create empowerment and contain political potential.(Grossberg 1995, 49-53)

Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) have defined fandom a bit differently. Abercombie and Longhurst (1998, 138-142) suggest a continuum from consumer to petty producer. In this continuum they make a distinction between the fan, the cultist and the enthusiast. According to Abercrombie and Longhurst fans are people who become particularly attached to certain programmes and stars within the context of relatively heavy mass media use. For example young children are mentioned as typical fans. Cultists on the other hand may be heavy users of mass media but this use revolves around certain defined and redefined tastes and the media use has become more specialised. The specialisation also occurs through the increased consumption of literature specific to the cult. Abercrombie and Longhurst also argue that cultists are more organised than fans. More dominant forms of organisation of an activity occur among enthusiasts who are involved more with the specialist literature by producing it than with media and stars.

I find this distinction rather problematic since it tends to reproduce the stereotypical image of fandom and follow the gendered genre hierarchies of soap opera and science fiction audience. Furthermore it is in contradiction to the ways fans themselves define fandom and their position in the field of popular culture. This idea of a continuum might serve as a tool for theoretical analysis of fan culture if we were to think of fan culture as the main category. The problem of this type of categorisation however is in the way it produces closed meanings and clear boundaries. In most cases these boundaries are factitious. Even for Abercrombie and Longhurst it is not always clear whether they should talk about a fan or a cultist. I will argue that there are different types of fans and that fans may be well organised, petty producers and heavy mass media users and literature users at the same time. There is however one element in fandom that produces the difference between the fan and for example the media consumer. It is the affective relation to cultural texts that is an essential part of fandom. According to Henry Jenkins (1992, 57) the difference between watching a series and becoming a fan lies exactly in the intensity (affective) of fan's emotional or intellectual involvement. This is one of the reasons I am especially interested in the feelings of fandom. For many reasons scholars have emphasised the rational side of fandom but I consider that in the irrationality, in the intensive involvement lies the very essence of fandom.

In my research I define fandom as an affective relation to cultural texts that involves activity other than viewing that is somehow connected to the idol or the television programme concerned e.g. collecting pictures or writing fan fiction. Fandom also involves representation of identity and therefore questions of identification are essential in fandom. This is one of the elements that differ fandom from consumption and collecting. In the following part I will discuss the history of Finnish television fan culture.

Pride and shame

Television fan culture is a fairly new phenomenon in comparison to other forms of fandom in Finland. Television first arrived to Finland in the late 1950s and became household item about ten years later. The first television fans probably appeared in Finland at the same time with regular broadcasting. There were fans of Peyton Place already in the 1960's when Ryan O'Neill visited Finland and met his fans (Ruudun hurma 1996). But fan culture with special community and subculture would first developed around different sci-fi series, like Star Trek. In the beginning of 1990s media brought fan groups into public notice with the soap opera Bold and Beautiful whose stars made very popular fan tours to Finland.

Now television companies are very aware of fan movements and even offer special viewing sessions for them. For example in March 27th 2000 Finnish Broadcasting company Yleisradio organised a special non-stop viewing session of all the episodes of Raid, a very popular Finnish crime series at the station and the commercial channel MTV3 has sent "marathon" sessions of X-files, Simpsons and Friends on television.

So in the 1990s television companies have become aware of the fan culture and have even began to actively promote fandom. These sessions and the overall concept of fandom has gained publicity and coverage in the media as well. These media discourses and practices are constantly constructing Finnish television fandom.

The role of media can be quite essential in construction of fandom but fandom is also constantly constructed among fan groups that create their own traditions, views, relations and interpretations. As a social group fan groups have their unwritten rules and hierarchies. New fans learn fandom from older fans and even though participating is free to every one the discussions can be dominated by the leaders of the group - who usually are the founders of club or a web-site.[3] Fan groups hold their own discussions through the internet, letters or fan clubs and establish their views on different issues concerning their idols. Many of the discussions of fans are also influenced by the producers or marketing of the programme since they tend to control the information about the programmes. Nevertheless fans collect and change information and also make their own stories and interpretations on the programmes and stars. These fan groups participate in the construction of fan identity and set certain frames for it.

Naturally the social background and the special cultural conditions of each fan have there impact on the experience of fandom. For example age and gender can be very decisive factors in the experience of fandom. Television fan groups appear to be heterogeneous which indicates that the experience is not dominated so much by the homogeneity of the group. There appears to be room for diversity: different ages, genders, sexualities are included. Nevertheless it is quite a different thing to state to be over 60 years male and a Xena fan than 19 years female and Xena fan.

At this point it is good to take a closer look at the programmes and fan groups under discussion. Xena The Warrior Princess is a television series from New Zealand that was first broadcasted on Finnish commercial channel MTV3 on November 1997. The events are situated in an indefinite past. The episodes include elements of mythical material from ancient Greece and famous stories, fairy tales and plays by Shakespeare. Xena is a warrior princess who used to be evil but changed. Now she fights to defend the good and the weak. Xena is accompanied by Gabrielle who is not as skilled fighter as Xena and tends to talk rather than fight in conflicts. Xena has a wide fan audience especially in United States and many lesbian followers who are interested in the subtext of the series: the relationship between Xena and Gabrielle is considered to be a love affair. Xena has around 50 very active fans in Finland who have their own websites and discussion groups in the internet. Fans write to each other, collect pictures, books and Xena material as well as write fan fiction. Fans are both men and

women, from 14 to 60 years old, from all around Finland.

I have received letters from seven Xena fans of which I have interviewed five, first in 1999 and later again in 2001. I have also followed their activities and discussions in the internet.

Ally McBeal is an American television series produced by David E. Kelley and it began in Finland on MTV3 in September 1998. The main character Ally is in her thirties, single and working in a successful lawfirm in Boston. The series concentrates on the private life of Ally and her colleagues - mainly on the relationships between men and women. The court cases are usually dealing with sexuality. Events in the series and the life of actress Calista Flockhart have made headlines in the evening papers. Ally McBeal has been a very popular television show with over 700 000 viewer at best. Fans are men and women from different ages, although the series has been especially popular among 13-16 year old teens. Ally McBeal fans seem to be cautious about calling themselves fans. They may recognise that they are fans but with certain reservations. They follow discussion in the net and in the papers, collect pictures, talk about the series and follow it intensively. Ally McBeal fans don't have as intensive fan community as Xena fans and their fandom is more attached to the public media representations[4].

I have interviewed 15 Ally McBeal viewers of which 12 were fans. I have also analysed 8 fan letters concerning Ally McBeal and written to local newspaper Aamulehti.

As noted before, different public and private discourses construct fandom and give the word its meanings. Although fans themselves actively take part in this construction, the negative ring of the word seems to be strong, so strong that many followers do not want to identify with the word fan. Those who are highly involved in fan culture are proud but at the same time quite defensive about fandom.

> "Many people have learned from Xena, gained self confidence, new friends and aspects in life. For me Xena has taught all those things. Someone might think that one has to be quite poor, if even the moralities have to be learned from television. Of course one doesn't learn them just from there, Xena is merely a "vehicle". I am not a raving fan swearing by the name of the series. I have a life outside the show, even a very happy one. I live with my family, I have hobbies, I study, I am quite an ordinary young kid".
>
> Pirjo, 17, female, Xena-fan

Those who are not so involved (many Ally McBeal fans in my study) try to make some distance with the word fan although they seem to realise many practices of fandom. They might say that they are fans, but not as enthusiastic or intensive as some others.

> "I would like her (Ally McBeal) to take the doctor because he likes her so much but...now I sound like my mother and her friend when they are talking about the Bold and Beautiful and I always say that you are crazy (laughter)".
>
> Kikka, 40, female, Ally McBeal fan

Fans are quite aware of the negative stereotypes of "raving, crazy" fans that are unable to make a distinction between reality and fantasy, fans obsessed with television. These stereotypes are produced and maintained among fans as well. At the same time hierarchies between fans are created. In the last quote Kikka has positioned herself above Bold and Beautiful -fans and with her remark she wants to stand out from them.

This need for justification has come up several times in my study and it is familiar from previous television and audience studies. In her study Watching Dallas Ien Ang(1985) found the same defensive arguments as women were trying to justify

watching the show. Ang argues that audience was well aware of the mass culture criticism and were actually arguing against that. It appeared to be easier to explain why Dallas was a bad programme than explain the pleasure it gave. These arguments were also found in a Finnish research by Pertti Alasuutari (1991)concerning the way people talk about television.

One of the contradictions of fandom lies in the emotional experience of the viewers. These emotions may be difficult to talk about, difficult to conceptualise. It is hard to make an argument based on the emotions when emotions themselves are considered to be the very essence of the problematic spectatorship. Emotional attitude is considered to mean incapability for distance and distance seems to be the main element of sophisticated, appreciated viewing in our culture.[5] Nevertheless emotions are essential in the experience of fandom. In a way fandom is based on irrationality rather than rationality. Instead of trying to make sense of fandom or rationalise the emotions I want to take a closer look at the emotions involved.

Fandom as a space

Lawrence Grossberg (1995, 45) considers fandom as an activity that makes life matter. For him affect is the force in fandom, it is the energy invested in different things (ibid., 42-43). The sensibility, the way of experiencing, of fandom is affective. Of course the intensity varies and there are differences in the way one invests time and energy on fan culture or in the momentary experiences. I have tried to listen to this aspect in the way fans discuss their idols and the attraction of the programmes. Most of the times these moments come out as something that cannot be expressed in words. It appears to be difficult to talk about the feeling of fandom. Fans can easily explain what is good about Xena or Ally but when it comes to their personal feelings, the words are usually lost. This may be due to the fact that it is not very easy to talk about feelings to a stranger overall.

> "And then there is something else that I cannot explain what it is. There is something deep there, something I can't quite find ."
> Paavo, 50, male, explaining why he is a Xena fan

Other things that Paavo mentioned were the mythological part of Xena, the fighting scenes and the relationship between Xena and Gabrielle. He connected these aspects to his own hobbies or other aspects in his life (karate, aggressiveness, relationships).

Grossberg (1995, 42) has introduced an idea of mattering maps that fans use in order to organise a stable identity - even for a moment - in which one can feel at home. I find this idea of feeling at home quite useful since it contains the idea of a space. For many fans fandom is a space. It is something that one enters and leaves, something that leaves others outside, something that allows you to feel.

Fandom is a very private thing for many fans. It is something one does not lightly share. Many fans hide their fandom from friends at work, neighbours and acquaintances. Some are ashamed of their fandom, some feel that "others don't understand" and contacts with the fan community and other fans are important.

> "…well everybody knows that it's a fairy tale for adults. I won't publicly announce very loudly that I'm a Xena fan, but I did put Xena's picture into my computer as the background picture. That much one must confess publicly, even though some people think that it's a very childish show[...]Maybe it requires certain attitude and ability to go deeper into it."
> Eila, 37, female, Xena fan

The space develops when fans are involved with other fans or with the programme: while watching the programme, surfing in the internet, discussing with others. Fans

talk about getting carried away in the internet and losing the track of time or how liberating it is to share views with others who follow the same series. This is a space where fandom can be expressed without the fear of being stereotyped or criticised from the "outside".

> "Xenits want to meet other people like them, not just watch the series over and over again. Xena is more than a television series it is a way of life."
> Pirjo, 17, female, Xena fan

I would consider this a utopian space where dreams and emotions are allowed. This idea comes close to Teresa de Lauretis'(1987, 26) space-off , a view from elsewhere, outside the hegemonic representation. Space-off refers to something that has been left out of the representation or hidden, something that has to be found reading against the grain. In that sense fandom as a space is something different. It looks for something new, something hidden but at the same time embraces and celebrates the representations.

Nevertheless this space has its own limits and practices, defined by the fan community that guide the experience of fandom. Fan community sets the agenda for the discussions and interpretations and offers models of fandom to be copied and learned. The community is nevertheless open in the sense that everyone can take part in these discussions, visit and create web sites and bring out their views of fandom.

> "I was quite alone with my secret hobby and it was wonderful...I called my husband... you can't believe how many Xena pages there are in the internet, it's a real cult thing! There were all kinds of things and it was like heaven had opened , I am not alone with this strange hobby!"
> Eila, 37, female, Xena fan

> "Closest (Xena fan) that I know lives 230 km from here. We write and call each other every week, exchange news, send pictures, tapes [...] I have received beautifully illustrated calendars from him for several years now [...] We help each other, free of charge."
> Raimo, 62, male, Xena fan

Identification and Desire

When fans travel in the space of fandom, their experiences and social backgrounds accompany them in the journey. That is why certain things become important for particular people. Their personal experiences connect with cultural texts creating mattering maps. But not everything follows: in this utopian space it is possible to exceed certain limits otherwise present in everyday life concerning identity - sexuality, ethnicity, age and gender.

Jackie Stacy (1994, 29) argues that process of identification and desire are intertwined. In her work on female spectatorship Stacey suggests that identification contains desire and forms of homoerotic pleasures which are yet to be explored . These are questions that I have come up with in my own study as well.

Fans of Xena and Ally McBeal identify mostly with the main characters, Xena or Ally. Xena is usually admired because of her strength as well as for her evil past: she is not a perfect heroine. Ally McBeal for her part is admired for her ordinariness and difference from " The Pamela Andersson type of feminine ideal"(Taija ,38, female Ally McBeal fan) and the way she is constantly embarrassing herself. Young men who follow Ally McBeal are mostly identifying with shy and insecure character John Cage and sometimes with Richard Fish who's role is to irritate and undermine political correctness. Fans can also identify with many of the characters which happens especially

in the case of Ally McBeal.

As Stacey points out the centre of negotiations between the spectators(or fans) and their star ideals is the recognition of similarities and differences.

> "I would like to be Ally, she is so slender and successful, wonderful nut case, that's probably something that I ...I love when she gets those fits[...]If I was younger I would probably identify".
> Kikka

> "It is just like me there, like when she is fussing about and everything goes wrong, it's like in my life, something like that."
> Salla, 15, female, Ally McBeal fan

Especially younger fans of Ally McBeal stress the similarities between the star and themselves while older fans stress the difference between the real self and the ideal star. As Stacey has pointed out identification is a process of negotiation between the self and the other - but also between the self and the imaginary self. Many of the interviewees talk about how they would identify if they could - if they were different and Eija for instance considers that "inside" she is like Xena although she doesn't act or look like her.

> "I would identify with her (Xena) if I could, but I myself don't have the courage to do anything, I'd escape from the situations[...] but in a way I do identify and think that that's what I'd do if I had the courage[...]she is the opposite of me, but inside I feel like that, not outside (laughter)."
> Eija

I consider that the imaginary self is not only idealised representation of the same gender. There are many male fans of Xena who identify with Xena. They identify with her inner struggle between good and evil and her love of Gabrielle. It is possible for men to identify with the female star, not only eroticize her.

> "It is the way she lets herself and the bad side of her against and then wins it."
> Paavo

Stacey argues that identification and desire should not be considered separate but rather intertwining. Identification can also contain homoerotic desire. Fans talk about their idols not only as admirable but also as sexual objects: whether they are sexy or exciting. Based on my own research fandom seems to carry emotions over gender. Therefore I think that the idea of identification and desire intertwining is quite essential in fandom.

> "When you see her walking with her jacket, wearing really big mittens and she doesn't really realise that she's so little-girl-sexy , so cute."
> "I would probably say that it is like falling in love with the characters more than identifying ".
> Kikka, Ally fan

Xena differs from Ally McBeal in many ways. One of the differences is that Xena is quite open for homoerotic interpretations because of the subtext of the series. There are frequent discussions among fan groups about the relationship between Xena and Gabrielle who travels with her, whether they are lovers or just friends. The subtext is constituted by the elements that can be interpreted as suggesting the love affair between Xena and Gabrielle. Most of the Xena fans are well aware of the discussions but not all refer to it. It is interesting, however, that the relationship, whether named

as friendship or love affair, is considered to be one of the most important aspects of Xena.

> "It is the self-sacrifice, they don't think about themselves at all. When friend is in danger the only idea is to get her out of there and the joy is mutual and touching when they survive. There has been many of these touching scenes connected with death".
> Raimo

> "She will do everything, even give her life to save the other, it is the real friendship that everyone longs for in their heart, to have someone to trust so deeply."
> Eija

For some fans it is however the love affair between Xena and Gabrielle that interests them.

> "You have to watch it long to realise the nature of the relationship between these two women[...]it is definitely a love affair between them. It is one big thing (of the attraction) in it".
> Paavo

> "I 'm not lesbian myself but I think it is interesting to look for and find these subtexts in the series."
> Pirjo

As a matter of fact none of the interviewed Xena fans stated to be gay or lesbian but still the representation of Xena's and Gabrielle's relationship seemed to touch most of the fans. They describe how they cry, fear and laugh while following the adventures of Xena and Gabrielle. It appears that while watching Xena the fans can identify or live with the love affair. Some might argue that love affair between two women emphasises the erotic aspect of the series for male audience. I think the process, however, is more complicated. It appears that for male fans Xena can be an erotic object of desire but also an object of identification. The relationship between Xena and Gabrielle appears to be the ideal relationship that fans long for, regardless of gender. As Richard Dyer (1992, 18) has argued entertainment has utopian sensibility. This means that entertainment offers the image of "something better". I consider that fandom has this utopian sensibility. It offers a utopian space where it is possible to cross boundaries of gender and sexuality. Therefore I argue that watching Xena creates a utopian space that allows fans to exceed the normative boundaries of sexuality. It creates a space where they can experience a utopian relationship.

We can always go further from here and take a closer look at the utopian feelings in the cases of Xena and Ally since these feelings are always historical and gender specific. We can ask what does the appeal of Ally McBeal mean or why is the relationship of Xena and Gabriella felt so important. In the case of Ally McBeal there appears to be a certain ideal of the strong woman in the Finnish culture that Ally McBeal challenges. Her representation both irritates and attracts viewers - for the same reasons mostly. Xena on the other hand seems to represent this strong ideal although her evil past suggest that she is less than perfect (but indisputably powerful). The representation of Xena's and Gabriella's relationship appears to contain elements rarely seen in the representations of heterosexual romance. It is interesting to notice that because of the nature of representation - the love affair is coded as subtext - the relationship is constructed through representation of equality and mutual sacrifice. These elements may be less emphasised in the representation of heterosexual romance that

may concentrate on showing affection through physical acts.

Conclusion: space for desire

As these cases demonstrate the identification process in fandom is complicated and multiple. It is possible for men to identify with female stars and vice versa. It is also possible to identify with several characters, not only one. The desires are interlaced with identification in a way that an idol can be the object of desire and identification at the same time. There are strong emotions present in fandom and the emotions seem to come to the fore as abundant and permissive. It is the emotions that count. It appears that the pleasures of fandom are about pleasure to desire and pleasure to identify.

Behind this pleasure there is the utopian sensibility. Fandom offers a utopian space where it is possible to cross boundaries of gender and sexuality. Naturally fandom does not automatically mean that such boundaries are being crossed - it does not automatically challenge dominant concepts of sexuality and gender. What is essential in fandom nevertheless is the permissiveness it contains. Fandom is constructed through different public and private discourses. Experienced through the public discourses fandom means something that is not appreciated, something situated low in the cultural hierarchy. Inside fan culture it is possible to escape this criticism and openly be a fan which above all means the possibility to feel and desire.

Endnotes

[1] The study is funded by the graduate school of Information and Mass Communication studies (Viva) at the University of Tampere.

[2] I received 21 letters through announcements in tv-magazines and after reading these letters I decided to concentrate on Ally McBeal and Xena fans. I chose 9 fans for interviews. Four Xena fans have written again, two years later about their relation to Xena. I have also made a questionnaire at local high school on television and chose 12 pupils for further interviews on Ally McBeal.

[3] Among Finnish Xena fans the founder of the first Xena web-site is highly respected and considered someone who knows the facts about the programme better than others.

[4] I have discussed (see note 25) this issue of media effect on fandom in the case of Ally McBeal since there has been fairly wide discussion on the character of Ally in the Finnish media, dividing viewers in groups of haters and lovers. It is interesting how Xena fans on the other hand make their own publicity in the internet while the main newspapers and magazines hardly ever write about Xena. I consider the role of media essential to the contruction of fandom in the sense that it can create fandom in different ways: by publishing stories and encouraging fandom and by disregarding and giving space to subculture. I intend to explore this aspect of fandom and publicity further in my Ph.D.

[5] For example Brechtian alienation, praise of abstract and avant-garde art by cultural critics like the Frankfurt school (Adorno Theodor, The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture. London: Routledge 1991).

Bibliography

Abrecrombie, N., And Longhurst, B., 1998*. Audiences. A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination.* London: Sage.

Adonro Theodor*,* 1991. *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture.* London: Routledge.

Alasuutari, P., 1991. The Value Hierarchy of TV Programs. An analysis of discourses on viewing habits. *In:* P., ALASUUTARI et al. (eds.), *Reality and Fiction in Finnish TV viewing*. Research report 3/1991. Helsinki: Yleisradio, 35-62.

Ang, I., 1985, *Watching Dallas. Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*. London: Methuen.

De Lauretis, T., 1987. *Technologies of Gender,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Dyer, R., 1992. *Only Entertainment.* London: Routledge.

Ehenreich, B., Hess, E., And Jacobs, G., 1992. Beatlemania: Girls just wanna have fun. *In:* L.A. LEWIS ed., *The Adoring Audience. Fan Culture and Popular Media.* London & New York.

Fiske, J., 1997. *Television Culture*, London: Methuen, 84-106.

Grossberg, L., 1995*. Mielihyvän kytkennät. Risteilyjä populaarikulttuurissa.* Translation and edition J. Koivisto, M. Lehtonen, E. Puoskari and H. Uusitupa. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Jenkins, H., 1992, *Textual Poachers. Television Fans and Participatory Culture.* New York & London: Routledge.

Jensen, J., Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization. *In*: L.A. Lewis ed. *The Adoring Audience. Fan Culture and Popular Media.* London & New York, 9-29.

Modleski, T., 1984. *Loving with Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*. London: Methuen.

Press, A., 1991*. Women Watching television Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience.* University of Pennsylvania Press 1991.

Robertson, J., 1999. Patologia ja halu: japanilaisen Takarazuka-naisrevyyn fanit. Translation M. Pajala. Lähikuva (2-3), 11-29.

Seiter, E., Brochers, H., Kreutzner, G., Warth, E., 1989. Don't treat us like we're stupid and naive: towards the etnography of soap opera viewers. *In:* E. Seiter et al. eds., *Remote control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*. London: Routledge.

Stacey, J., 1994*. Star Gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship*. London: Routledge.

Television programmes:

Ally McBeal. Production David E. Kelley / Twentieth Century Fox Television, USA. Broadcasted in Finland since September 1998, MTV3.

Raid. Production TV1 Kotikatsomo Yleisradio Finland. Broadcasted 10.1.-27.3. 2000 and 18.6. - 3.9. 2001.

Ruudun hurma. Episode 1. Opetusohjelmat 1996. TV1 Yleisradio. 22.9. 1996.

Xena. Production Renaissance Pictures for MCA/Universal Inc. 1995-2001. First broadcasted in Finland 4.11. 1997.

Unpublished material:

Nikunen, K., The Strange World of Ally McBeal: Construction of gender in television programme Ally McBeal. Paper at the Nordic Conference for Media and Communication Studies at Kungälv Sweden 14-17th of August 1999.

Visual acts

Choreography of touches, glances and movements between hosts and assistants on television

Sanna Ojajärvi, University of Helsinki

sanna.ojajarvi@helsinki.fi

The subject of my article is the construction of body and gender on hosted television programs. I have a collection of programs belonging to various genres on Finnish television, all hosted by two or more hosts, and the paper introduces how the bodies, genders, and positions of the performers are constructed by embodied practices, such as interplay of touches, looks and movements in the studio. I center on the quantitative volume of touches, glances and movements of hosts and assistants, in order to see if there are gendered or positional differences on these practices. I also address questions of powers and hierarchies, emotions and desires between and within sexes, genders and televisual positions in these embodied practices. I promote performative approach to body and gender, and an applied version of speech act theory that I extend to concern visual acts as well. My aim is to clarify the range and volume of visual acts that construct different positions on television, as well as to throw light on gender and other hierarchies that become thereby constituted.

Two men standing close to each other, preparing food in a cookery programme, or two women trying to match people with items they collect, standing close together behind a desk in a television studio. What relates these programmes? The genders of the performers? No. The topics of the programmes? No. The fact that they both are hosted by a couple of same sex? Yes. And, for the most, the performances look alike, regardless of different genders of the performers and different genres of the programmes.

The analysis is based on ten different television programmes that are a part of my ongoing dissertation. The sample consists of a quiz show *Jaaeityhjiäpoissa*, a current affairs programme *Ajankohtainen kakkonen*, a magazine programme *Hakupalat* that tries to match collectors with various goods and commodities, a newscast *Kymmenen uutiset*, a cookery programme *Makupalat*, two different early morning magazines, *Huomenta Suomi* and *Sunnutaivekkari,* a science magazine *Prisma*, a youth magazine *Tiikeri*, and a parody of a newscast *Iltalypsy*.

The criteria for choosing the variety of programmes is that they all represent a pair of hosts. Three programmes represent a homosocial couple of same sex (two of the programmes represent two men and one is hosted by two women), and the rest, seven consist of a heterosocial couple of a woman and a man (more precisely, one of the programmes is hosted by a woman and two men). At the first glance the programmes seem to have very little in common and one could doubt the idea of analysing them together at all. They, however, share the setting of two hosts interacting with each other. This setting is the base for my analysis on how genders, as well between and within the sexes, are constituted in the programmes.

The genres and the programmes on television usually follow a quite strict script – both in terms of what is said and what is done (Shattuc 1998, 216.). I regard the visual script of the programmes as choreography, a regulated interplay between the actors. The study of visual choreographs of the programmes focuses on several questions: Who is highlighted and when? What happens between the hosts? Who appears to be the leader? What role does gender play?

My method is to count the touches, glances and movements of the hosts, since these acts are traditionally considered as having crucial importance when constructing gender (Goffman 1979; Henley 1977). I, quite briefly, look at the amount of looks and touches in the programmes, what do they tell about the relationship between the

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

hosts. My further intention is to cross the binary boundaries of genders by concentrating the analysis on the touches, glances and movements between the hosts. This is a way to find out whether there are gendered differences in the visual performances or representations of hosts. Depending on the answer, there are further questions to be posed. One important question, regardless of the results, is the kind of cultural knowledge of genders that is assumed from the viewers by the performances.

Flow of genders

I have chosen not to concentrate on specific genres. Instead, I analyse a flow of programmes I assume people are watching when they open the television set: a flow that, in this case, consists of two early morning magazines, a youth magazine, a quiz show, a cookery programme, a hard-to-define magazine programme, a science magazine, a current affairs programme, a newscast and a parody of a newscast. I consider these widely watched programmes as representatives of a flow of genders and positions as well as genres in an ordinary evening on television programming.

The idea and concept of flow was originally introduced by Raymond Williams (1974, 95). I find the concept quite useful, and agree with Tim O'Sullivan, who presents two particular strengths of the concepts: "First, it directs our attention to the holistic contours of TV output: to the characteristics of television as an overall cultural system of communication with distinctive features which cut across generic divisions… Second, 'flow' refers to the viewer's lived experience of and with their televisions and their activities in relation to the TV interlocutor." (O'Sullivan 1998, 200.)

Feminist media studies have shown how women and men are portrayed in different ways and under different conditions in media. There is a number of studies that promote the idea of women and men differing from each other in the way they move, talk, act etc. (Henley 1977), or in the way they are represented or addressed in the programmes. Women in the hosted programs, entertainment as well as news, are often considered the problematic, or deviant sex, more appreciated by their looks than the skills of hosting a program or possessing any agency at all (see Halonen 1999; Holland 1987; Lusted 1998, 185). Women are easily positioned as "silent but decorous assistants to male hosts" (Lusted 1998, 185). Stereotypes of femininity and masculinity seem hard to challenge, even if they are negotiated and made visible.

As it is understood today, however, most, if not all, of the differences between women and men are thought culturally constructed. There are, it seems, greater differences within genders than between them. This way of understanding has, or at least should have, its consequences when it comes to representations and the interpretations of representations in media.

Laura Stempel Mumford lists a number of questions as the fundamental questions of feminism: "What does it mean to live as a woman or a man? How do we learn it in the first place? To what extent does gender – our own identities as male or female, our ideas about what that might mean – shape our experience of the culture around us? (Stempel Mumford 1998, 115.) She goes on asking, "how television works to establish or promote not just specific gender identities, but existing cultural relations generally" (Stempel Mumford 1998, 115).

What I would like to add is the questioning of the strict dichotomy of genders that seems difficult to avoid. It is always either – or, your identity is supposed to be either male or female, and your actions are supposed to follow from this identity. My main question follows the previously presented questions: I am interested in interpretations that lead to ideas of what male or female might mean. Here I share some ideas concerning the inherent heterosexuality of feminist studies, presented explicitly by Judith Butler (1990, 1997b). The evident complexity of bodies, genders, and sexualities has made me wonder what kinds of questions are possible to ask at all. When studying the construction of gender, could the starting point of analysis be something other than gender?

I start by paying attention to representations of both women and men, in order not to pose woman as the problematic sex (Ang and Hermes 1991, 308, cited in Stempel Mumford 1998, 126). I will focus on the construction and interpretation of genders in television texts. The next step would perhaps be not to pose heterosexuality as the natural norm of sexuality (see Ojajärvi 2001b).

By making use of the concept of flow, I point the importance of repetition when constructing genders (Butler 1990). The ideas of what it is to be a woman or a man become constructed and normalised by constant repetitions, but, at the same time, there is a possibility of different repetitions that might alter the ideas.

Flow of programmes

The flow of the programmes starts in the morning and goes on via prime time to end up in a late night newscast:

Huomenta Suomi *(MTV3)*

The early morning magazine starts by showing the two hosts, a man and a woman, standing in the studio. The man stands on the left side of the woman (as in the news of the same channel). During the programme they both sit and stand, they also change places so that, for example, in the third sequence, the woman is sitting on the left side of the man. The relationship between the hosts is constructed by frequent looks: the man looks at the woman 94 times and the woman at the man 61 times. They construct an active relationship with the viewer as well; there are 105 looks into the camera by the man, and 87 by the woman. The man seems to be a little more active than the woman is: besides looking more into the camera, he also moves or acts more frequently (5) than the woman (2).

Sunnuntaivekkari *(YLE TV1)*

The early-morning magazine of Sundays has two hosts, a woman and a man in a homelike studio with coffee table and a rag rug. In the first part of the programme, the hosts sit side by side behind the table, and read letters from the viewers. They occasionally watch into the camera, but mostly there eyes are directed to the letters. The woman conducts the first interview of a male guest; the man conducts the other interview with a female guest. After that, the first interview goes on, while the male host is pouring coffee to the guests. After a while, he takes part in the conversation. There are no differences in the amounts of looks of the hosts in the programme.

Tiikeri (*YLE TV1*)

This youth magazine, shown early in the afternoon, begins as the hosts, a woman and a man come out of a door, introduce the programme, and finally, take each other by the hand and dance. Their occurs another touching in the closing sequence, as the woman pushes the man ahead of her out of the door. During the programme, the hosts seem quite alike; there are no significant differences in the ways they look at each other (15/12), or in the numbers they look into the camera (21/25). The man is positioned slightly on the foreground on several occasions (4/1).

Hakupalat *(YLE TV2)*

This hard-to-define, early prime time magazine programme that concentrates on collecting and transmitting goods and commodities, introduces two women hosts. They stand very close to each other, almost touching in the opening sequence. They pay attention to each other as well as the camera. The hosts seem hard to separate from each other; they act almost as one. There are slight differences, however. The other one is more active in looking at the other on (9/6). She also moves more (4/2) in the studio.

Makupalat *(YLE TV2)*

This cookery programme of early prime time begins with a sequence where the two men hosting the programme stand beside the stove. The following sequence introduces one of them, the chef, standing in front and the other one, the assisting chef, behind him. The programme is full of movements: both hosts walk around the L-shaped table and sit in different chairs during the programme. There is a slight difference in their looks at each other: the chef looks a little bit less to the assisting chef (53/62). Instead, he looks more into the camera (54/42) and he also moves and acts slightly more (35/26). The hosts are physically close to each other, their hands skim by each other, probably without intention.

The setting of the programme introduces typical roles of a host and an assistant, with the exception that the assistant is a man. This practice of casting is becoming more and more common in current television (Ojajärvi 2001a).

Jaaeityhjiäpoissa *(Nelonen)*

In the beginning of this prime time programme, a quiz show, the two male hosts appear in dark suits, their backs turned to the audience (into the camera?). The programme centres around the guests, who walk in the studio, give speeches and answer to the questions. The hosts are sitting throughout the programme, sometimes turning on their chairs. There is neither loose talk, nor loose acts in the programme. The host, who is in charge of conducting the programme, is more active in his looks, also: he looks at the other host twice as many times (19) as the other one looks at him (10). He also looks more into the camera (17/10) and to the guests (63/49). The other host, however, is in charge of the correct answer, and that makes his role an important one, too.

In conclusion, this programme constructs a system of two different men – an active and a passive one. At the same time, however, two different authorities are constructed: the other one is in charge of the plot of the programme, whereas the other one holds responsibility for the result of the programme.

Prisma *(YLE TV1*)

In the opening sequence of the prime time science magazine *Prisma*, the hosts, a woman and a man, walk towards a high table. The woman is leading, while the man walks behind her. The third sequence introduces the woman and the man standing behind the table, very close to each other, the man slightly in the foreground. The programme consists of interviews that are visually constructed by close-ups of the interviewee and the male host, whereas the female host appears only in the wide shots that present all three performers. That makes the woman appear more as an assistant than a host, even though she is clearly hosting the programmes in the sequences that introduce the progress of the programme. The difference between the hosts is evident in the amount of contacts with the interviewees: the man looks at them 15 times and the woman only 7 times. Their contact to the camera follows the same pattern: the man looks into it 36 times and the woman 30 times. The contact between the hosts is equal in terms of the amount of looks: 25/26. While walking in the studio, the woman takes the leading position, but the interviews introduce the man in the foreground, both visually and verbally.

Ajankohtainen kakkonen *(YLE TV2)*

In this current affairs programme, shown after the main news of YLE in the evening, there is a woman-man –pair hosting the programme. The setting is news-like: the hosts are sitting side by side behind a desk: the woman on the left and the man on the right side. The hosts seem to be alike: they take turns in presenting the topics, and there seems to be no gender-biased selection of the topics. There are only two slight acts that make the difference between the hosts: the programme both begins and ends by words of the man, and during the programme, the woman looks

at the man twice as many times (13) as the man looks at the woman (6). The differences are not very visible, actually they draw attention only when counted, not while watching the programme. The question is, whether such differences are significant acts of gender or not – if interpreted along the framework of stereotypical genders, women are said to be more supportive towards other people than men.

Iltalypsy (*YLE TV1*)

The studio of this programme resembles the studio of a newscast, and the whole programme is about making a parody of the news. To highlight the parody, the programme is shown after the main newscast of YLE. The hosts, a man and a woman, rush into the studio when the lights are still off, and while the lights are turned on, they sit calmly in their places behind the desk, the woman on the left side. They look into the camera (15/15) when reading "the news", but they also change looks with each other frequently (6/7). They also move with their chairs: they turn around and look at the pictures reflected to the wall behind them (7/6).

Kymmenen uutiset *(MTV3)*

The main newscast of the commercial MTV3 introduces, again, a pair of woman and a man as hosts. Behind a desk, the man is sitting on the left and the woman on the right side. The main focus of their glances is the camera; there is only one exception when the man looks at the woman as giving the turn to her. The closing sequence makes an exception of the talking heads as well: the woman turns to the man and reaches to touch him. This requires an effort, since they are sitting quite far from each other. In this programme, the woman has both the first and the final word. On the other hand, this could be interpreted as the woman opening the opening sequence and the man opening the closing sequence.

All in all, the news reporters construct visually two similar actors throughout the programme, except for the very last moment. The one difference is quite remarkable in constructing genders, however, since it would be presumably out of question that people of same sex would touch each other in the news. On the other hand, touching is not a very common practice in the newscasts anyway.

This quite rough analysis of ten television programmes indicates the complexity of gendering and gendered representations. The programmes of my sample can be divided into two main types: the ones in which the hosts are constructed along the lines of sameness, and the ones in which the host become constructed along the lines of difference. As I interpret it, the samenesses and differences do not center around genders but rather, the positions in the programmes.

When it comes to the method I used, it seems obvious that a more careful counting is needed; the smiles, poses, nodding of one's head etc. (Goffman 1979; Henley 1977) would give essential information on non-verbal construction of genders and positions, and only combined with analysis of verbal construction of gender, as well as qualitative analysis of both modes of construction, would the study be complete.

Question of interpretation: the (im)possibility of proper genders

Jaaeityhjiäpoissa and *Makupalat* stage a couple that represents same-sexed bodies in different ways. The difference between the positions of the hosts is evident, while at the same time the sameness is constructed by sex of the performers. The third same sex couple, the women in *Hakupalat,* does not complement each other or each other's tasks in the same way; they rather construct a gender that is one.

The rest of the programmes represent couples of presumably, by the dichotomous standards, different sex, but their genders seem to vary. In four of the programmes, *Kymmenen uutiset, Tiikeri, Iltalypsy,* and *Sunnuntaivekkari,* the visual per-

formances are constructed along the lines of samenesses rather than differences, the amounts of looks, touches and movements do not construct different genders more than different positions.

There are also programmes, where the differences are evident: in *Ajankohtainen kakkonen, Huomenta Suomi,* and *Prisma,* the other party is more active than the other is. In case of *Ajankohtainen kakkonen,* it is the woman, who looks at the man twice the amount the man looks back at her. This goes fine along with the notions that women seem to be more supportive than men are at least verbally (< biblio >). *Huomenta Suomi* proves the opposite: the man looks at the woman, as well as into the camera, more often than the woman looks back to him, or into the camera. Why am I tempted to interpret this as an evidence of man's activity, not, for example, of his need to accompany the woman?

The representations in *Prisma* seem easier to interpret: the hierarchy between the hosts is evident in relation to the guests, where the man takes the leading position, and the role of the assistant falls to the woman. There is a moment, in the middle of an interview, where even the camera forgets where the woman is, and focuses on the man instead of the woman, who is posing the question.

Touching between the hosts is very rare in the programmes: it happens twice in the youth magazine *Tiikeri,* and once in the newscast *Kymmenen uutiset.* In both programmes it is the woman who touches the man. In *Hakupalat* and *Makupalat*, the hosts of same sex stand so close to each other that they occasionally also touch each other. Stereotypically, a man's touch is interpreted as having more sexual intent than a woman's (Goffman 1979, 80), which might explain that it is the women who are active in this kind of acting. On the whole, the distance between the hosts seems to be quite large on the chosen programmes.

The act of two men making food in the cookery program *Makupalat* is a beautiful example of the complexity of genders. Cooking is often seen as the task for women in private, whereas in public places, such as restaurants and media, the chefs are often men. In this sense, *Makupalat* confirms the cultural norms, but, on the other hand, an unusual power hierarchy is constructed between the two men in the studio, where the younger one seems to be the chef and the older one the assistant.

The greatest differences between genders seem to be constructed in the early morning magazine *Huomenta Suomi* hosted by a woman and a man, and the science magazine *Prisma*, hosted by a woman and a man, as well. Visually, the hosts appear as the most similar in the youth magazine *Tiikeri,* (a woman and a man), the magazine programme *Hakupalat* (two women), the early morning magazine *Sunnuntaivekkari* (a woman and a man), and the newscast *Kymmenen uutiset* (a woman and a man). This makes it hard to define and interpret the representations according to genders of the performers as well as the genre of the programme.

Psychoanalyst Joan Riviere introduced the idea of masquerade in the 1920s when stating that femininity is always a masquerade (cited in Burgin & al. 1989). That notion has been widely accepted and applied in feminist (media) studies (Butler 1993; Nikunen 1994; Kirkham & Skeggs 1998). However, parody is usually seen in representations that somehow exaggerate what is thought to be feminine (Kirkham & Skeggs 1998, 295; Nikunen 1994; Pedersen 1993), whereas masculinity seems to be outside the possibility of parody. Of the programmes analysed here, *Iltalypsy* is the one that makes explicit use of parody concerning gender as well as genre. Remarkable is that both of the hosts seem to exaggerate femininity rather than masculinity.

What is often neglected about masquerade, is that also the naturalised representations of genders, e.g. the perfectly "normal" appearances of women and men are a form of masquerade. There is an aspect of parody – and masquerade - in every representation, actually, parody and citing are needed in order to be able to represent genders at all, since there are no natural genders that would be outside what is culturally constructed (see Butler 1993). Masquerade is essential in order to make gendering occur.

In the programmes that I watched, it seems like the significant differences in the performances do not necessarily relate to gender of the performers. Gender is visually present, but it is not found in the looks, touches or movements. Thus, acts seem to be of minor importance when constructing gender. This raises the question of interpretation, as well as highlights the limits of textual analysis – in many cases the gender seems to be nothing more, or less, than the implicit notion of people belonging to one of the two sexes (if the dichotomous system is considered constructing the scope of intelligible sexes). As a conclusion, I would state that the representations are not gendered, i.e. they do not necessarily happen according to one's gender. On the contrary, the representations are gendering in a way, that acts tend to be interpreted in a gendered framework.

Even when the differences do not necessarily relate to gender, then, the interpretations of performances tend to follow the same patterns, no matter how well aware of the social character of genders one is. Just like the woman newsreader might be interpreted to somehow either question the seriousness of the news (Holland 1987) or question the femininity of the Woman, the man looking at the woman becomes easily interpreted as active, whereas the woman doing the same falls into the category of a supportive woman (Cameron 1996). It seems like the interpretation is trapped in the dichotomous order of sexes and genders – the culturally learned and quite fixed ideas of what it is to be a woman or a man.

What if the questions were turned the other way round: if, instead of asking how different genders act, one would ask: what are the acts that constitute differences between and within genders? The question is in line with speech act theory and its later applications (Austin 1975; Searle 1969; Butler 1997a & 1997b; Rojola & Laitinen 1998). Could the performances be interpreted as performatives of two different genders within one sexed body? Could the interpretation be that there is a need for some difference in the dynamics between the hosts, and it is the question of genre whether the difference is actualised in the body or the position (gender) of the performer.

The newscast *Kymmenen uutiset* and the current affairs programme *Ajankohtainen kakkonen* would be examples of a type of a programme where the difference is limited in the sexed bodies of the performers; the choreography does not highlight other differences between the hosts. In programmes like the cookery programme *Makupalat*, or the quiz show *Jaaeityhjiäpoissa,* the differences between the same-sexed bodies is constructed by different positioning of the actors.

What these notions would suggest, is a more complex understanding of genders, even if that in some sense would mean a certain obscurity for dichotomous categorisation of genders. More complexity is needed in order to grasp the assumed or hoped changes in gendered/gendering representations in media. Finally, the role of the research as a technology of gender, is not to be neglected (de Lauretis 1987, ix, 5).

Literature

Ang, Ien & Hermes, Joke 1991: Gender and/in media consumption. In Curran, James and Gurevitch, Michael (eds.): Mass Media and Society. Edward Arnold, London, 307-328.

Austin, John Langshaw 1975: Performatives and Constatives. In Urmson J.O. & Sbisa, Marina (eds.): How to do things with words. 2nd ed. Oxford UP, Oxford, 1-13.

Burgin & al. (eds.) 1989: Formations of Fantasy. Routledge, London.

Butler, Judith 1990: Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Routledge, New York.

Butler, Judith 1993: Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex". Routledge, New York.

Butler, Judith 1997a: Excitable speech. A Politics of the Performative. Routledge, New York.

Butler, Judith 1997b: Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. Columbia UP, New York, 401-419.

Cameron, Deborah 1996: Sukupuoli ja kieli. Feminismi ja kielentutkimus. Vastapaino, Tampere.

Goffman, Erving 1979: Gender Advertisements. Harper.

Halonen, Irma Kaarina 1999: Matka journalismin sukupuolittumisen strategisille alueille. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 669. Tampereen yliopisto, Tampere.

Henley, Nancy M. 1977: Body Politics. Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Holland, Patricia 1987: When a Woman Reads the News. In Baehr & G. Dyer (eds.): Boxed In: Women and Television. Pandora Press, London, 133-150.

Kirkham, Pat & Skeggs, Beverley 1998: *Absolutely Fabulous*: Absolutely Feminist? In Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds.): The Television Studies Book. Arnold, London, 287-298.

Laitinen, Lea & Rojola, Lea 1998: Keskusteluja performatiivisuudesta. Teoksessa Laitinen, Lea & Rojola, Lea (eds.): Sanan voima. Keskusteluja performatiivisuudesta. SKS, Helsinki, 7-33.

Lauretis, Teresa de 1987: Technologies of Gender. Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction. Indiana UP, Bloomington.

Lusted, David 1998: The Popular Culture Debate and Light Entertainment on Television. In Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds.): The Television Studies Book. Arnold, London, 175-190.

Nikunen, Kaarina 1994: On aika lähteä naamiaisiin. Alma ja Doris feministisen representaation jäljillä. Lähikuva 4/1994, 14-21.

Ojajärvi, Sanna 2001a: Toistoja eli miten toimijuus televisiossa tehdään. Naistutkimus-Kvinnoforskning 2/2001, 38-51.

Ojajärvi, Sanna 2001b: Private Issue of Public Interest. Discourses of Sexuality on Television. In Tarja Savolainen & Ullamaija Kivikuru (eds.): The Politics of Public Issues. Viestinnän laitos, Helsingin yliopisto.

O'Sullivan, Tim 1998: Nostalgia, Revelation and Intimacy: Tendencies in the Flow of Modern Popular Television. In Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds.): The Television Studies Book. Arnold, London, 198-209.

Pedersen, Vibeke 1993: Soap, pin-up and burlesque. Commercialization and femininity in Danish television. Nora (1993):2, 74-89.

Searle, John R. 1969: Speech acts. An essay in the philosophy of language. Cambridge UP, Cambridge.

Shattuc, Jane 1998: 'Go Rikki': Politics, Perversion and Pleasure in the 1990s. In Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds.): The Television Studies Book. Arnold, London, 212-225.

Stempel Mumford, Laura 1998: Feminist Theory and Television Studies. In Christine Geraghty and David Lusted (eds.): The Television Studies Book. Arnold, London, 114-130.

Williams, Raymond 1974: Television: Technology and Cultural Form. Fontana, London.

Best Wives Are Artefacts? Popular Cybernetics and Robot Women in the 1970s

Susanna Paasonen, University of Turku

suspaa@utu.fi

Popular cybernetics, as discursive field, refers to basic principles of cybernetics, the science of communications and automatic control in both machines and organic systems, as defined by Norbert Wiener (in his 1948 *Cybernetics, or, the control in human and machine*, and the 1950 *Human Use of Human Beings*). Cybernetic research feeds into "popular cybernetics" as terminology, experiments and analogies (perhaps most common are analogies between brains and computers as information-processing systems, the body as cybernetic system of feedback loops and autonomous responses). Nevertheless, popular cybernetics is also a field of representations concerning boundaries and the nature of the human that builds and feeds upon itself: literary, televisual and cinematic fictions both draw from, and add to popular cybernetics as sets of concepts, figures and analogies.

In the 1970s, fictions concerning androids and cyborgs (inspired by NASA-funded cyborg research) became perhaps the most visible forum of popular cybernetics, of depicting and imagining the relations and connections between humans and machines, animals and things – and, centrally, women and men. The 1970s saw many cinematic and televisual representations of cybernetic, reconstructed bodies, as in *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman* series, *The Stepford Wives* (1975), *Westworld* (1973) and *Futureworld* (1976). In different ways, these fictions address the perfection of the body through technology. Doing this, they are concerned with the borderline between the (normal) human and the (abnormal) monstrous, but also the continuing fascination with sexualised machine women and automatic love dolls, some previous models of which include Pygmalion & Galatea, Villier de l'Isle Adam's novel *Tomorrow's Eve*, and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis.* These are literal connections between technology and sex; technological objects as objects of desire.

In *The Stepford Wives* (USA 1975), based on Ira Levin's 1972 novel, these themes are met with feminist intertexts concerning technology, gender and power. The main protagonist, Joanna Eberhart (Katharine Ross), moves from Manhattan to Stepford, Connecticut, with her husband Walter (Peter Masterson), a lawyer, two children and a family dog. There is something wrong in Stepford from the start, and Joanna is not happy in her new home town, where all the women seem ideal feminine homemakers and men gather nightly at the men's association, when not working at the local computer and bio technology corporations. As Walter explains, all "the important guys" of Stepford are members of the club "the TV executives, the shrinks, the police chief, the fire chief, the head of the hospital, the guy who runs the telephone company". The association is chaired by Dale Coba (Patrick O'Neal), nicknamed "Diz", since he used to work for Disney.

Together with Bobby Marcowe (Paula Prentiss), her new best friend, Joanna wonders what *is* going on in Stepford, where all the women seem obsessed with housework, submit to their husbands will and have no aspirations outside their homes. Bobby and Joanna seem to be the only ones with disorderly kitchens in the whole town, yet they find out that Stepford used to be "the most liberal town" in the area, with a women's club meetings attended by 50 women. Only some years later, the same women are interested only in housework and pleasing their husbands. Bobby and Joanna suspect that something is wrong with the local water that makes women act compulsively domestic, but nothing unusual can be found. Joanna and Bobby realise that the only alternative left is to move from Stepford. Yet before Bobby

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

finds a new house, also she is turned into another homemaker. Joanna meets the new Bobby, changed, in a white lacy blouse, long blue skirt and an apron, with a feminine hairdo and make up, in her sparkling-clean kitchen, arguing she wants to "look like a woman and keep my house looking decent too".

Joanna realises that in no time also she is to be replaced by someone who looks like her but will not be her, but "like one of those robots in Disneyland". As the story unravels, Joanna uncovers that the women in Stepford have been killed and replaced with robots, perfect machine replicas designed to please their husbands. The men's association is a conspiracy and since all the "important guys" are members, they are able to cover up their traces. The automata wives shop for groceries, cook, clean, mind the children, are sexually accessible to their husbands and praise their sexual skills, appearance or demeanour, never arguing and expressing their sentiments mainly by quoting commercials.

Nuclear families made strange

The robot wives are frightening in their retro-Victorian hair and dress styles, aprons, completely realistic looks, vacant gestures, submissive performances of conventional femininity and obsession with cleaning and appearances. Picture-perfect and consumerist, the wives are emotionally void – the terror of the thriller lays both in that the wives *look* human, yet are not, as much as in does in that the husbands have killed their wives and replaced them with more convenient machines. Robot wives are monstrous as non-organic constructions of human, but the husbands are equally boundary figures as emotionally void, and thus "not-quite-human" men – given that interiority, emotions and empathy are conventionally posed as markers of the human (vs. the machine). (Cf. Turkle 1991; Williams 1991.)

This image of the wife-as-servant-robot bears close resemblance to the ideals discussed by Betty Friedan in her influential 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, where she analysed the frustration of American middle-class housewives and homemakers ("the problem that has no name"). According to Friedan, during the post second world war era, the feminine mystique – a set of beliefs according to which true feminine fulfilment was to be found from marriage, motherhood and domestic chores – was created in the media, especially women's magazines, popular psychology, different kinds of expert literature and the education system. Friedan quotes a representation of ideal femininity from a 1960 *Ladies' Home Journal:*

> "[she] 'sits on a pale aqua satin sofa gazing out her picture window at the street. Even at this hour of the morning (it is barely nine o'clock), she is wearing rouge, powder and lipstick, and her cotton dress is immaculately fresh.' She says proudly: 'By 8:30 A.M., when my youngest goes to school, my whole house is clean and neat and I am dressed for the day.'" (Friedan 1983, p.63.)

The representation is near-identical to Ira Levin's description of the "new Bobbie":

> "Bobbie, in her immaculate living-room – cushions all fluffed, woodwork gleaming, magazines fanned on the polished table behind the sofa – smiled at Joanna [--] She looked the ways he had on Sunday – beautiful, her hair done, her face made up" (Levin 1973, p.129).

This representation of "smiling empty passivity" (Friedan 1983, p.64) is of a woman who dedicates her life to her home, children and husband and sees to her attractive feminine appearances. She is the ideal subject of contemporaneous women's magazines that defined woman through their exclusive interests in romance, nursing, home furnishing, clothes and (early and lasting) marriage. Cooking, cleaning and other domestic chores became, according to Friedan, the occupation of a housewife,

but also a religion of sorts, since they we seen as fulfilment of women's natural roles and inner drives, as defined by their biological capacity of reproduction. Yet another important component of the feminine mystique is consumerism: the ideal housewife is an ardent consumer who buys endlessly new things for the home, and gains satisfaction from doing so (Friedan 1983, p.206–208; Bowlby 2001, p.199–200). In *The Stepford Wives,* women shop systematically and neatly, discuss and consume products with devouring interest and gratification.

In her article on technology and representations of the feminine, Mary Ann Doane (2000, p.114–115) argues that *The Stepford Wives* suggests feminism to be necessary only within "the science-fiction nightmare in which husbands turn wives into robots" and sees its depiction of the machine-woman as banal. For Doane, films that do go beyond the banal and approach the machine-woman theme in more interesting ways, are those that focus on the maternal and technology. I find this reading simplifying, for representations of the maternal in *The Stepford Wives* can also be read as evasive, cynical, or both: most of the women replaced by robots are mothers, yet the reactions of their children to these transformations are simply not an issue. The implication is that the mother is primarily instrumental not only for her husband but also her children – as if echoing the comment made by one of Friedan's (1983, p.74) interviewees. "[m]y mother doesn't serve any other purpose except cleaning the house". Furthermore, the children are not depicted as agents of any kind, but seen running on the lawn, riding on the school bus, or being groomed by their parents. Children, any more than women in the film, are not quite fully human. Ira Levin's book makes apparent that children appreciate the new version of their mothers as neat domestic machines. Bobby's son Jonny expresses his satisfaction to Joanna: "She doesn't shout any more, she makes hot breakfasts…[--] I hope it lasts" (Levin 1973, p.141–142).

The film can also be read as depiction of an experimental cocoon of a upper middle-class society where both feminist and "feminine mystique" understandings of the gendered labour and power relations within the family coexist. The latter ones, as practised by the men's association, see women ideally as obedient passive servants with a passion for home making and no interests beyond. As the wives are unwilling to comply to these ideals, the men's association solves the problem with the aid of high technology. In *The Stepford Wives,* men are the ones to make decisions and the (robot) wives are the ones to comply. As in Friedan's study, the kitchen is the centre of women's lives and the women do not leave their homes "except to shop, chauffeur their children, or attend a social engagement with their husbands" (Friedan 1983, p.17). The robot wives are embodiments of the Friedan's feminine mystique, since, as machines, they do not reflect on the lack of content, excitement and challenge in their lives; they do not complain of not feeling alive, feeling incomplete, lacking personality or a sense of the self; they do not compensate by using tranquillisers, sleeping pills, by drinking or eating, or develop psychotic states, unlike the flesh-and blood housewives interviewed by Friedan (1983, p.20–22, 234–235, 251–252; also discussed in Bowlby 2000, p.200–202). When the chair of the men's association explains to Joanna that the solution is "just perfect. Perfect for us and perfect for you", this may not read only as a "science-fiction nightmare", but an ironic cinematic solution to "the problem that has no name".

The novel and the film alike may be superficial in their ways of addressing "the gender question". After all, as Rachel Bowlby (2000, p.201) points out, *The Stepford Wives* gives little motivation for the male desire to murder and rebuild their wives, implying that men are as if by "nature" anti-feminist and misogynist: "In *The Stepford Wives*, the women who conform to the [feminine] stereotype are man-made, but the men acting out the equivalent stereotypes of maleness are real". Yet I am not willing, like Doane, to bypass the fiction as banal. Depicting the ideal housewives as abnormal and non-human, and their patronising husbands as quite literally monstrous in their lack of affection and willingness to reduce their spouses into robot

servants, *The Stepford Wives* takes the model of gendered division of labour into its extremes and works an alienating effect. In both the film and the novel, Joanne is the protagonist from whose point of view events unfold and whose reactions the readers and viewers witness. The motivations or "inner life" of her husband are not discussed, and thus he remains a hostile alien other, depriving the nuclear family unit of its give normalcy and turning it into a site of work, abuse and, indeed, compulsive repetition.

Unlike the film, Levin's novel uses of *The Feminine Mystique* as explicit intertext: Both Joanne and Bobby are member's of NOW, National Organization for Women, of which Friedan was a long-term president. Friedan is also mentioned as guest lecturer of the Women's Club some years back, whose then eager audience is now passionately occupied with housework and serving their husbands. According to an article in the local newspaper, "Over fifty women applauded Mrs. Friedan as she cited the inequities and frustrations besetting the modern-day housewife". (Levin 1973, p.37, 62–63, 90.) In addition to references to Friedan, the novel, as Rachel Bowlby (2000, p.199) has it, "is studded with references to prominent feminists" such as de Beauvoir, Kate Millett and Gloria Steinem. Yet it is Friedan's version of feminism that the novel promotes by depicting the key protagonists as combining creative careers with motherhood and being "naturally feminist" until replaced by robot dolls that embody the feminine mystique. Furthermore, according to Bowlby, many of Friedan's themes – such as the history of women's movement, critique of psychoanalysis and mutation of sex into somewhat perverted "pseudo-sex", represented in the novel by masturbation and rubber fetishes – reappear in the novel, often in hyperbole". (Bowlby 2000, p.199–200.)

Technology as male terrain

The Stepford Wives draws from cybernetic research and experiments in human-like robots and self-regulating machines (represented as robot wives), as well as other contemporaneous visualisations and depictions of popular cybernetics. Furthermore, the film also reads as a commentary of a social situation where the ideology of women as domestic creatures, reinforced by cybernetic-influenced social sciences and their various popularisations in the 1950s and 1960s (such as functionalism), are confronted by the women's liberation movement and its alternative conceptions of what counts as satisfactory family life. Ultimately, the film turns into a dystopian control fantasy with women as automated puppets whose controls are held and operated by men. While representations of the feminine mystique in *The Stepford Wives* draw from Friedan's liberal feminist study, the cinematic themes of power, technology, gender and sexuality, are more closely connected to radical feminist ideas that emphasise "private areas" of sexuality and family as arenas of power and struggle fought over women's bodies.

In *The Stepford Wives,* high tech is literally a male terrain: the husbands all work at technological research institutes ("electronics, computers, aerospace junk", Levin 1973, p.89) while their wives stay at home and mind the children after having been uprooted from their previous homes due to their husbands' occupations. The men are away at work or at the men's association, where one of the rules of membership includes exchanging their wives for androids. When Joanna asks Dale Coba for explanation for replacing the women of Stepford with automata, he shrugs and says "because we can. We found a way of doing it and it's just perfect. Perfect for us and perfect for you". Thus the threat of technology in the novel and film alike lays less in the machines, the androids themselves, than it does in their designers, developers, and the aggressive male homosocial networks behind them. High tech is literally tool for backlash, for "restoring" the ideal power relations of the 19th century bourgeois family with the addition of heightened female sexual accessibility and (male) gratification. As the wives, interested in the women's liberation movement are turned into house pride "angels of the house", the threat posed by feminism on the level of per-

sonal politics is solved for good. Organised into a conspiring association, the men are able to use their skills collectively: one sketches the faces of the women for resemblance, another stores their voices and pronunciation by making the women record excessive lists of words, while others produce the actual life-like machine replicas. The men running the hospital, the police station and the telephone company help in covering up the traces so that no outsiders realise the death of their wives. Thus women's liberation that questions uneven power relations within the family can, be fought and won in the entire town.

These pessimist views on technology as a male terrain have affinity to Mary Daly's decidedly anti-technological radical feminist views, presented in her *Gyn/Ecology* (orig. 1978). For Daly, technology is quintessentially patriarchal, a tool for male control over women and nature alike. Technology, for her, belongs to a wider range of social systems of control which, along with therapy, cloning and transsexualism aim at the effacement of female self-definition and renders women into mere reflections of male fantasy. Thus cold and mechanistic phallotechnic progress creates hollow people, women and men alike, but with different gendered implications. For Daly, women are transformed into "hollow holograms", "feminine nonwomen, the replacements of female". This is the state of robotitude, "life in the state of mechanical motion". (Daly 1990, p.52–53).

Its is "hard to see/name the fact that phallogracy reduces women to framed pictures / holograms / robots", but this "see-ing, nam-ing of this nonbeing is essential to liv-ing" (Daly 1990, p.56). Robotitude, then, does not refer literally to replacement of women with robots, but to the technologies of femininity at large, the construction of women as objects of male desire. As "pure repetition of mechanical gestures", robotitude changes women into things, "women with anatomically female bodies but totally male-identified, male-possessed brains / spirits", which is "an imposed state of idiocy, a kind of cretinism" (Daly 1990, p.56–57). Daly uses technology – especially technologies of robotics, astronautics and holograms – as metaphors for phallocratic control over women and nature, of violence and death, female self-alienation and compliance to the male ideals and norms.

For Judith Halberstam (1998, p.477), Daly's writings on robotitude and the creation of female holograms resemble those depicted in *The Stepford Wives*, and "[g]iven the history of gendering technology female in order to make it seductive, the threat of a Stepford Wives phenomenon certainly has validity". Halberstam nevertheless criticises Daly's views on gender and technology, for "[s]he reads robotitude, or automated gender, as a negative condition because she imagines that it replaces something natural and organic within 'woman'", and, furthermore, ignores the technology of gender and replicates patriarchal gendering of technology (Halberstam 1998, p.477). Although Daly does presuppose a true self and true womanhood that have been biased and hidden by patriarchy, and can be reclaimed, I do not think this fully means ignoring the technology of gender. Daly's discussion is certainly not Foucauldian in the sense that she postulates possibilities for "being outside" power and "a self" prior to power. Yet, as pointed out above, her reading of technology as a terrain of male control is about technologies of gender, power, making women and manufacturing femininity. Power is lived and internalised: "[t]he viciously exploitative technological embedding that infiltrates the modern psyche from all sides impresses the mind on levels beyond conscious awareness, profoundly affecting beliefs and behavior" (Daly 1990, p.109).

While Daly is decidedly anti-technology, she does not quite define what she means with technology. Given her general interest in – or even passion for – words, meanings and etymologies, this is somewhat surprising (cf. Daly 1994). I am inclined to think that technology is used by Daly as general reference to things *machine-like* and artificial reproduction of life. Thus her writing do not concern technology as much as patriarchal underpinnings of certain technologies. After all, spinning and weaving, central metaphors used by Daly throughout *Gyn/Ecologies* and beyond to describe

gynocentric ways of thinking, speaking and interacting, can themselves be considered technologies. For Daly, technology is pro-war and anti-women, and geared towards the destruction of life and the Goddess as its mythic origin: "[t]he creators of artificial death belong to the same funeral fraternity as the various ale supermothers – creators of artificial life and manipulators of existing life. [--] The projected manufacture by men of artificial wombs, of cyborgs which will be part flesh, part robot, of clones – all are manifestations of phallotechnic boundary violation". (Daly 1990, p.70, 71.)

These views on technology have been commented on by Donna Haraway in her writings on cyborgs, including the famous declaration "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess" (Haraway 1991, p.181). Whereas for Daly technology is patriarchal and thus other to gynocentric practices, Haraway argues for a feminist incorporation and appropriation of technology and answerability for its uses. And whereas Daly sees boundary violations as illustrations of patriarchal aggression towards women, for Haraway they illustrate possibilities for change and multiplicity. Judith Halberstam (1998, p.476) reads goddesses and cyborgs as two poles in the debate on women and technology: "The ground between the goddess and the cyborg clearly stakes out the contested territory between the category 'woman' and the gendered 'body'. So, if the goddess is an ideal congruence between anatomy and femininity, the cyborg instead posits a femininity as automation, as coded masquerade". It can be argued, however, that also for writers using the figuration of the goddess, like Daly, femininity is nothing if not automation and coded masquerade. Daly does not assume a congruence between anatomy and femininity, since femininity signifies male-identified performance of womanhood, accomplished by transsexuals and holograms as well as by "women". Being woman, not being feminine, has to do with anatomy and embodiment.

In Halberstam's reading, Daly depicts the figure of a female cyborg as a threat of seducing women into automated femininity, thus distancing women from their true selves. If, however, femininity, like masculinity, is seen as something always already artificial and mechanical, and technology as something already gendered female, the question is cast in a different light (Halberstam 1998, p.478, 480), while issues of power, normativity and control remain equally central. Connections between women and technology as gendered female are hardly more obvious anywhere else than in ideas concerning perfect machine women, which can be traced back to female automata as constructed in fiction and practice alike at least since the 18th century.

Perfect workers

The Stepford Wives are both domestic workers and household machines. Robots being generic representatives of a service-class is already implied in the etymology of the term, deriving from Slavic word ("rabotnik") for a worker or hard, even forced labour (Halberstam 1998, p.468). As Alexandra Chasin (1995) has pointed out, the gendered, classed and raced category of servants is situated on the boundary of humans and things, us and them. The instrumental function and subjected social position of servants, along with their un(der)valued arena of domestic work, has led to comparisons between servants, slaves, non-humans and robots. Chasin (1995, p.81–83) associates this drawing and crossing of boundaries with a wider cultural move of depicting technology as anthropomorphic, while human labour becomes increasingly defined in terms of machines – yet in both cases the categories of human are clearly classed and gendered. For Chasin, the central problem does not concern differences between the human and the nonhuman, given that the inclusion of women in the former category has never been a given, but rather on how the dependence of social relations "on a service being, even on a service class of being" is left intact and unquestioned (Chasin 1995, p.84–85).

When tackling with the feminine housewife mystique, Betty Friedan returned continuously to the blurred boundaries of women and things. She compared 19th cen-

tury views on women as irrational and animal-like creatures to the 1950s housewife discourse, insisting that "[w]omen are human beings, not stuffed dolls, not animals" (Friedan 1983, p.67). Friedan's central argument for equality was based on women's humanity, and certainly women have been one of the groups excluded from the category of human, or at least from being fully human, more liking to the material world of objects, possessions and animals (understood as "nature") (Butler 2000, p.81–82). However, Friedan's demands for acknowledging women as human fail to take into consideration the workings of "race", sexuality and class, leaving the category of women to signify white middle-class and heterosexual. Similarly, as Rachel Bowlby (2000, p.202) notes, in *The Stepford Wives* only young middle-class housewives become turned into servant-machines. The danger does not include domestic servants or working women, yet deliberate emphasis is made on African American Ruth facing a faith similar to that of Joanne and Bobby.

In addition to functioning as the perfect servant/domestic worker, the robot wives (like the ideal housewives in Betty Friedan's book), are also ever-willing sexual servants to their "masters". Female robots as ideal love dolls are a recurring theme in cinematic and literary fictions, implying both the mechanistic nature of desirable femininity and sexual acts, and, perhaps more centrally, the desirability of man-made technological objects. In *The Stepford wives*, the figure of robot wife is literally husband's property and modelled to please him in a vein similar to the contemporaneous "love model" robots in *Westworld* (1973) and *Futureworld* (1976), films that depict theme parks where intercourse with m/f robots (but never male on male or female on female) is one of the key attractions. As one visitor has it in *Futureworld,* "once you make it with a robot chick, that's it, you don't ever want nothing else" – finding later resonance in Steven Spielberg's later film *AI* (2001). Like Hadaly, the ideal machine woman in Villier de l'Isle Adam's novel (orig. 1880)*,* these robot women are referred to as "better than their originals", as embodiments of La Femme, the ideal woman and heterosexual love-object. In such fictions, desirable femininity becomes understood as programmable sets of lines, gestures and responses, produced for male pleasure. The ultimately gratifying female is in fact a robot love-doll and perfect wives have to be engineered.

I find it productive to read *The Stepford wives,* not merely as faithful illustration of Daly's robotitude, but against an interetxtual framework of debates and concerns over gender, power and technology – as an ironic metanarrative rather than a visualisation. This enables a move from the shortcomings and simplifications of the narrative to a wider discursive field concerning women, servants and things both within popular cybernetics and feminist theory. Representations of sexualised female automata are about definitions of the gendered, raced, sexualised and classed category of human and its boundaries, as defined against negation (of machines, animals, dolls and things) and through uneasy affinities (the categories of historically "less human" servants, ethnic, racial and religious others, homosexuals, women and children).

Literature

Bowlby, R. 2000. *Carried Away: The Invention of Modern Shopping*. London: Faber and Faber.

Butler, J. 2000. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chasin, A. 1995. Class and Its Close Relations: Identities among Women, Servants, and Machines. *In* J. Halberstam and I. Livingston, eds. *Posthuman Bodies.* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 73–96.

Daly, M. 1990. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism.* 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press.

Daly, M. 1994. *Webster's First Intergalatic Wickedary of the English Language*. New York: HarperCollins.

Doane, M.A. 2000. Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine. *In* G. Kirkup and al., eds. *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reade*r. London: Routledge and Open University, 110–121.

Friedan, B. 1983. *The Feminine Mystique.* 2nd ed. New York: Laurel.

Halbestam, J. 1998. Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine (1991)*. In* P. D. Hopkins, ed. *Sex/Machine: Readings in Culture, Gender, and Technology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 468–483.

Haraway, D. J., 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.

Levin, I. 1973. *The Stepford Wives*. Greenwich: A Fawcett Crest Book.

Turkle, S. 1991. Romantic Reactions: Paradoxical Responses to the Computer Presence. *In* J. J. Sheehan and M. Sosna, eds. *The Boundaries of Humanity: Humans, Animals, Machines.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 224–252.

Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, 2001. *Tomorrow's Eve*. Robert Martin Adams (trans.), from *L'Eve future* (1880). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Wiener, N. 1988. *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. 2nd ed. New York: Da Capo.

Wiener, N. 1999. *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Williams, B. 1991. Prologue: Making Sense of Humanity. *In* J.J. Sheehan and M. Sosna, eds. *The Boundaries of Humanity: Humans, Animals, Machines.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 13–23.

The Effect and Affect of Celebrity on The Vagina Monologues and V-Day 2001

Megan D. Pincus, University of Wiscinsin-Madison

mdpincus@students.wisc.edu

In February of this year, when I booked a ticket to New York City to attend the huge V-Day 2001 gala in Madison Square Gardens, I had already researched and written two papers on The Vagina Monologues and V-Day (the fundraising campaign launched from the play to end violence against women around the world). I had looked mostly at the media discourse surrounding The Vagina Monologues and issues of women's political activism and global feminism associated with the phenomenon of V-Day.

Going into V-Day 2001, I was unsure what I would ultimately write about it, but I knew I wanted to look at it through the perspective of performance studies, as I was then enrolled in a seminar on that brand of theory. After attending the event, my topic became clear. The juxtaposition of some of America's most renowned celebrity women with non-celebrity women struggling to survive oppression in their local communities brought a fascinating uniqueness to this particular event. So, after the performance I began to read theories of celebrity and I interviewed V-Day's directors on the celebrity aspect of their project. Then, I posed a hypothesis: My claim is that celebrities are tremendously effective in promoting the show and its cause; that is, they are successful in drawing an audience, a reputation, and an energy to the V-Day movement. But, they are not necessarily or always the most affective -- emotionally powerful -- aspect of the show's live performance on stage. In fact, that affective role in live performance can actually be problematized by the sign of celebrity.

This paper focuses on one particular event, V-Day 2001 "Take Back the Garden", and has two main sections: one on the effectiveness and one on the affectiveness of celebrities and V-Day. I will read excerpts from each.

The Effectiveness of Celebrities And V-Day

Much has been written on the discursive power of celebrities in American culture. P. David Marshall wrote "within society, the celebrity is a voice above others, a voice that is channeled into the media systems as being legitimately significant."[1] Another scholar, Jib Fowles, concluded:

> The fame stars have won lends them power. It is not power in the ancient sense, by which a few can legitimately exert authoritarian control over others, but rather power in a modern sense, by which few have license to influence on a vast scale. Americans turn to stars for the guidance they can provide.[2]

Fowles also describes the power of stars attaching their names and personae to specific social causes, "being put to symbolic purposes by the population," as the celebrity women do with V-Day. To have this level of impact, stars of certain images are picked to be associated with certain causes. These images, according to Fowles, "can help Americans negotiate the universe of abstractions. Stars come to symbolize ideas in the minds of the public."[3] As Richard Schickel wrote:

> It is not too much to say that we have, in about half a century's time, reached a point where most issues, whether political, intellectual, or moral in nature, do not have real status -- that is, literally, the status of the real -- until they have been taken up, dramatized, in the celebrity world.[4]

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

In short, several scholars have concluded that attaching a celebrity name to a cause or event legitimizes it in the eyes of the public, giving it an identity and a power that the cause alone did not have in the social sphere. This phenomenon is well illustrated in the evolution of V-Day from one-woman show to "social movement" and "bona fide phenomenon" (a phrase often used by one journalist to describe the play). While celebrity involvement cannot be considered the sole factor causing the show's current renown, it is notable that before celebrities got involved, The Vagina Monologues was an unknown off-Broadway show, and V-Day was only an idea.

The celebrity image associated with V-Day in America today consists of a large group of high profile, socially conscious, open-minded and ultimately hip famous women. According to V-Day artistic director Abby Epstein, this celebrity image was created in an "organic process," which is better understood by knowing the evolution of V-Day itself.[5] In my original version of this paper, I trace the growing celebrity involvement in V-Day from 1997 to 2001, but today I will use my time on the particular event on which I'm focusing my theory.

When the event took place, there had already been successful celebrity-driven V-Days in 1998, 1999 and 2000 (mostly to somewhat elite crowds), and the play was touring the world with local and national celebrities, to sold-out houses. But the V-Day 2001 event became by far the biggest yet, offering reasonably-priced tickets to 20,000 people and enticing a phenomenal 80 celebrity women to join the bandwagon. Vagina Monologues author Eve Ensler had a twofold vision for V-Day 2001[6] -- During the day of the event, a relatively small group of women's organization workers held a conference on the problem of violence against women around the world.[7] That evening, the public was invited to watch a star-studded gala performance of The Vagina Monologues, interspersed with a handful of speeches and performances by non-celebrity women. The rock-concert scale performance included such stars as Oprah Winfrey, Jane Fonda, Gloria Steinem, Rosie Perez, Teri Hathcher, Glenn Close, Calista Flockhart, Marisa Tomei, Claire Danes, Queen Latifah, and 70 others. It sold out the Garden's 20,000 seats.

Celebrity clearly drove the publicity and momentum of V-Day 2001. An episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show about V-Day aired the day before the performance and shot the ticket sales up 4,000 in a single afternoon. Before the show that night, I heard audience members cooing over the names of their favorite celebrities in the program, "I can't believe she is here!" or "I can't wait to see her!" When the show started, the stars were shining brightest. The audience roared as each celebrity performer was introduced by Ensler at the show's opening. The largest audience eruptions occurred when Ensler shouted, "Oprah is in the house!" "Queen Latifah is in the house!" and "Gloria Stienem is in the house!"

It is up to this point that I believe the celebrity presence at V-Day was its most important and effective. Celebrity presence and reputation helped gain media attention for the cause, filled the seats of the performance, created a certain reputation, and energized the audience of the shows. After the introductions of the stars, however, I saw a shift began to occur. The focus moved from star presence (quite surreal) to the presence of "reality," from women of Hollywood (larger than life) to women of local communities around the world, and from celebrities being an effective marketing tool to celebrity actually becoming a problem in the affective realm of this particular live performance.

The Affectiveness of Celebrities And V-Day

According to scholars, celebrities' influence on the public comes from a personal connection the audience feels to them. Marshall refers to this as "affective power." He uses the term primarily in the context of political culture, claiming that "affect moves the political debate from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling and sentiment."[8]

In Marshall's view, the celebrity persona of politicians is manipulated by marketing strategists to give them emotional power over their audience. I agree with Marshall that, on a large scale, celebrities function to create an affective economy through "an intense focus on the personal, the intimate, and the individual qualities of leadership in its process of legitimation."[9] It was their broad affective power that made the celebrity women involved in V-Day so effective in drawing an audience. However, my argument is that when celebrity and affect are looked at in terms of live performance rather than broader political culture, they function differently.

In terms of V-Day 2001, the attachment and impact of celebrity names (and, thus, social power) to the event -- results of public relations and press agentry -- is the more effective side of the V-Day experience. The real affect, as I see it, became evident in the audience's reactions, which grew consistently stronger with the non-celebrity speakers than the celebrity actors at V-Day 2001.

Michael L. Quinn's article, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting" provides some explanation of why I think this phenomenon occurred.[10] He applies writings of the Prague School on the phenomenology and semiotics of acting to "the problems of celebrity in performance." According to the Prague School, "every acting event contains within it some relative blend of performer, acting figure and character. The performer's personal contribution to the acting sign is called the expressive function; and in the cases of celebrity, this function is often dominant."[11] In other words, the celebrity actor, instead of being a blank palette on which character and text are layered, already has a variety of signs layered on her presence. These expressive signs include the celebrity's prior famous characters and roles, personal life circumstances, experiences and personality, which the audience feels it already knows through media representations of that celebrity. This problematizes a celebrity's full embodiment of a fictional stage role in the eyes of the audience. As Quinn says, "the personal qualities of the individual actor dominate the perception of the actor's reference to the fictional events."[12]

At V-Day 2001, the contrast in expressive function of celebrity women to non-celebrity women allowed the non-celebrities to embody more "realness" in their performances than the celebrity actors. The cause of the evening -- helping women and girls in dire situations of violence -- became easier to relate with the women telling their own present-tense experiences of oppression, women who had no pre-existing expressive function in the eyes of the audience. This is not to say celebrity women are unable to embody the characters of The Vagina Monologues in other venues, or that they did not perform well and affectively at the Garden. To be sure, the testimonial nature of The Vagina Monologues text as a performance piece is traditionally one of its most affective features, and skilled actresses consistently bring audiences to laughter and tears performing them. It was clearly the specific instance of the event's mixture of celebrities and non-celebrities, and of play text, personal speeches and musical numbers that brought to light the diminishing affective function of the celebrity actors.

To illustrate, at the V-Day 2001 event, of the 26 acts in the show, six were not performed by celebrities. It was three of these non-celebrity acts in the show that had the most affective impact on the audience. One act was called "Women Speak Out On Female Genital Mutilation," in which three young African women spoke from self-written speeches about their personal experiences with FGM, describing how they left their villages to fight against the practice. (One extremely affective moment came when one of the young African women said passionately, "I refuse to be cut!") A second act was called, "In My Girl Spirit I Knew It Was Wrong," in which a troupe of teenage girls of a variety of races/ethnicities (and seemingly lower income brackets) performed a musical number about self-esteem and self-awareness as young women. A third act was called "RAWA Speaks," in which an Afghani woman representing the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) entered the stage wearing a burqa, then removed it and stood, spotlighted, alone on stage, voice trem-

bling, speaking of the political, social and physical oppression of women in her homeland, and how she has devoted her life to freeing them. The only times I saw most of the audience moved to tears were during these three performances, and by far the loudest applause of the evening (besides the introduction and final applause) came after these three acts.

Of the celebrity performances, the usual tear-jerker monologue, "My Vagina Was My Village," which tells the story of a Bosnian rape survivor and usually the show-stopper, when portrayed by actors Claire Danes and Kirsten Dunst, did not seem to pack quite the emotional punch I have seen it do before. Again, this is not to say the monologue was not well-acted. It is important to look at the expressive function of these young actors, represented in the media as hip and stylish, donning high fashions at premieres and fundraisers and glowing about their boyfriends, parties and new apartments. These semiotic layers are hard to erase in a three-minute monologue, making it difficult for an audience to envision Danes or Dunst as the young Bosnian woman of the monologue whose life was destroyed and hopeless. Furthermore, the young actors' celebrity personae were amplified by their performance coming one act after the three young African women describing their "real" personal experiences with violence. Similarly, the sight of 80 perfectly coifed, albeit socially conscious, actresses cleverly performing Ensler's lines as "The Vulva Choir," while evoking much laughter, simply did not pull the audience heartstrings or inspire them on a personal level as much as the group of somewhat awkward, lower-income girls, wide-eyed with nervousness, singing and dancing with all their energy to "In My Girl Spirit I Knew It Was Wrong."

The affect/effect divide was also evident in the fact that the stars who received the biggest audience reaction at the top of the show did not necessarily receive the same after their performances. For instance, Oprah Winfrey, widely known as one of the most successful and powerful women in the world, received the loudest applause at the top of the show. But her performance of a new monologue about the plight of Afghani women, "Under the Burqa," did not cause nearly the affective reaction (or applause) as the nameless Afghani woman telling her "real" story directly afterwards. Interestingly, as Marshall argues, Winfrey's certain celebrity power and affective function are built on her image as "from the people" and vulnerable, with the public's knowledge of her personal battles with sexual abuse, childhood poverty, racism, and body image.[13] However, again it is relative: Winfrey in contrast to a more "privileged" celebrity, say a Gwyneth Paltrow, may be the more affective or vulnerable Other, but in contrast to an Afghani woman in dire straits Winfrey's current wealth, power and success become her expressive function.

Conclusion

What I have attempted to illustrate in this paper is not that celebrities are problematic as part of The Vagina Monologues/V-Day movement as a whole; to the contrary, I hope I have shown how extremely effective they are in adding momentum, legitimacy and audience to V-Day. The most interesting point I found in attending V-Day 2001 was that the immense power of celebrity is not necessarily the most affective factor in a live performance -- specifically, a live performance fundraiser with non-celebrities. In short, for one night at least, the extremely affective testimonials of Ensler's monologues were upstaged and problematized, in relative scale, by the expressive function of 80 famous performers.

Visibility and attention-generation are celebrities' largest and most effective contributions to V-Day as a whole. Their dramatic ability also certainly enhances the affectiveness of The Vagina Monologues performances throughout the world, where the "problem of celebrity in live performance" is less noticeable when not compared to "real" testimonials of non-celebrities. However, at V-Day 2001, it was this unscripted plight of "real" oppressed women and girls that generated more emotional

affect, touching the hearts of audience members and giving them a different perspective on the cause itself. I believe the combined power of celebrity and non-celebrity women in the V-Day 2001 performance were key to its immense success and audience impact. In short, V-Day 2001 exemplified the ways in which affect and celebrity power can function differently in the social sphere and live performance.

Endnotes

[1] Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis: 1997. Page x.
[2] Fowles, Jib. *Starstruck: Celebrity Performers and the American Public*. Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington: 1992. Page 176.
[3] Fowles, 180.
[4] Schickel, Richard. *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*. Doubleday. New York: 1985. Page 8.
[5] Telephone interview with Abby Epstein, artistic director of V-Day World. April 20, 2001.
[6] This charter will be a one-page proclamation condemning violence against women, which will be translated into as many languages as possible and distributed via newspaper advertisements and other commercial means, according to www.v-day.org.
[7] Three winners were selected and their projects funded by the V-Day organization. The day included screenings of independent films on women's struggles throughout the world and a convention-type room of tables stocked with information on organizations that fight violence against women.
[8] Marshall, 240
[9] Marshall, xiii.
[10] To help qualify this paper as a performance studies work, I want to quote Quinn's opening line. He says: "The system of celebrity production and reception provides an important supplement to performance study that is frequently dismissed by serious contemporary criticism."
[11] Quinn, 155.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Marshall, 143.

Gender for Sale
Advertising Design as Technologies of Gender

Liina Puustinen, University of Helsinki

liina.puustinen@helsinki.fi

> "Advertisements as a cultural form, display a preoccupation with gender that is hardly matched to any other genre."(Van Zoonen, 1994, 67.)

In contemporary consumer culture advertisements are a part of our every day life. As media imagery in general, advertisements are loaded with subject positions representing gender and sexuality. Taking a glance to the commercial television channels evening program or browsing through pages of a newspaper or a magazine one can find thousands of images addressing to us along gender lines. Why is it so? How are discourses of gender encoded in advertisements? How advertising designers produce representations on gender? These are the main questions in my doctoral dissertation.

The aim of my research is to study the cultural discourses of gender and power behind the advertising design work. I will follow the tradition of Feminist Media Studies and Cultural Studies and particularly the Foucauldian Theory of Discourse. Collecting the empirical data I will make extended interviews of focus groups consisting of advertising designers. My method is qualitative and discourse analysis will be used as framework for scrutinizing the data. However, I have been working on the dissertation only for a month and a half so far. Consequently this paper will present only some of my theoretical and methodological starting points.

I will begin with presenting some background for my study: about advertising as communication. I try to position my study in the field of Communication and Media Studies and Feminist Media Studies. In the second chapter I will elaborate on the theoretical framework, especially my understandings on the notions of language, gender, power, subjectivity and agency. The main theoretical influences I have found from Foucault, Fairclough and de Lauretis. Next I will discuss on advertising as technologies of gender. And finally, I will present my plans about the empirical fieldwork before concluding the aims of my dissertation in the last chapter.

Background - Studying advertising as communication

The field of Communication and Media Studies is traditionally divided in three domains of research: production, text and reception. This division derives from the transmission view of communication of 1930's. The MCR-tradition started the studies of audience and reception. But the receivers of communication were considered fairly passive and the texts were much in the focus of research. Later, along with the linguistic turn and rise of the Cultural Studies in the late 1960's and 1970's the conception of reception changed to be more active. Stuart Hall introduced the encoding-decoding –model in 1973 in which communication is understood as interpretation in both ends of the sender and receiver axel. Nevertheless, the division to senders and receivers, or encoders and decoders, is still useful for making clear which kind of part of communication process is concerned. The contemporary paradigm understands communication as a process of interpreting and formulating meanings taking place in social and historical context.

In my master thesis I focused on reception, decoding, of advertisement pictures by making discourse analysis on the ways people talk about femininity and embodiment when exposed to advertising images. Through the advertising viewers

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

speech I reached a glimpse of the cultural and discursive world behind the ad images. Now, my intention is to turn the focus in the direction of production or encoding of the gendered images, and in particular, to the discursive world communicated by the people behind advertisements, the designers.

Nevertheless, the encoders and decoders of social meanings do not differ so much from each other, they are both products and producers of our culture. We all take turns depending on the phase in communication situation. So are the advertising designers and others working in the media industry, even though they interestingly seem to have a more powerful position in the process of encoding public communication. They have an institutionalised position of being interpreters of our culture. Not forgetting that without the back up of the market economy, they would not have a tongue at all. Some theoreticians (e.g. Gillian Dyer 1982, 2) have even suggested that the relationship of market economy and advertising in contemporary world can be compared to the unity of art and religion in traditional society. We can think of both the market economy and the church, as the ruling elements of their époque, being able to afford hiring the best artists to serve their purposes.

However, as far as my position as researcher is concerned, the topic of my study is not far fetched. After finishing my master's degree I was hired by an advertising agency and stayed there for one year. Working as junior copy writer I got interested in the position of the advertising designer (that means copy writers, art directors and project leaders) in the social communication process.

Earlier, during my under graduate years I had read researchers analysis of advertisements, read critical text analysis and made some for my thesis, too. And later, when analysing some ads with my colleagues at the advertising agency, they would wonder the complicated signification chains and hidden ideological messages I found in them. When asked the visual specialist, art director, the intentions behind his own work he would just say: "Oh, I put there a picture like this, because I thought it just looked cool". Of course I got to know the strategic side of advertising planning, too, which emphasises the message being aimed at specific target group. But the ideas called "creative" often seemed to lead the strategies, which could sometimes be like badges glued on the visual and literary works of art.

Moreover, I ran in to the frequent use of sexuality in ads, which seemed to every body as natural and evident hook for catching the target group's attention. No matter which age group, social status or class was being at stake, gender and sexuality seemed to be always useful tools in persuasive communication. No further questions were asked.

Yet, the analytical and academic view on ads never detached its grip of me. And later I found my way back to the university, and took with me the idea of continuing with investigating advertising. It still seems like an area not overly explored in the field of Communication and Media Studies. As my colleague Nando Malmelin, who has recently finished his licentiate work on TV commercials media rhetoric, remarks that advertising as an object of study has usually been considered as ground belonging to Marketing Studies or Humanist Art Studies such as Art History. I agree with him that advertising needs to be studied as Communication, too. (Malmelin 2001, 3,13.)

Positioning in the tradition of Feminist Media Studies

Meanwhile, advertising has been neglected by the mainstream Communication and Media Research, Cultural Studies and particularly its feminist wing have done some pioneer work on studying advertisements starting from the 1970's; to name one of the classics *Decoding Advertisements* by Judith Williamson (1974). And ever since the birth of women's liberation movement in the 1960's feminists have singled out advertising as "the most disturbing cultural products" (Van Zoonen 1994, 67-68).

Liesbeth Van Zoonen, the author of Feminist Media Studies (1994), describes feminist scholars and activists having accused advertisements and commercials of

representing distorted images of women. Nevertheless, this view has later been criticised for two reasons. First, of being connected to the transmission view on communication, which was criticized and complemented with the interpretative view on communication process. Second, the distortion accusation starts from a essentialist view of gender, which assumes that there exists universal traits of femininity and masculinity. The essentialist approach would thus lock the dynamic conception of gender as historical and cultural process – on which I will elaborate later in this paper (p. 8-9).

According to Van Zoonen, one of the problems of the distortion view is, that if some cultural images are singled out as distorted one is obliged to define what is normal and what is not. And, as it is taken for given in contemporary paradigm, there will never be an agreement of what is a 'normal' woman.

> "Feminists are divided among themselves over what is the reality of women's social position and nature. Thus before the media could transmit more realistic images of women, it would be necessary to define uncontroversially what the reality about women is, obviously an impossible project." (Van Zoonen 1994, 31.)

In studies focusing on media production the earlier tradition of Feminist Media Studies have mostly concentrated on the statistical inequality of the sexes amongst the media employees. During the 60's and 70's there was still a vast majority of men working in broadcasting and advertising. The assumption was that the media companies are 'sexist mini societies' and their products are a like. To fight against that feminists have required for more women working in newspapers, radio, television, film and advertising industries; having more women as media producers would be instrumental for creating more balanced media product. (Ibid, 29.) Whereas, times have changed and today in Finland there is a slight majority of women working in the media field. Yet, the leading posts are still dominated by men. But, have the media's gender representations changed?

Advertising images are no more accused of presenting distorted images of women in contemporary Feminist Cultural Studies, but more there are researchers interested in different ways of interpreting, 'reading' advertisement images. The social and cultural context behind the image's surface has become more in to the focus. Also, it seems to me, that the advertising imagery in general has become more varied in representations on gender.

For Cultural Studies point of view advertising is still considered as "an excellent example of the repetitive production of gender and sexuality," as Leena-Maija Rossi puts it; and she continues:

> "As an highly effective system of representation, advertising participates in this performative cultural production and does not just function as a passive reflection of society. And in spite of the ruling gender constraints and conformity, advertising also gives space for acting out different ways of doing gender." (Rossi 2000, 2.)

Because of their condensed form of communication advertisements and commercials are considered as fruitful field to an examination of cultural values, beliefs and myths connected to gender. Advertisements need to convey meaning within limited space and time and will therefore exploit symbols that are relevant and salient to society as a whole. (Van Zoonen 1994,67-68.)

Accordingly, my purpose is to go beyond the surface of the ads, to the very origins of the production of ideological subject positions, to the advertising agency. Taking in to consideration that the agency is not any unified ideological apparatus, but consists of human subjects who bring their views, experiences, values, norms, beliefs and other psychological and social factors in the process of advertising design.

To my view, ad designers have a double role as receivers and producers of advertisement texts. I'm interested in the ways they work by observing, interpreting, selecting and reproducing the cultural discourses of gender. How they act as cultural agents in producing advertisement texts? What are the cultural, social and political discourses in which the producers of cultural images of gender are enmeshed with?

But before going on to questions for the interviewees and field work methods, I will elaborate on the most important theoretical concepts in my study, which are gender, power, subjectivity and agency.

Theoretical Framework: Theory of Discourse and Feminist Cultural Studies

My theoretical and methodological framework is the Foucauldian Theory of Discourse and Feminist Media and Cultural Studies. The starting point is the costructionist view of communication according to which the use of language, symbols and signs construct social reality. Language has material, social and historical consequences (Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 1993, 9-10). When we speak and assign meanings to the objects, we construct the objects of our speech (ibid, 18).

The theories of Michel Foucault have inspired many feminists and discourse theorists. A Finnish philosopher Johanna Oksala describes that Foucault's great fame is partly thanks to feminism, because the feminists have most utilized but also criticized his ideas (Oksala 1997, 168). The works of Foucault and of the ones developing his ideas are important sources for my study, particularly his views on power, discourse, subjectivity, and sexuality.

The most important concept for understanding how the society works is the notion of power. Foucault sees power not as a possession or having but as a relation, a dynamic network of non-centralised forces that work all over in the institutions of society, and in the daily practices of the individuals within it. (Foucault 1976, 121-122.) As he notes further: power is not always oppressive, it does not rely on violence and suppression but it can be subtle and productive. "Power produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (ibid. 196). To Foucault discourse is a specific system of language use, a form of knowledge. It is a system of meanings that is being continuously reconstructed and also deconstructed in social situations. Discourses transmit and produce power, they work as tools of power. And I argue that today's gendered discourses of power work heavily through media culture, even in those kinds of representations that might seem innocent and neutral on surface. (Aslama & Puustinen, 2000, 4-5.)

Whereas, Foucault proceeds: "where there is power there is resistance". The resistant discourses are continuously being produced beside the dominant discourses (ibid.125). Power creates possibilities for knowledge in and through the production of discourses (Fisher & Davis1993, 8). Thus, power and resistance work through cultural and social institutions, and advertising is one of them.

Taking some influence from Foucault Norman Fairclough has presented a methodological framework of critical discourse analysis. In his book *Language and Power* he writes about language as social and historical process. (Fairclough 1989, 22.) Fairclough's idea on the three spheres of discourse is useful. He presents the discourse consisting of processes as follows: 1. the process of production (product is a text), 2. the process of interpretation (to which the text is a source), and 3. the social conditions and circumstances, in which the production and interpretation is taking place. (Ibid, 24.) The division of discourse is analytical and often the processes are not separable from each other. Thus, when analysing the use of language it is important to take in to consideration the text, the context of the discourse interaction, and last, the sociocultural context surrounding all the former ones. (Fairclough 1989, 24-25; 1997, 82.)

Consequently, analysing language always has to do with analysing power relations. In this section I will elaborate on the concepts of subjectivity, agency and

gender that are also closely connected to the notion of power as relation. I will go to ways of writing, representing and reading gender in advertising, using Teresa de Lauretis' notion technologies of gender.

Advertising designers as ideological subjects and agents

I see advertising designer's position as active cultural subject, agent. I understand subjectivity as process of a person's consciousness of one self, which changes in time and place. The concept of subjectivity refers to the person's way of relating to his/her social environment and to world at large. Subjectivity is not seen as a fixed quality, but it is being reconstructed continuously in social interaction. As individuals we learn the cultural ways of thinking that constitute our consciousness and the positions to which we place ourselves as subjects. (Weedon 1997, 32, 173; Puustinen 1997, 9.)

Reading Foucault's earlier works, e.g. *Discipline and Punish* of 1975*,* his conception of the subject seemed to be quite much determined by the social environment. But in his last writings he assigs more agency to the subject, and conceives the subject as an active agent using *the technologies of the self* in terms of the cultural discourses. Foucault 1984, 1-20; Puustinen 1997, 20). According to Oksala Foucault's subject is active and intentional, but its needs and desires are constructed through the networks of power (Oksala 1997b, 4).

Thus, subjectivity is being constituted in the crossroads of discourses (see e.g. Weedon 1997, 102). Louis Althusser maintains that language calls, 'interpellates', the subject to take a position in the discourse. Without language there is no ideology and without ideology there is no subjectivity. Thus, ideology constitutes individuals as subjects through language. (Althusser 1984,126.) According Stuart Hall ideology is embedded in language and it works through all the institutions, such as family, school, media, that assign social meanings to subjects. These are also the places where the ideological struggle and negotiation takes place. (Hall 1990, 271) Gender can be conceived as one social ideology that is being reformulated and reconstructed in social discursive situations. (Puustinen 1997, 13)

Weedon maintains that language is also a very political place and the subject is a central component for social change or preserving status quo (Weedon 1997, 21). The potential of resistance is always there; and the changes of meanings and discourses can only happen through subjective action (ibid. 23). As creators of cultural representations the ad designers, thus, have a position not only to reproduce but also to create or stretch the prevalent discourses of gender.

Teresa de Lauretis introduces the concept of experience, which combines the linguistic and semiotic approaches, both the psychological and material sides, of subjectivity (de Lauretis 1984, 171). She maintains that semiotics has overemphasised the social side in the processes of semiosis and construction of the subjectivity. Whereas, psychoanalytic theory stresses the subconscious and drives. As feminist de Lauretis criticizes those theories forgetting the material side of subjectivity, the embodied subject, who lives and takes action in time and space. She stresses the importance of historical materialism in understanding of subjectivity.

The concept of experience of De Lauretis, combines the social and psychological view of the process in which the subjectivity is taking form. Through the process of experience a person places oneself or is placed in social reality, and so perceives and comprehends as subjective. The process of subjectivity is to be seen in relations – material, economic, and interpersonal – which are in fact social and, in a latter perspective, historical. (ibid, 159.) And she summarises:

> "Subjectivity is an ongoing construction, not a fixed point of departure or arrival from which one then interacts with the world. On the contrary, it is the effect of that interaction – which I call experience; and thus it is produced not by external ideas, values, or material causes, but by one's personal, subjective,

> engangement in the practices, discourses, and institutions that lend significance (value, meaning, and affect) to the events of the world." (de Lauretis 1984, 159.)

This view makes possible to see the ad designer subjects as active agents, who on the basis of their experience reproduce and reorganize the discourses of gender within their culture. The subject is not only a product of his/her culture but also a producer of culture.

The processes of subjectivity and identity are closely connected to each other. They both are constructed through language and discourses. Thus, identity, like subjectivity, is not seen as fixed property in the individual, but an ongoing process. Fairclough elaborates on the process of subjectivity using the concept of subject position, which refers to the identity that we take in discursive situations. And he seems to use subject position almost as equivalent to identity. The concept of subject position will be useful for me in the phase of scrutinizing the interviews of advertising designers talking about their views on gender. The interviewees may take different kind of identities or subject positions in the conversation.

In theory the communication situation of advertising is similar to any other textual communication. The ad designer as the producer of a text wishes to place the receiver in a certain subject position, while the identity taken by the receiver depends on how he/she has understood and interpreted the text. The receiver takes the identity or subject position according to his/her interpretation, which is influenced by various personal, social and contextual factors. Therefore the identity is not always the kind the producer of the text has intended to be. (Puustinen 1997, 14.) Keeping in mind the Foucauldian notion of power as relation, the producer and the interpreter both act within the cultural discourses. The producer would not have any power without the receiver, and she or he has the possibility for resistant readings of the ads.

Advertising as Technologies of Gender

I understand gender as a social and historical process along with subjectivity and identity. "Gender should thus be conceived, not as a fixed property of individuals, but as part of an ongoing process by which subjects are constituted, often in paradoxical ways." (Van Zoonen 1994, 33.) Gender is a cultural discourse, and thus subject to continuous struggle and negotiation (Ibid).

These definitions of gender have been influenced by Foucault's notion of sexuality presented mainly in his work *History of Sexuality vol. 1* in 1976*.* Foucault writes about sexuality as a social discourse implemented in individuals through institutional practices as family, pedagogy, medicine, economics etc, he calls this social and historical practice technology of sex. Sexuality is not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, but "the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviours, and social relation" (Foucault 1976, 127 .)

The way Foucault conceives sexuality and embodiment has been liberating to feminism, since it allows to see women as not determined by their biological fate, economical structures or childhood experiences (Oksala 1997, 169). However, De Lauretis, among other feminists, criticizes Foucault of forgetting the consideration of gender. "His critical understanding of the technology of sex did not take into account its differential solicitation of male and female subjects, and by ignoring the conflicting investments of men and women in the discourses and practices of sexuality." (de Lauretis 1984, 3.)

Going beyond Foucault's technology of sex, de Lauretis has brought up the notion of *technology of gender*. She argues that gender is a representation, which is a social and cultural construction. The construction of gender is a continuous historical process going on in all societal institutions every day life: in the media, schools, the family, the courts etc. (de Lauretis 1984, 3).To de Lauretis the sex-gender system

is both a sociocultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning to individuals within the society (Ibid, 5). Following hers and Foucault's ideas Van Zoonen summarizes that media is the site where discursive negotiation over gender takes place. "Media can thus be seen as (social) technologies of gender, accommodating, modifying, reconstructing and producing disciplining and contradictory cultural outlooks of sexual difference."(Van Zoonen 1994, 41.)

Reading and writing gender in advertising

Advertising, as any other media or social institution, can be seen as a technology of gender in contemporary society. The advertising designers are engendered cultural subjects who use their cultural capital in their work both consciously and inconsciously. Rossi argues:

> "In attempting to appeal to consumers, the majority of commercial imagery reproduces heterosexual hegemony and produces ideal images cherishing the stereotypes of feminine women and masculine men. These ideal gender images are often extreme in their expression, and unattainable in the real world. Nevertheless, commercial imagery is not a homogeneous visual world. It allows various different ways of encoding (in the processes of copywriting, directing and photographing) and decoding (interpreting, reading and re-writing) – multiple and proliferating ways of signifying genders and making them intelligible." (Rossi 2000, 1.)

Advertising is a huge ideological apparatus, but it is evident that there is no unified advertising machinery manufacturing all output with the same stereotyped pattern. Moreover, taking the Foucauldian view to account we can see how the power of advertisnig is relational and spread in to discursive networks, in which the original 'encoder' of the message is impossible to trace. (See e.g. Williamson 1978, 17; Puustinen 1997, 44.) The advertisements and commercials are made by designer teams, which consist of separate cultural subjects, living and experiencing, taking influences and trying to influence their social environment. They can have very controversial conceptions of gender among themselves but will have to compromise to come to a solution.

The reception studies has emphasised multiple ways of reading media texts and strategies of writing and reading as forms of cultural resistance. Feminists have written about the subjects possibility of "reading against the grain", which works as means to position oneself outside of the dominant discourse by displacing oneself inside the discourse. For after all, it is impossible to go beyond the discourses completely. (See e.g. De Lauretis 1984, 7.) Thus, the ad designers like any other producer of media texts, have the possibility of both reading and *writing* against the grain when producing representations of gender.

The textual analysis made of recent Finnish television commercials shows that advertisements are not always presenting gender roles as strict and stereotypical. Rossi argues that some of the Finnish TV commercials can be interpreted as obvious parodies of normative and idealised gender representations. And surprisingly often there are possibilities for readings, which challenge the normative heterosexual reading even further. More often one can see active, initiative, sturdy, even aggressive female figures in contemporary Finnish advertisements, those kinds of features that represent masculine traits in women. (Rossi 2000, 5.) And also, more often one can see men represented as sexual objects of gaze or performing tasks considered stereotypically feminine, such as cooking or child rearing. Thus, I'm not expecting to find the designers comments in the interview to be repeating only the discourses of typical heterosexual matrix, but I'm interested finding possible ruptures or hints of the new ways of conceiving gender and sexuality.

However, advertisers main purpose is to persuade people buy products and they uti-

lize media to convey specific cultural subject positions to people. Fairclough maintains that advertising works through posing implicit ideological presumptions. Advertising is an ideological apparatus. The advertiser creates an image to the product with which it constructs subject positions. (Fairclough 1989, 199.) The ideological practice of advertising takes form in three ways: first by constructing a relationship between the consumer and producer, second by constructing representations (narratives, images, ideals etc.) and third by offering the subjective consumers and large masses certain kinds of subject positions. (ibid. 202.)

Thus, the advertising designers are a part of this continuous institutional construction of representations of gender. Even though they have their individual freedom, their discursive agency, to produce whatever kinds of representations of gender they like, they are still in a position having to 'encode' their messages aiming to be understood by the possible 'decoders'. They have to import their new ideas in terms of the existing cultural discourses. Therefore writing against the grain might often turn out to be difficult. But what would the designers really say about this all? In the next chapter I will present some plans for the interviews, the empirical fieldwork.

Empirical Data – How is gender being represented in advertisement designers speech?

As I wrote earlier, the context of making advertisements is always team work and the final outcome is a compromise of many peoples ideas and views in many cases. The commercials, advertisements and banners go through many complicated processes before they are shown in television, published in newspaper or internet site. First the company's market leading makes a decision to consult an advertising agency for improving selling of a product or creating an image to the brand. They give a brief to advertising team, which brainstorms for new creative ideas, plans a strategy, makes surveys and finally the advertisement campaign is concretised in the audiovisual and print advertisements.

How ever, my main interest lies on the gender and power relations in the larger cultural context in which the advertising designers live. And for getting a hold of it I need some informants. But, since it is impossible to go inside the people's heads and find out about their views on gender and sexuality, I'm going to have to content to studying their speech acts, and then aiming at discerning different discourses they have produced. For collecting the empirical data I will make extended interviews of focus groups consisting of advertising designer teams. My method is qualitative and discourse analysis will be used as framework for scrutinizing the data.

Firstly, I will make a selection of some print advertisements, television commercials and maybe some internet banners that are representing people, both Finnish and foreign. I will try to pick advertisements that seem to make possible various readings of gender. I am aware that this inescapably reflects my own interpretation of the variety of gender images in our culture. I will try to look for ads representing traditional and stereotypical heterosexual context and also some that a researcher would read as parodies of the conventional gender performance.

Secondly, I will try to trace the designers of some of the Finnish advertisements. I will invite them to the interview, where I will show them their own ads and some others to provoke discussion. The amount of people in a group interview would be from two to four. I will invite the "creative designers": art directors and copywriters, and project leaders, who are responsible for the strategic part of advertising planning. I might interview the clients too, the ones who give the briefs to advertising agencies.

My aim is to have the advertising people talk about their own intentions behind their works and to speculate on the works made by others. How they see their own position as cultural encoders? How they interpret the ads? What they say they

think about gender and sexuality? Why they think it is so used in advertising? Also, I'm interested in hearing what they say they think of their possible receivers, the target groups? What kind of power or influence do they assume of having over the receivers? Have they ever faced any ethical dilemmas in their work? What they say about gender stereotypes? What kind of ideals of good and bad advertising do they talk about? Which are the features they identify with as viewers? In sum, how is gender being represented in their speech?

Conclusion

Paradoxically, the deconstruction of gender in scientific or other circumstances contributes to the construction of the normative gender system. That is De Lauretis' last point in (1987, 3) *Technologies of Gender,* and I am aware of my study contributing to that as well. Accordingly, Stuart Hall suggests, that the criticisers of the normative discourses inevitably take part in the reproduction of the given terms to the discourse. (1992, 182). No matter how much we try to write or read against the grain we can not escape the starting points which the normative discourses have placed before us. As researcher, I am an active subject within the networks of power, as well.

But my aim is not to judge the various technologies of gender in our culture but to try to understand them, and hopefully I will be able to give new perspectives on constructing of gender in our contemporary media culture. In sum, my dissertation aims at increasing understanding about production, reception and interpretation of advertisements and their relation to gender and power.

Literature

Althusser, L., 1984*. Ideologiset valtiokoneistot*. Jyväskylä, Vastapaino.

Aslama, M. & Puustinen, L., 2000. Gendered Excess. Representation of A Legend and Today's Femininity in "The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc" In *4th European Feminist Research Conference Oct. 2000* http://www.women.it/quarta/workshops/spectacles2/liinapuustinen.htm

Butler, J., 1990. Gender Trouble. New York and London, Routledge.

Fairclough, N., 1989. *Language and Power*. London & New York, Longman.

Fairclough, N., 1997. *Miten media puhuu*. Tampere, Vastapaino.

Fisher, S. & Davis, K., 1993. Power and the Female Subject. In Fisher, S. & Davis, K. (eds.) *Negotiating at the Margins. The Gendered Discourses of Power and Resistance.* Rutger's University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Foucault, M., 1980. *Tarkkailla ja rankaista*. Otava. Helsinki.

Foucault, M., 1976. *History of Sexualiy, volume 1 An Introduction*. Penguin Books, London.

Hall, S.,1992. *Kulttuurin ja politiikan murroksia*. Jyväskylä, Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.

Jokinen, A., Juhila, K., Suoninen, E. (eds.), 1993. *Diskurssianalyysin aakkoset.* Tampere, Vastapaino.

Lauretis, T. De, 1987. *Technologies of Gender. Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Lauretis, T. De, 1984. *Alice doesn't. Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. MacMillan Press. London.

Malmelin, N. (will be published in 2001): *Maiselokuvan mediaretoriikka. Viestintäteoreettisiä lähtökohtia mainoselokuvan merkitysmaailman tuotannon ja tulkinnan tutkimukseen*. Licenciate dissertation, University of Helsinki, Department of Communication.

Martin L.H., Gutman H., Hutton P. H. (eds.), 1988. *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. The University of Massachusetts.

Oksala, J., 1997a. Foucault ja feminismi. In Heinämaa, S. & Reuter, M. & Saarikangas, K. (eds.): *Ruumiin kuvia; subjektin ja sukupuolen muunnelmia*. Tampere, Gaudeamus.

Oksala, J., 1997b. Cyberfeminists and Women; Foucault's Notion of Identity. *Performatiivisuus, sukupuolen esittäminen - sukupuolen tekeminen -symposium 9.10.1997*. University of Helsinki.

Puustinen, L., 1997. *Vartalonainen. Naiseuden ja ruumiillisuuden rakentuminen viestinnässä.* Pro gradu in Communication. Facaulty of Political Sciences, University of Helsinki.

Rossi, L.-M., 2000. Masculine women – viable forms of media representation? Options for gender transitivity in Finnish television, commercials. In *4th European Feminist Research Conference Oct. 2000* http://www.women.it/quarta/workshops/spectacles2/leenamrossi.htm

Van Zoonen, L., 1994. *Feminist Media Studies*. London, Sage Publications.

Weedon, C., 1997. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. USA. Blackwell Publishers.

Williamson, J., 1984*. Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London, Marion Boyars.

Why Do I Love and Hate the Sugarfolks in Syruptown?
Studying the Visual Production of Heteronormativity in Television Commercials

Leena-Maija Rossi, University of Helsinki

Leena-Maija.Rossi@helsinki.fi

> ”When we are not thinking, what are we not thinking about?”
>
> (M.M. Manring 1998, p. 16)

Let’s imagine a generic television advertisement. The imagery is dense with signifiers of heterosexual romance. The represented bodies are “beautiful” (when they represent women) or “handsome” (when they represent men). Conventionally defined, these characters refer to tall and slender women with long hair and legs, and harmonious, smooth, not too strong facial features. And to tall, broad-shouldered and muscular men with strong facial features. In the realm of advertisements these features of the looks are necessary prerequisites for normative, successful male-female matching. The narratives, then, represent men and women fitting these norms and fulfilling each others’ dreams, while of course simultaneously consuming the marketed products. The image of a happy nuclear family with hetero parents is part of the picture, too, emphasizing the naturalized imperative of reproduction. For a feminist researcher this visual order of the Sugarfolks in Syruptown might look thoroughly appalling and repulsive, but there is a reason why I love this material. In this paper I am going to discuss this perverse affection of mine.

Why study the obvious, the banal, the taken-for-granted? Why study the heterosexual imagery produced in and by television commercials? Exactly *because* this imagery is so taken-for-granted and thoroughly naturalized. *Because,* as a highly effective system of representation, television advertising is an excellent example of the repetitive, coercive and normative production or technology (de Lauretis 1987) of gender and heterosexual agency. And simply because heterosexual hegemony still forms the dominant order in our society, it is important to look closely at its different formations – in order to find new ways of challenging that order.

What makes the hyper-naturalized commercial imagery interesting for a feminist researcher is that it nevertheless often blatantly emphasizes its own constructedness (e.g. Goffman 1979). Thus it also demonstrates the thoroughly constructed and performative nature of heterosexuality – just like Judith Butler’s already classic example of drag, which, as she says *”in imitating gender, -- implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself.”* (1990, p. 137.) This means that like drag, advertisements provide an excellent possibility for queer questioning.

By queer questioning or theorizing I do not mean identity-based gay or lesbian theorizing. Instead, I am pursuing for something else, something more vague, something resisting neat categorization. One way to define queer is that it predominately acquires its meaning from an oppositional relation to the norm (Turner 2000, p. 134). William Turner describes the task of queer thinking as wondering ”how we adopt our genders and sexualities, how those categories come to have the specific meanings they do, what symbolic and institutional practices contribute to our sense of ourselves as selves, and how those practices both enable and constrain us” (Ibid., p. 8). Advertising certainly forms one of those symbolic and institutional practices, a practice to wonder about. Critical interpretation of commercial representations is one way of pondering the historical variability and political determination of genders and sexualities. And it is important that while interpreting we do not settle for decoding the most

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

obvious imaginable meanings: as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has put it, *reading against the grain,* or resistant reading, is crucial for queer politics and survival (1993 cited Turner 2000, p. 135).

Turner has also claimed that "[t]he basic approach, central to queer theory, is the investigation of foundational, seemingly indisputable concepts," and, following this logic, he reminds that if left "[u]nexamined, heterosexuality functions as ideal signification, as a purportedly universal category beyond the contingencies of history" (2000, p. 3 and p. 72). Let's not leave it that way, then.

The politics of my analysis on contemporary television commercials consists of reading against the grain the naturalizing representations of both heteronormativity and normative heterosexuality. The former of the concepts refers broadly to the dominant social order maintaining heterosexuality as a norm, and the latter, while telling that there are strict rules governing heterosexual practices, also hints that there exist also non-normative, queer hetero performances.

The issue of sexual preference is a rather current one in the academic discourse on advertising. Already since the 1970s researchers have been talking about sexism or gender stereotypes and "genderism" in advertising (Williamson 1998/1978, Goffman 1979), but it has really been the effect of the feminist and queer cultural critique of the past ten years, that heterosexuality has been conceptualized, and furthermore problematized in literature focusing on advertising (e.g. Cortese 1999, van Zoonen 1994, Lewis and Rolley 1997, Jobling 1997, Cook 1992). Partly this is due to the more and more common scrutiny of representations of homosexuality in the ads. (Messaris 1997, Cortese 1999, Lewis and Rolley 1997, Jobling 1997, Cook 1992). But heterosexuality is still often taken as a norm, as a given. As a matter of fact it is still such a given that the prefix 'hetero' is frequently left out as unnecessary. There are numerous contemporary texts which speak of plain 'sexuality' in the ads while explicitly referring to representations of heterosexual practices, or images connected to heterosexualized conventions of looking (e.g. MacRury 1997, Messaris 1997 [sic!]), O'Barr 1994, Blom 1998).

Heterosexuality *is* one of the major factors, or vehicles used, when designers of advertising aim to appeal to their audiences, to evoke desire and identification. Like in different forms of visual art, and especially in film and photography, iconic representations of gendered people have proved to be effective in eliciting emotions and thereby in visual persuasion based on affects. Also crucial are the "syntactic" ways in which the gendered bodies and their sexual and other relationships are represented. These include spatial and temporal organization like close-ups and general views, juxtapositions, sequences etc. (Messaris 1997.) Erving Goffman has described a specific mode of this organization, which takes place in advertising. He writes about *rituals and ritualization:* "If anything, advertisers conventionalize our conventions, stylize what is already a stylization -- Their hype is hyper-ritualization." (1979, p. 84.)

Thus performances of heterosexuality, which already become conventionalized, stylized and ritualized in people's everyday practices become hyper-ritualized in the visual world of advertising. The rituals people repeatedly perform when approaching their objects of desire get further stylized, cited, and reiterated in advertising. And, furthermore, these ritualistic representations get imitated in interpersonal relationships, as "shared vehicles for the all-too-real process of social identity display" (Messaris 1997, p. xxi).

This hyper-ritualization is part of the fascinating and contradictory process, which makes advertising a mixture of *idealization and naturalization.* We are all familiar with ads containing highly beautified, aestheticized, image-processed representations of female and male bodies performing proper genders. Quite often, anyhow, these idealized bodies are represented in pictorial contexts and narratives, which are supposed to attach a label of naturalness onto them. Judith Williamson has discussed

the Lévi-Straussian way the ad culture 'cooks' nature into an ideological form, which is then discursively presented as 'natural' (1998, pp. 103-137). Specifically about the representation of (hetero)sex in ads she writes:

> "Sex becomes a referent system, always hinted at, referred to, in innuendo, double entendre, or symbolism: but never 'raw'. Thus again the illusion is that sex is being revealed, while in fact it is concealed behind its own references."(1998, p. 120.)

Put in Butlerian-Foucauldian terms one could say the same thing in slightly different words, i.e.: there is nothing natural about genders and sexuality, but they are being produced in various power relations through reiterated performances and representations. (Butler 1990, Foucault 1990.)

I am now going to close-read a selection of contemporary, mostly Finnish television advertisements presented on the two commercial Finnish television channels, and I hope my reading will illustrate and unravel some of the effective and affective ways in which these representations enforce *or* sometimes re-formulate cultural agreements concerning heterosexuality, male masculinity and female femininity. I am going to use three analytical viewpoints, or interpretational frames, to look at some of the syntactic ways the gendered bodies (and other gendered signifiers) have been organized in these representations. These frames are the following:

1. naturalization and idealization
2. hyper-ritualization and its parodies (narratives of passion and romance)
3. non-normative or unnecessary heterosexuality

1. 1. Naturalization + idealization = heterosexuality in advertising

Finnish culture with its long history of ideas concerning "direct relationship to pure nature" forms (maybe surprisingly) favorable surroundings for representations aiming towards naturalization of bipolar gender difference and heterosexuality. There also exists a notion of ideal Finnish landscape, which has its origins in nationalist, monocultural discourses formed in the late 19th Century. (Ringbom 1978, pp. 171-172.) Let's look at a couple of examples of commercial imagery connecting ideal landscape, ideal atmosphere, and ideal or normal bodies and heterosexual agency. The advertisements *(A1 – A14)* are named after the products they are marketing.

A1: HK:n sininen (A traditional sausage with a long-term connection to the Finnish sauna culture.) *In a fragmentary narrative consisting of very short takes, a man and a woman are sharing quality-time moments in a Finnish summer-cottage milieu, heating the sauna and cooling off afterwards. There is an abundance of affect-causing elements in the short spot: representations of two bodies gendered according to the heterosexual order; signifiers of warmth or heat (setting on fire, the interior of sauna) and relaxed but sexually charged atmosphere (half-bare bodies after sauna)... All this is combined through fast cutting to images of fresh air and water (the open window, the lake and the raindrops), i.e. signifiers of naturalness of both the surroundings and the relationship.*

There is one visual factor disturbing the illusion of naturalness, though, and this factor of disturbance permeates the whole spot: the cold bluish tone used in all images. In my reading this single element functions as an alienating signifier of constructedness, underlining the strong aestheticism of the representation.

Like many other ads, this one too forms an interesting testing ground for recognition of visual marks of gender: from which tiny and quick hints and references are we supposed to read the "properness" of the obviously sexually charged setting? The figure of the woman forms an easy sign to read; the camera shows her

body and her ”girlish” expressions and gestures long enough to make the female femininity clear... but is it a male hand setting the fire? Whose is the torso we get a glimpse of? The tightly cropped close-up of the bare chest passes by so quickly that we do need some kind of hetero expectations (strongly supported by our culture) to decode the other protagonist as male. Yet the mini-football shown as an isolated object in the fast-proceeding continuum of images refers to maleness and sporty masculinity, and helps the viewers to complete the picture of the ideal hetero-romantic moment by the nature.

A2: Voimariini (a mix of butter & margarine). *This spot repeats pretty much the same setting as the former one: a heterosexual couple outing (!) in their leisure time, this time probably by the sea. This time the narrative sets a much easier task for the viewer, though – and thereby maybe is more successful in its naturalizing effect. The colors are rich, the lighting "naturally" combines warmth and cool. The protagonists are both shown in full figure, so the arrangement between the "opposite" genders is obvious. The male character fills the measurements of traditional, hegemonic male masculinity: he is a man of action, wading in the sea, rowing the boat, and fishing the food for the passively feminine woman just waiting for him on the dock (metaphorically* in dock*, being idle).*

Naturalization, again, takes place through the use of images representing the basic elements: water, fire, earth and air/sky. The male-female relationship is juxtaposed with these elements and with even more specific signs of ”simple and natural life:” the sauna by the water, being barefoot, cooking simple food with simple utensils – as Judith Williamson might say, cooking nature into "natural" culture. The cooking is in this case performed by the man, the master of the outdoors. The woman, her silhouette visible against the romantic sunset, sitting and waiting, only serves as a reminder of the naturalness of heterosexual coupling.

In both the former examples the signifiers of *the ideal* (heterosexuality, "good-looking" bodies, romantic settings and narratives, landscapes) are combined with signifiers of *the natural* (basic elements, pure food, forms of simple lifestyle connected to the countryside), and thus – even though the concepts of ideal and natural might be contradictory in the everyday use of language – when "cooked" in a proper way in the realm of commercial imagery they become one. And in terms of sexuality they strongly refer to heterosexuality.

1.2. Explicitly constructed naturalness

A3: Clusters cereal. *The picture of man and woman in the arms of Mother Nature may be represented in a very different way, though, if advertising applies the genre of parody. This happens in a spot selling breakfast cereal by re-telling the mythic story of Adam and Eve in Paradise. This advertisement is one of the few examples of non-Finnish advertising in this paper, and it is interesting to notice how it represents quite a different idea of people's relationship to nature than the previous Finnish cases.*

Since the idea of picturing the paradise already represents the sphere of fantasy, an image illustrating that idea easily decodes as a staged one. The story opens with a view showing a small waterfall and overly rich vegetation: signs of exotic and thus fantastic ideal. Then a young man and a woman are shown naked (genitals covered) under an apple tree. Close-ups of the woman and a snake in the tree confirm that we are dealing with a myth of Adam and Eve, which as a matter of fact forms one of the "ur-stories" of the origin of heterosexuality. The images the viewers are witnessing re-present the moments after the Christian god allegedly had created a man and a woman, moments before the Fall.

In this version of the story, too, Eve reaches her hand for the apple… but then she sees the same as the viewers do: Adam eating something from a bowl. If not

already the exuberant nature-scene in the beginning, at the latest the bowl and the cereal package strip the illusion of naturalness from the image and the entire narrative. The whole scene is cultured by bringing industrially produced food into the picture; in the extreme close-up of the eye of Eve we can actually see the stylized production line of the cereal in question. But there are other signs of culturing as well: the plastic-looking appearance of the apples in the tree and the similarly artificial-looking flowers covering Adam's genitals. The heterosexual attraction of the young couple does not seem so natural any more, either. The set-up, the way the product is brought along into the narrative, and the way the protagonists are over-acting their parodic roles – all of this questions and even undermines the mythical naturalness of heterosexuality the paradise story was supposed to tell. It is not meaningless either that Eve does *not* eat the apple. Quite the contrary, this change in the plot refers to the Fall not taking place after all, and thus Eve/Woman not being to blame for that fatal turning-point in the destiny of the human race, either.

1.3. Representations of the nuclear family

One form of commercial imagery, which seldom yields to questioning the naturalness, and outright normativity of heterosexuality, is the image of the nuclear family. In the words of Goffman, "the nuclear family as a basic unit of social organization is well adapted to the requirements of pictorial representation." (1979, p. 37.) Foucault has, in his *History of Sexuality,* analyzed middle-class families as the primary locus of sexuality that agents of such public institutions as churches, hospitals, and schools incite and govern. (1990, p. 108-114; Turner 2000, p. 73). I would add to these governing instances also the contemporary institution of advertising. Advertising repeatedly represents the heterosexual lifespan routinely including procreation, and furthermore this choice is represented both as ideal and natural. Says Goffman: "[A]llocation of at least one girl and at least one boy ensures that a symbolization of the full set of intrafamily relations can be effected." (Ibid.)

A4: The telephone book*. The idea of the spot is to show how changes in the listings of the telephone book may be read as signifiers of the life story of a normal hetero couple. In a black-and white "short film" the viewers are shown a male-female couple first living together in the same address, but having different last names: thus being common-law spouses. In most shots of the ad they are represented at home, in the privacy of their kitchen. In the introductory scene the woman is touching her breasts and this gesture functions as a sign, which supposedly refers to her pregnancy. A cut to the next page of telephone listings already tells that the couple has married: they now have the same last name (the woman has taken her husband's name), and the listing also shows that they have a kid, a boy.*

The following sequence of the scenes convey that – against the most conventional gender roles – the man is taking care of the baby and the woman is a career woman. She is not represented as a masculine business-type, though. On the contrary, she establishes femininely enough a coiffure salon of her own. Through cross-cutting the viewers get to see the couple growing older together, and also their kid as a grown up, starting his independent life in his own apartment.

The black and white, very matter-of-fact shooting, and the documentary style it carries along, function throughout the spot as signifiers of naturalness and normalcy. The viewers are obviously supposed to share, and affectionately identify with the life-solutions of this utterly normal couple. Yet the smoothness of the visual excerpts of the family life, democratic role-reversal included, nevertheless produces the level of idealization.

A5: Kassler meat*. Pretty much the same recipe of gendering meaning production is at work in this narrative, which is selling domestically produced meat for Finnish consumers. Heterosexuality is more clearly present in this image of family romance,*

though; it is represented both through quite straightforward images (even though some of the images are shadows shown as upside down reflections) and through naturalizing metaphors and hints. The first images in the advertisement show only food in its basic form: raw meat and vegetables. Then we see people's hands toasting with wine glasses. A hand with a ring (conventionally a sign of heterosexual commitment and romance, about the ring as a signifier see e.g. Williamson 1978, p. 34) gently (≈ femininity) touches another while this is grabbing (≈ masculinity) a bottle of olive oil with herbs in it. After the oil is poured onto a frying pan (a visual metaphor equaling the idea of adding fuel to the fire) we see a short footage showing a shadowy silhouette of an embracing couple. One of the figures has her hair in a bun and is wearing a skirt, the other one obviously wears trousers; their silhouette thus is signifying a significant difference, gender difference. Then we are shown fire (signifying passion) under a pan. More sexual metaphors enter the narrative: meat (frying) in heat, the woman's hand feeding the man; an act, which obviously refers to intimacy and even seduction.

With a jump cut positioning the viewers behind a door ajar we are told that we have watched the past scenes as voyeurs. The theme of voyeurism brings to the fore the idea of scopophilic pleasure of a safe control of the things seen. (See e.g. Mulvey 1989, pp. 16-17). Positioned behind the door the viewers share the experience with two kids peeping in. The other one says to the other: "They're doing it again." We see the silhouette of a kissing couple, and only some crucial moments later a male voice-over reveals us that the carnal joy the adults are sharing refers to cooking (again!), not sex.

If the adults are represented in most ads as "naturally heterosexual," so are the kids, too.

Narrative hints referring to kids' heterosexual interests may be used, just like more or less covered metaphors of adult heterosexuality, for instance when selling something as basic a product as bread:

A6: Linkosuo Bread. *In the narrative a little boy is sitting on a bench in a park, supposedly watching nature around him through binoculars. However, he starts spying a girl of his own age through his optic device… Here we face the theme of voyeurism again, and just like in the previous spot, veiled in the innocence of kids. But how innocent is the narrative after all?*

The boy using binoculars is clothed as a proper adult man and he looks precocious, too. And what is the object of his gaze? According to the heavily constructed laws of advertising and other mainstream representations, the boy spies a girl jumping rope in a red sweater and a skirt. The visual punch-line of the plot is that the girl is smarter and faster and steals the boy's lunch (phallus?) while he is immersed in his spectatorial voyeuristic pleasures, thus punishing him for his voyeurism. The system of the controlling heterosexual male gaze is temporarily disturbed, but the situation in normalized quickly enough when the nice feminine little girl gives back half of the lunch she has stolen.

In the very end of the narrative the viewers are told that the episode was a flashback of an adult man who is making sandwiches for his nuclear family in the kitchen. How very natural: the little boy has become a heterosexual family man!

But even though the family formed by hetero parents and kids seems to be one of the main fortresses of the dominant gender ideology, it is not totally safe from parody. A growing amount of ads does not take the idea of the nuclear family as a self-evident icon of marital and familial bliss.

A7: Finnish post. *The narrative starts with an iconic image of one of the most cherished hetero rituals: a wedding picture of a smiling heterosexual couple. The photograph stands framed on a night table. We see a man's silhouette reflecting from the glass shielding the picture, as a dark shadow falling on the happily smiling man*

photographed in it. The shadow gets a corporeal form: a middle-aged man in striped pajamas, coughing and retching at the end of a bed, the camera looking down at him. There are two beds in the bedroom, but they are separated from each other. A quick shot of an ashtray, and another of his exhausted and hung-over expression, tell us that the man has been smoking, drinking and staying up too long.

The man descends downstairs to the kitchen doorway, stands still and watches the scene in front of him: other members of the family, a woman and a little girl having breakfast. They are spreading the morning post in front of them so as not to see the man. The copy reads: ”If only everything would come home as fresh as the post.”

There could hardly be a more obvious parody of the nuclear family, starting from the wedding picture and emphasizing the rift between the genders by signifiers like the separate beds and the mute non-communication. This is not a family romance any more. These people are not the Sugarfolks living in Syruptown, who are familiar to us from so many other ads. This imagery may very well be read as challenging the naturalized idea of the blissful nuclear family of heterosexual parents and their kid(s). Yet there has been constructed a bonding between the characters representing the same gender: the mother and daughter, and this still is a common way of representing the intrafamily relationships in the ads – even though at least in Finnish advertising we get to see more and more representations of cross-gender “quality-time” (e.g. outdoor hobbies like hiking) between fathers and daughters, and respectively mothers sharing household chores with their sons.

2. Hyper-ritualization of romance and passion

Writing on the theme of family romance in literature, Finnish researcher Markku Soikkeli has presented a useful distinction inside the discourse of heterosexual love. He talks about passion versus romantic love, and claims that the latter has the support of our society, because it represents ”docile” love leading to marriage, which then leads to reproduction and thus to production of children whom the parents guide towards a heterosexual identity, and thus ultimately supports and re-produces heterosexual order. (Soikkeli 1999.) If one applies the same idea to the visual culture of advertisements, one easily notices that even though we all know that sex sells, and thus there is a heavy demand for images of passion and objects of desire, also the docile romantic love connected to the perpetuation of heterosexual hegemony does have a strong presence in the mainstream commercial imagery – which pursues as broad acceptance as possible and tries not to alienate consumers. Paul Messaris has noted that there are certain types of situations in which sex (in the form of outright passion) becomes a subject of covert, insinuating presentation. These are the metaphoric uses of sex, cases in which “the link between the product and the sex is frowned upon,” and the case of “socially unacceptlabe sex”. (1997, p. 246.)

It is, of course, possible to combine both sides of the love discourse in visual representation, and juxtapose images of sex/passion and images of docile romantic bodies in the same narrative. This may happen e.g. through images of strongly ritualized moments, be they rituals of everyday or ritualized turning points of life.

2.1. Rituals of everyday

> “Apparent junctures or turning points in life are solemnized -- Social relationships are addressed by greetings and farewells. – Moments of festivity are attached to the acquisition of new possessions. In all of these ways, a situated social fuss is made over what might ordinarily be hidden in extended courses of activity and the unformulated experience of their participants; in brief, *the individual is given an opportunity to face directly a representation, a somewhat*

> *iconic expression, a mock-up of what he is supposed to hold dear, a presentation of the supposed ordering of his existence.*
> A single, fixed element of ceremony can be called a 'ritual'…"
> (Goffman 1978, p. 9. Emphasis mine.)

Rituals of everyday can be as simple as drinking coffee: repetition combined to pleasure. Let's look at a visual representation through which this simple habit is transferred into the realm of hyper-ritual:

A8: Costa Rica coffee. *A person invisible to the viewers is pouring coffee into two cups; we can already expect to see two people enjoying the beverage together, sharing a moment of oral pleasure. The next scene, nevertheless, shows a woman alone, dressed in a plain long white (man's) shirt. As a guarantee of her "genuine" female femininity she nevertheless does have long hair; the shirt functions not as a signifier of her masculinity, but as a signifier of intimate relationship and sharing on the other hand, and of the absence of her male partner on the other. A close-up by the window presents her face: harmonious enough to mark ideal beauty, with clear arches of the eyebrows and a full-lipped mouth.*

A cut takes us to a flashback, the scene of which is a hallway of an apartment building. There is a heterosexual couple in the image, caught by the camera in an intimate encounter. The woman is leaning on the wall, the man leaning towards her. They kiss. The warm light streaming in from the windows only shows the figures as silhouettes, but the outlines of their bodies are meant to "reveal" the genders: the clues include the forms of woman's breasts and the shoulders of the man. The conventional male masculinity and female femininity of the characters are also confirmed by the activity/passivity opposition represented in their gestures.

In yet another scene we see the couple on a loveseat, cuddling. The man wears a dark suit and a white shirt, the woman wears a black dress with bare shoulders. There are red flowers on the table. The man is nuzzling the woman's ear. The former representation of passion in a semi-public space has been replaced by docile bodies in private surroundings containing only tamely romantic signifiers such as the flowers in a vase and bodily closeness marked by the nuzzling. Still, romance is underlined by the festive clothes, which also through their sartorial semiotics gender the bodies male and female, dressing them up in male masculinity and female femininity and thus emphasizing heterosexuality of the couple.

The image moves back to the apartment where the woman is still sitting alone on the windowsill, surrounded by warm light and elegant furniture. She seems to be peacefully waiting for a normative reunion of the properly gendered and sexualized agents of the story: herself and the man. The copy reads in Finnish: "When it's time for a cup of good coffee..." The banal ritual of drinking coffee gets hyper-ritualized through the hyper-aestheticization realized by the camera-work and editing. In my reading the signified connected to the signifier of the soothing ritual is, again, the safely enjoyable, idealized, normative heterosexuality – supposedly everybody's cup of tea/coffee.

2.2. When rituals go wrong – parodying the "sacred"

Rituals may be a core factor in advertising, but the ads may also feast on rituals going badly wrong – even such key rituals of normatively heterosexual life as marriage proposals and weddings. This kind of advertising can be interpreted as giving effect to politics of sexual parody, performing interventions into the ritualistic repetition of proper genders and proper sexualities (Butler 1990, p. 146) even though this politics, or at least not the degree of its subversiveness, might not be intentional from the part of the advertisers. The context created by the proliferating, blatantly parodic representations make way for proliferating angles of resistintant reading. In this light it is politically motivating to watch e.g. the chocolate, cookie and ice-cream ads such

as the following:

A9: Kismet chocolate. A man and a woman are walking together in a park, surrounded romantically by the golden glow of autumn leaves. The woman is eating chocolate (a feminized aphrodisiac). She is blonde, longhaired, and slender, he is a bit stockily built and clumsy-looking. The bodily appearances in relation to hegemonic the beauty ideals already prepare the viewers for some unfortunate turn in the storyline.

And so it happens: the chocolate requires woman's complete and undivided attention – the oral pleasure given by the sweet being more fulfilling than the pleasure which can be expected from the poor man, who does not even come close to the contemporary normative ideal in terms of male handsomeness.

So, she does not even notice that he is trying to propose to her, trying to show her an engagement ring – usually the most intense moment in a romantic narrative. The man, on his behalf, is so focused on the proposal and the heavily symbolic ring that he does not notice that he walks straight into a pool of cement and gets stuck. Is he metaphorically stuck with the conventional institution of engagement and marriage? Does his life stop when the woman does not yield to his proposal?

The woman leaves him behind, perfectly content with the temporary pleasure she is consuming – not needing a heterosexual relationship after all? This spot, mocking the ritual of marriage proposal, could very well serve as an example of mildly subversive advertising representing situations where heterosexual coupledom is represented as unnecessary compared to other sources of pleasure.

A10: Radiolinja mobile operator

In a spot marketing mobile operator services with a highly profile, the viewers get to witness the end of a wedding reception of an "ideal couple:" a blonde, long-haired bride and a darker bridegroom. Actually the end of the reception might signify a broader cultural phenomenon: the end of the wedding ritual as we knew it; as an exclusively heterosexual ceremony.

Let me take you to the scene: The newlyweds kiss and everybody is cheering. The bride turns and throws her wedding bouquet to the crowd. The women start racing greedily towards the bouquet. And even though there is almost an animal frenzy on their faces, it is simultaneously made clear that the happening is purely a cultural convention; there is nothing natural about this. One woman runs on the table and almost catches the flowers, but stumbles on the wedding cake and falls down. Another, big woman in a long-sleeved dress (signifying non-sexiness) waives her hand, jumps in the air and catches the bouquet... nevertheless leaping too far and falling through a glass door to the next room. The guests and the newlyweds look horrified… but she gets up, smiles as a winner, and steps back to the room with the heavily symbolic bouquet in her hand. She walks through the aisle of guests, obviously feeling self-assured. The copy urges: "Start a family, now it pays." She grabs one of the guests, a man clearly shorter and smaller than her, and drags him along with her.

The visual and narrative solutions of the ad make references to such contemporary cultural products as the film *Muriel's Wedding,* and the television series *Ally McBeal.* And just like in the film – though maybe not in the series – the whole "sacred" ritual of wedding, the central ritual in heteronormativity, is made seriously fun of and challenged here. The main couple has been displaced from the center of the narrative, the vultural brutality of the bouquet-race is emphasized, and the idea of starting a family is ridiculed – even though this ridiculing happens at the expense of non-normative bodies of too-big-a-woman and too-wimpy-a-man.

3. Non-normative and unnecessary heterosexuality

One may rather safely argue that advertising at large still produces representations,

which illusionarily fill the prerequisites of normative heterosexuality. But how do not-so normative couples fit in the Grand Narrative of heterosexual romance? For the last examples I take a couple of spots, which quite wonderfully mock the requirements of normativity and illustrate the futility of the idea of trying to inhabit ideals – like Butler says: "Identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable" (1993, p. 126).

The relationship between a clearly older woman and a younger man is a touchy issue in the order of Western hegemonic heterosexuality, and its representation is seldom used in the realm of advertising. I would argue that as a cultural exception, an iconic image of this kind of couple does have specific affective effect – even in a spot for unripened cheese:

A 12: Hovi cheese

The scene of the ad is a beech where a male-female couple is having a picnic and the man is washing the laundry as well. This commercial breaks the heterosexual age-norm, and does it with a clearly coded warm humor, not with downgrading irony. The representation of the young man is underlining virility and muscular male masculinity. He is showing off his flat washboard-stomach while using a real washboard – a meaningful doubling of signs. The representation of the woman, on the other hand, draws an obviously camp character in front of the viewers. Already the shot framing only her hands and knees brings fore her plumpness and the exaggerating femininity in her gestures. The male character, even though approaching ideal masculinity, breaks that norm, too, by the feminine activity he is focusing on: hand-washing the laundry. And doing it gladly, with a loving expression on his face when looking at the woman on the beach.

When the camera shows the upper torso and the head of the woman, the viewers are able to see that she really is representing remarkably older age than the man; her hairdo, hat, and apron are all "motherly" signifiers. For a moment one could think that the whole spot is meant to be a representation of a tender mother-and-son relationship, after all. But the compositions of the last images are against this interpretation. The woman raises a heart-shaped cookie model in her hand and peeks at the man through it, the heart being the foolproof symbol of romantic love. And as if that symbol would still need affirmation, there is a shot in which the woman is reclining in the man's lap and the man is feeding her: again a sign of sexual intimacy and romance. There are a lot of clean white cloths (washed by the man) drying in the summer wind and the picnic is served: the image is quite idyllic in spite of the heterosexually non-normative age-difference. The copy reads: "It is easy to love a good cook." Easy, but not necessarily natural.

The visual jokes representing non-normative couples in the ads are not necessarily organized around a camp female character, either. Also a male protagonist may perform a non-ideal, and as such, a comical notion of maleness.

A 13: Edet toilet paper*. A not-so-muscular young man is looking at himself in the bathroom mirror, sighing when noticing his body not being even close to the requirements of the ideal, muscular male masculinity. Even though the color codes of the bathroom-scene are signifying proper maleness (blue and light blue), the contours of his body, especially the limp feminine wrist, tiny chest and the soft-looking belly are not.*

The whole narrative of the spot is built around the idea of the construction of the male gender. How to shape your body according to the ideal – and how to do it in an instance? The man sees his salvation in the toilet-paper rolls, which the camera shows us, and we see him smiling knowingly and self-assuredly to the mirror/camera. There has already happened a change in his gendered being. The camera-angle is low, we are looking at him from downward; this means that he has already acquired new (male) authority (Messaris 1997, p. 34-40).

In the next scene we see the same man on the street. His figure has changed remarkably. Its outline is drawing a bulky character with remarkably wide shoulders; by padding his shirt he has acquired the conventional criteria of male handsomeness. He carries himself straight (sic!) and greets somebody briskly, energetically. The color of his shirt, of course, is blue, supporting his strengthened masculinity. Which, as we see in the next image, is confirmed as heterosexual masculinity: he meets his date, a young blonde longhaired woman, and gives an air-kiss on her cheek.

They sit in the cinema theatre, obviously watching a tear-jerker, because the woman leans on his shoulder and cries. The man puts his hand protectively over her shoulder. We see the tears on her face in a close-up – showing her proper feminine emotionality. She also opens one of his shirt buttons (a sexually active move) and the close-up of his face shows an expression of undecidedness: pleasure mixed with worry? The woman draws a strip of toilet paper from under the shirt and dries her cheeks. The man pouts his lips and tries to kiss her, but his attention is distracted by an elderly man who has fallen asleep leaning on his soft, patted shoulder and arm. Our hero is represented being torn between nurturing, feminine softness and masculinity required for the performance of proper heterosexual romantic moves. It looks like he will be giving way to the former... and thus the whole representation may be interpreted as questioning the normative hegemonic male masculinity as a prerequisite of normative heterosexuality, and underlining the uninhabitability of the bodily ideals connected to it. The end solution also ignores the homophobic denial of the bodily closeness of two men, even though this particular solution is made possible by the way the older man has been coded to be a harmless, asexualized ”grandpa” character.

I have already discussed examples of narratives where female characters have at some occasions dealt with heterosexuality as if it were not by far the primary and natural force in their lives. The following ice-cream ad finally illustrates a fantasy of auto-eroticism making sexual encounter with another quite unnecessary.

A 14: Classic ice-cream

A woman is shown in a warm, yellowish light, having long hair, earrings, large full mouth, well articulated eyebrows and immaculate skin... the whole categorical package of female beauty. The spatial arrangements around her refer to an old European metropolis; she is sitting in a terrace of a cafe. She’s wearing (innocent) white dress and a maroon ladylike scarf.

A male waitress is hurrying to serve her. The waiter bows and the woman (shot from a low angle) picks up her order from the tray. A close-up to her order reveals that it is an ice-cream, which she unwraps from its package. We see her manicured hands and nails (femininity), pearls hanging from her neck (affluence, wealth). The neck-line of her jacket is quite open, but does not reveal the cleavage; thus it does not crudely render her to a stereotypical image of sexual object.

A pair of male waiters is shown standing together, one’s arm wrapped around the other one’s shoulders. They are also shot form a low-angle. They look at each other and at then at the woman, suspiciously. She glances teasingly at them, then at the ice-cream, holding it with both hands. She opens her mouth and bites, eyes closed.

A close up shows her glancing upwards, as if having a revelation.

Suddenly there is a shift into a totally different image-world of very fast cutting: a train running into a tunnel, a lightning, the train again... cinematic metaphors for sexual climax. The next we see of the woman is that she is up on her feet, stroking her hair, devouring her ice-cream. The camera is tilting, shaking, pulling away fast and showing a wider image of the woman by a fountain from which the water is running in several arches.

There is a series of cuts from the greedily devouring woman to an explosion, to the woman dancing with the ice-cream, to a flower opening, to the woman eating, to

fireworks, to another flower opening, and back to the woman finishing the ice-cream, playing with the stick in her hand, looking a bit embarrassed after going through such a private experience in a public space. She sees an old man who is also eating the same kind of ice-cream, nodding his head for approval... and there is a final cut back to the woman arranging her dress and her hair, and leaving the table.

In a very tightly condensed form the editing succeeds in parodying the classic filmic metaphors for the climax of heterosexual pleasure. But it is also obvious that the woman gets her experience of *jouissance* by herself, which connects the hyperbolic cluster of metaphors to auto-eroticism, not heterosexuality. We, the audience, do not control the events as voyeurs and neither do the other actors in the ad. The men around her are either interested in each other (the waiters) or in the ice-cream (the old man). The woman transgresses the line between the private and the public, and does it on her own.

Read this way, just a little bit against the grain, many of the episodes of the represented lives of the Sugarfolks in Syruptown provide handy tools for analyzing and resisting the hegemonic sexual order. Even though advertising by and large promotes normative heterosexuality, it also contains contradictions bringing forth fractures in that order, and thus material for non-normative interpretations. At least it may function this way in the eyes of critically queer beholders. And this is why I love and hate the Sugarfolks in Syruptown.

Literature

BLOM, V., 1998. Onko mainoksella merkitystä? Mainosten tulkinta Roland Barthesin koodiston avulla. In: KANTOLA, A., MORING, I. AND VÄLIVERRONEN, E. eds., *Media-analyysi. Tekstistä tulkintaan.* Helsingin yliopiston Lahden tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus. 200-228.

BUTLER, J.,1999. Performativity and Gender Insubordination. In: Cleto, F. ed. *Camp. Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

BUTLER, J., 1993. *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York and London: Routledge.

BUTLER, J., 1990. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York and London: Routledge.

COOK, G., 1992. *The Discourse of Advertising.* London and New York: Routledge.

CORTESE, A. J., 1999. *Provocateur. Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising.* Lanham, Boulder, New York & Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

FOUCAULT, M., 1990. *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction. Volume 1.* New York: Vintage Books.

GOFFMAN, E., 1979. *Gender Advertisements.* London: Macmillan.

JOBLING, P., 1997. Keeping Mrs. Dawson Busy. Safe Sex, Gender and Pleasure in Condom Advertising since 1970. In: NAVA, M., BLAKE, A., MCRURY, I. & RICHARDS, B., eds. *Buy this Book. Studies in Advertising and Consumption.* London and New York: Routledge. 157-177.

DE LAURETIS, T., 1987. *Technologies of Gender. Essays on Film, Theory, and Fiction.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

LEWIS, R. AND ROLLEY, K., 1997. "(Ad)Dressing the Dyke. Lesbian Looks and Lesbians Looking." In: NAVA, M., BLAKE, A., MCRURY, I. & RICHARDS, B., eds. *Buy this Book. Studies in Advertising and Consumption.* London and New York: Routledge. 291-308.

MANRING, M.M., 1998. *Slave in a Box. The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima.* Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia.

MACRURY, I., 1997. ”Advertising and the Modulation of Narcissism.” In: NAVA, M., BLAKE, A., MCRURY, I. & RICHARDS, B., eds. *Buy this Book. Studies in Advertising and Consumption.* London and New York: Routledge. 239-254.
MESSARIS, P., 1997. *Visual Persuasion. The Role of Images in Advertising.* Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage.
MULVEY, L., 1989. *Visual and Other Pleasures.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
NAVA, M., BLAKE, A., MCRURY, I. AND RICHARDS, B. eds., 1997. *Buy this Book. Studies in Advertising and Consumption.* London and New York: Routledge.
O’BARR, W. M., 1994. *Culture and the Ad. Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising.* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press.
LINDBERG, B., 1978. Måleri från romantik till realism. In: RINGBOM, S. ed. *Konsten I Finland. Från medeltif till nutid.* Helsingfors: Holger Schildts förlag. 170-199.
SOIKKELI, M., 1999. Perheromanssi yhteiskunnan parodiana. In: PAASONEN, S. ed. *Hääkirja. Kirjoituksia rakkaudesta, romantiikasta ja sukupuolesta.* Naistutkimus, Sarja A, N:o 43. Turku: Taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Turun yliopisto. 53-69.
TURNER, W. B., 2000. *A Genealogy of Queer Theory.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
WILLIAMSON, J., 1998 [1978]. *Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising.* 12th ed. London and New York: Marion Boyars.

Depression and video art at the turn of the millennium: the work of Diana Thater

Christine Ross, McGill University, Canada

cross2@po-box.mcgill.ca

In critical theory, it is probably the writings of Donna Haraway and Judith Butler which have shaped the most the postmodern conception of the performative subject, one that not so much denies than neglects, and strategically attempts to override its insufficiency. In her "Cyborg Manifesto," initially published in 1985, Haraway saw the conflation between body and technology as constitutive of the cyborg—a hybrid of machine and organism in which technologies of communication and bio-technologies articulate the polymorphous recrafting of bodies. The productivity of Haraway's theory lied in its postulation that the cyborg, as a creature without origins which forms itself through the confusion of boundaries (between the human and the non-human), is a fiction that nevertheless maps "our social and corporeal reality" and allows us to imagine beneficial couplings which undo identity into mutability (Haraway 1985:150). This proposition was concomitant with Judith Butler's postulation of corporeality as an act of imitation, identification or melancholic subjection to social norms, which is always a *re*enactment of norms. Like the cyborg, the performative body "has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" and its fluidity of identity "suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization" (Butler 1991:136& 140).

Less than a decade later, a more pressing question is raised in art. It is the following: how can one think mutability of identity *with* the fallibility of the body? I want to suggest that recent media art is increasingly concerned not so much with the celebration of fluidity than with the insufficiency entailed by such an ideal—fallibility, limits, inhibition, dependency, maladjustment, the need to think fluidity *and* persistency together, the critical requirement to relate performativity to new entrepreneurial norms of socialisation based on performance, including efficacy, initiative, flexibility, adaptability, and the reiterated imperative to re-create the self (Martin 1994). If we cannot merely oppose performative and insufficient subjectivities—they are the counterparts of a same neo-liberal socio-economic climate—the latter conception must be seen as a desire to introduce a limit to the former. By insufficiency, I therefore do not refer so much to a sense of lack, non-fulfilment or conflict as would be the case for a Freudian psychoanalytically defined subject but to a sense of cognitive, behavioural and neo-liberal inadequacy—the subject's inability to adapt to change, to match ideal models of performance and to re-imagine itself anew, together with the fatigue that ensues from such an inability. My guiding hypothesis is that the recurrence of insufficiency must be understood as both an enactment and a critique of what has been designated by French sociologist Alain Ehrenberg as *the* disorder of insufficiency—one that "discloses the mutations of individuality at the end of the 20th century"—: depression (Ehrenberg 1998).

The World Health Organization has established that psychiatric disorders are now at the 3rd rank of diseases and that the leading mental disorder is depression. According to The National Institute of Mental Health, major depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, affecting an estimated 9.5% of adult Americans in a given year (NIMH 2001). It also stipulates that nearly twice as many women (12%) as men (7%) are affected by a depressive disorder each year. More recent figures speak of a one-year prevalence of 10% to 15% (this corresponds to the proportion of individuals in a given population who have a particular disease at some point during a one year period), and of a lifetime prevalence of 50%, which means that half of

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the population will have a depressive disorder at some point in their lifetimes (Healy 2001). Alain Ehrenberg has convincingly argued that the prevalence and increase of depression since the 1960s must be explained in light of the contemporary shift from a Freudian/Lacanian form of subjectivity—a subjectivity defined through the Law of the Father, that is, briefly speaking, through prohibition, guilt and the threat of castration—to a neo-liberal form of subjectivity defined by norms of performance, responsibility, flexibility and initiative. In other words, one has to be attentive to present displacements in the field of subjectivity: the subject in conflict between the prohibited and the desired is gradually being replaced by a subject in cleavage between the possible and the non-possible. Constraints still pressure subjectivity, but the entrepreneurial imperative today is to initiate one's own identity instead of being disciplined to do so. If the Freudian pathology par excellence was neurosis, the main pathology of the contemporary performative subject who has become the sole agent of his or her own subjectivity is depression. Depression derives from failures to perform, more specifically from identity insecurity, feelings of insufficiency, problems of adaptation and responsibility fatigue. Performative and insufficient subjects are therefore part of the same historical continuum. Insufficiency does not override neo-liberal demands of performativity, it is more of a mental, psychological, and bodily response to those demands—an attempt as it where to protect oneself, to signal limits, to institute criticality, but also a failure to adapt.

The media work of American artist Diana Thater is an important manifestation of the aesthetics of insufficiency I wish to describe here. It explores depression as a critique of performance definitions of subjectivity. Her intermedia spaces usually consist of multi-screen projections of images of nature. Quite rapidly, however, the spectator realizes that she is looking at images of a technologically *re-created* nature: flowers are cultivated flowers, wild animals (horses, zebras, monkeys) are actors trained by professionals, natural landscapes are in fact theme parks. The spectacle of nature unfolds yet *always to be depressed* by diverse aesthetic strategies, including the absence of sound, the inclusion of the training or film crew in the image, the exposure of the projection apparatus (wiring, monitors, VCRs) in the room, and (as we will see further on) the multiscreen structure of the whole, which together work to break the absorbing effects of the spectacle. The suspension of sound weakens the multi-sensoriality of the spectacle, the staging of the training and filming crew discloses its fabrication and the exposure of the video technology deflates its power of enchantment. This means that the observer's attachment to the images or to the animals is gradually replaced by a relationship of detachment—a process which is, as we will see, one of the key features of depression. This construction of a depressed viewer is reinforced by another important feature of depression—the "non-future" condition of the installation, more precisely the loss of future produced by the reiterated recycling of sequences—the repetition of the same—, which is a constant in Thater's work. If we look, for example, at *The best space is the deep space* (1999), the installation is composed of three monitors that project, with a slight discrepancy, the same short repeated sequence of a circus horse filmed with its trainer in a process of genuflexion. As the same sequence is being repeated, as the reproductibility of the electronic image is being exacerbated, a collapse of time continuum occurs and the future is prevented to unfold. So in light of this prevalence in Thater's work—the loss of attachment and disbelief in the future—the question is: why such a reliance on depression? If her viewers are incessantly interpellated in the logic of depression, why and how does depression take place?

One can only start answering this question by examining what depression is or, more precisely, how it is being defined in contemporary sciences of depression. Depression is *the* slippery (uncertain, nonspecific) notion *par excellence* of psychiatry and, at the same time, it is one of its most important notions, considering the fact that it has been the most widespread psychic pathology for the last thirty years. This means that it is a constant object of scientific debate. As psychologist Janet Stoppard

has observed, divergences persist not only between ordinary and specialised uses of the term, but also among researchers and health professionals who use a variety of different approaches (cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, biological—to name the predominant ones—but also psychoanalytical and social) to depression (Stoppard, 2000). For specialists, conditions of depression are related to a set of experiences which include a series of more or less precise symptoms, including: feelings of sadness, dejection and hopelessness associated with a sense of worthlessness or excessive guilt; loss of pleasure, often taking the form of irritability or negative thoughts about oneself, one's world and the future; withdrawal and inwardness; fatigue (reduced energy, and diminished motivation); psychomotor agitation or retardation; difficulty in mental processes involving concentration, memory, decision making, and speech; different vegetative symptoms such as the difficulty in falling asleep or in staying asleep, too much sleep, and significant weight loss or weight gain; and finally, possible suicidal thoughts or actions. As many of these symptoms reveal, however, depression is first and foremost, as psychoanalyst Pierre Fédida convincingly maintains, "the human illness of time" (Fédida 2001:23). It is a disorder in which the temporalities of psychic life—to remember, to represent, to desire and to project—have been immobilized. Such a suspension means that the depressed individual is unable to situate itself, neither in relation to the future (to hope, dream, anticipate, make plans, decide tomorrow's actions) nor to the past (to give mobility to memories, to activate remembrance). It entails a slowing down and a freezing of time which leads to and is caused by the impairment of the human activities responsible for the activation of change and the inscription of potentialities, such as representation, action, language, love, and communication. Let me say briefly here that time is what media arts are about, so one must be attentive the temporality of subjectivity which is being described here.

Phenomenological studies have also shown—and this is descriptive of another key feature of depressive disorders—that the depressed individual suffers from isolation and that depression, in fact, corresponds to a rupture of intersubjective communication (Fédida: 206). This means that the person afflicted with depression cannot communicate with the other and that the other ceases to act as a mirror or a support for images of the self. The whole Sartian conception of the subject who constitutes itself in relation to the other's gaze, even more so Merleau Ponty's theorization of the subject as fundamentally intersubjective (to have a body is always to have a body in relation to other bodies) and Habermas' belief in intersubjective communication as the guiding principle for democracy collapse in the state of depression. This rupture is at the core of interpersonal psychology's understanding of depressive states. Interpersonal approaches to depression rely on John Bowlby's theory of attachment to explain the loss of intersubjectivity which occurs in depressive states. According to Bowlby, attachment bonds are necessary for a healthy life behaviours, such as calling, crying, following and searching. They are interpersonal responses that enable the development of affective bonds. Yet, uncertainty about the reliability and availability of support triggers what Bowlby calls "anxious attachment behaviors" such as clinging, protest, fear of separation, requests for reassurance, despair, and detachment behaviors (Jack 1991:18).

The collapse of both time continuum and attachment bond to the image are the prevalent operations at play in Diana Thater's installations. Her spectacles fail to keep up with the spectacle, depressed as they are by the absence of sound, the exposure of the projection technology, the inclusion of the training crew, and the exacerbation of reproductibility (the repetition of the same). So my question again is: how is depression critical? If we go back briefly to *The best space is the deep space*, it is important to note that it is only through blocking the occurrence of future and by imposing a form of detachment through the absence of sound that the subjection of nature to culture (the turning of nature into an object: here, the horse's genuflexion) is disclosed. Furthermore, the multi-screen structure of her installations, which para-

doxically deflate the spectacle at the moment when it expected to inflate it, activates, in the viewer, a loss and a re-thinking of the self. Hence, I want to argue that depression is envisaged here not solely as a pathology, deficit or maladaptation as it is in current sciences of depression, but also as a way to both critique objectification of nature for the sake of human subjectivity *and* to open possibilities for other forms of subjectivity.

Let me first say that the strength of Diana Thater's work lies in its faculty to question the relationship between the technologies of the spectacle and the constitution of the viewer. I adopt here one of Guy Debord's insights to the effect that, in the society of spectacle, the subject absorbs and is absorbed by images which seem to provide coherence, unity and mastery (a form of transcendence) to the self, but which in fact dis-unify it even further by isolating the individual from its environment (Debord 1996:22, Silverman 1996:22). For Thater, the depression of the spectacle is precisely a means to alter this absorbing effect and to break its promise of coherence and unity. Her multi-screen installations play an important role in this attempt to complexify unity. Thater explains in the following terms the questioning I am trying to describe here: "My idea is that to develop a new viewer, or a new form of viewing, one must present as subjects those who are traditionally seen as objects. This is a place to begin. In order to transform a viewer who probably brings to the work a singular point of view, I present her with a disconcerting space, one with images imbedded in it that make it move, that change it. And these images undermine the singularity of time, space, and being. […] That's my point: many things, many spaces at one time; or, many times in one space—multi-tasking! The singular doesn't hold my interest for long. I want to move in art. Move through, move with, move in. I want the viewer *not* to stand still, to *feel* the work moving and to understand it in motion. One-point perspective is neither depicted nor inscribed in the work." (Thater 2000:23&27).

Hence, in the installation *The best sense is the nonsense* (1999), Diana Thater proposes a space composed of two projection screens and one video monitor located one in front of each other, each projecting images of zebras performing acrobatics with the help of a trainer. The film images transferred onto video are projected on the wall in the back end of the room. These high definition images (if we compare them to the more low resolution video images of both the middle screen and the monitor) are paradoxically the less visible and less accessible of the installation. Furthermore, the images offer close-up views of zebra stripes which flatten the image and block the imaginary entry of the viewer into the image. The viewer is brought back at the surface of the image, that is the border that separates the inside and the outside, the illusionistic space of the image and the physical space of the room. The installation is also composed of light projectors that activate, when the viewer is close to the screen, the projection of his/her shadow onto the screen. This projection is operated in such a way that, in the case of the screen in the back, it reduces the scale of the viewer and makes her scale incompatible with that of the trainer and animal in the image. This means that, again, the view- er is refused entry into the imaginary space of the image. The video projection at the center elaborates a similar blocking effect but it does so this time by amplifying the scale of the view- er's shadow, which becomes much too big in relation to the represented bodies in the image.

I hope that this description is sufficiently clear to allow you to imagine the relationship which the installation establishes between the viewer and the image: a constant depression of expectations, between the far and the near, the imaginary and the real, is set into play. The only moments when the viewer enters the illusionistic space of the images is when she is far. When she is close, her entry is blocked. This paradox is reinforced by the installation of the screens one behind each other. This succession of planes introduces the viewer into a space constituted of a foreground, a middle-ground and a background. But, here, the traditional Renaissance perspective recession of orthogonal lines is completely reversed, as it works itself through from the back to the front. To be more precise, the orthogonal lines meet at the vanish-

ing point which is now located at the foreground, that is where the point of view is traditionally located. What the multi-screen film-video intermedia installation sets into play then is a series of substitutions and reversals between distance and proximity, imaginary space and physical space, point of view and vanishing point, surface and depth, substitutions which are only activated if and when the viewer moves in the space and when this movement incessantly depresses her horizon of expectations. Am I close to an image which refuses me? Am I far? Where am I if I occupy the vanishing point in which, theoretically, I disappear? Where does illusionistic space start and where does physical space finish? When does the spectacle terminate? In fact, as soon as the question of the space and time of the spectacle is raised, it is the question of subjectivity which comes about. And this question of subjectivity comes about because the spectacle has been depressed, because the absence of sound, the slowing down of the image, the exposure of the projection apparatus, the repetition of the same and the multi-screen structure have deflated the absorbing and unifying effects of the spectacle.

Not only is there, with the current prevalence of depression, a historical synchronicity between art's and science's interest in insufficiency but also a concern for similar symptoms. Indeed, as it stages the insufficiency of the subject, media art sets into play many of the symptoms which have come to define depressive disorders. Yet, to what extent should one speak of art in terms of depression? How is depression relevant to the practice and understanding of contemporary media arts? Surely, this is not merely a question of art representing depressive states of being. If art is marked by scientific definitions of depression, it also translates and questions them. At issue here is the resonance and dissonance between art and science, between aesthetically defined and medically defined insufficiency, between contemporary media arts and the sciences of depression. I contend that media art's original contribution to contemporary debates about depression lies in its fundamental concern for subjectivity. This is where art becomes highly critical of current sciences of depression. As I hope to have made clear in my much too brief description of Diana Thater's work, media art explores insufficiency not only as a disease, a deficit, a dysfunction or a maladaptive behaviour but also as a potential form of creativity and adaptation, a means to rethink identity, embodiment, perception, intersubjectivity and temporality. And when deficit and failure become productive, as they seem to do in contemporary art, it is then that media art acts as a critical counterpart to present norms of socialisation based on performance.

Literature

Butler, J., 1991. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Debord, G., 1967. *La Société du Spectacle*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

Ehrenberg, A., 1998. *La fatigue de soi: dépression et société*. Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob.

Fédida, P., 2001. *Des bienfaits de la dépression: éloge de la psychothérapie*. Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob.

Haraway, D. J., 1991. A Cyborg Manifesto : Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. *In Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 149-181.

Healy, D., 2001. The Antidepressant Drama. *In* M. M. Weissman, *Treating Depression: Bridging the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Jack, D. C., 1991. *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Martin, E., 1994. *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture. From the*

Days of Polio to the Age of Aids. Boston: Beacon Press.

NIMH, 2001. http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/invisible.cfm.

Stoppard, J. M., 2000. *Understanding Depression: Feminist social constructionist approaches*. New York: Routledge.

Silverman, K., 1996. *The Threshold of the Visible World*. New York: Routledge.

Thater, D., 2000. A conversation between Carol Reese and Diana Thater on the occasion of the opening of Delphine at the Secession, Vienna, 2000. *In Diana Thater: Delphine*. Vienna: Secession.

The Vintage Van Damme Look

Janne Rovio, University of Turku

janne.rovio@sea.fi

Jean-Claude Van Damme's first vehicle, Bloodsport (1988), presents the star's physical assets in the form of two distinct key images that were later to become his cinematic signature. The first of these, the side split, launches a series of problematics concerning masculinity, performance, and activity. By requiring a relatively static and immobile posture, the split collides with the cultural imperative of masculinity-as-activity. The salvific aspect of Van Damme's body is his bulging musculature that promises a potential for action. However, a built body has been, from the days of Eugen Sandow, also overshadowed by dysfunctional and ornamental excess. Remedying this source of anxiety, in turn, comes Van Damme's martial arts prowess and the concomitant narrative violence which seems to grant a functionality and purpose to his muscles. The male martial artist cannot, however, in the last instance but confess his desire to be the object of a desiring gaze, being not so much a fighter as a performer indulging the visual pleasure of the viewer. This desire is pronounced in the second key image, the butt shot. Here, male spectacle clashes with explicit eroticization and Van Damme experiments with the fetishistic aspect of the spectacle, wallowing in a bodily perfection that mirrors his narrative mastery. The figure of 'the Gay Karate Man', Van Damme's first credited role, is conjured by the conflation of martial arts and homoeroticism.

Enter Jean-Claude Van Damme, the main protagonist of this work He became an action movie star in the late 1980s, following the way paved by fellow bodybuilders Sylvester Stallone, the six-time Mr Olympia Arnold Schwarzenegger, and martial artist Dolph Lundgren. In his native Belgium, Van Damme had won the bodybuilding title of Mr. Belgium, earned a black belt in karate and become proficient in ballet. He had sold the gym he owned to earn the money for a trip to the United States, where he hoped to become a movie star. Initially, however, Van Damme had to earn his living as a limo driver, pizza delivery boy and carpet salesman, starring occasionally in a couple of odd movie roles, which will be discussed later. His big break came when he arrested the film producer Menahem Golan on the street by launching a swift kick towards the man's head and arresting it an inch away from impact. "Do you remember me? I sent you photos.Van Damme, karate guy, karate guy." Startled, Golan invited Van Damme over to his office the next day. There, Van Damme showed him a full side split, his legs poised between two chairs, took off his shirt and did some poses for the producer. "You want to be a star", marked Golan. "I'll make you a star." (See Thompson 1999, p.577 & Naughton 1995, p.61 & Gire 1989, p.108.)

Here, the elements. The split, the kick, the muscles. A male body for sale. The situation could be contrasted with that of Sylvester Stallone, who got his lucky break a decade earlier with a screenplay for the Oscar-winning *Rocky* (1976). In Van Damme's case, on the other hand, the lack of the element of language is conspicuous; he had not come to tell stories, but to portray himself in images. He had no script, no narrative, only his body to merchandise, decreeing his acting talent to the most convenient genre of action spectacle. The meeting with Golan formed a blueprint for many Van Damme films to come. He was to become, as Tasker (1993, p.74) notes, known as a performer rather as an actor, flaunting such spectacular stunts on the screen as the splits and kicks described above. The subgenre of martial arts movies was the immediate answer to Van Damme's physically inclined talents. His first star-

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

ring role came with *Bloodsport* (1988), a script allegedly based on real events in the life of Frank Dux, who is claimed to be the first Westerner to defeat Asian masters in their own game of no-rules combat.

1. Key images

The split, the kick, the muscles. These moments find their way into Van Damme's films as key images, a concept that will be elucidated here. Sihvonen (1984, p.86) notes how some images in a film come to stand as symbols for the whole motion picture, issuing a paradigmatic superiority over the rest of the material. In this theoretical context, the purpose of such an image is to be representative of all the other images included in the film, either in terms of stylistic convention or ideological content. The question facing a film student is how to determine which images gain this metaphorical importance, since each image carries its own inherent propositions. As Sihvonen (1984, p.87) notes, there are neither 'right' nor 'wrong' ones – in principle any image can function as a tool or a key, depending on what is it used for, i.e. what signifying function of the image is being investigated. "The very concept of key image is not in the filmmaker's apparatus but rather in that of the theoretician's." To use the concept of key image, the theoretician must establish a code, to find a way to imbue a concrete image with an abstract statement or a *leitmotif*. In other words, the goal is to establish a logical relationship between expression and meaning; a tool through which the viewer is able to interpret and understand the thematics of the film.

To the casual viewer, the key images of Van Damme's films may appear to be incidental. However, their frequent recital from one film to the next belies this incidentiality, and they have caught the eyes of reviewers and critics as they might catch the eye of a viewer better educated in the genre. In this work, I have used reviews and interviews as well as academic studies to determine which images have given rise to discussion and have been viewed as ideological statements. Interviews and other such spin-offs spawned by a particular films are dubbed 'secondary texts' by John Fiske, (1999, p.117) who understands them as providing an auction of meanings, which aid a film viewer to determine the relative importance of a film's images and themes. "[S]econdary texts, such as criticism or publicity, work to promote the circulation of selected meanings of the primary texts... Studying them gives us access to the meanings that are in circulation at any one time." I have here simply taken up the images that resurface time and again in articles and reviews of Van Damme's films. In this sense, the secondary texts spawned by Van Damme's films provide me with the code that I use to interpret the symbolic importance of some images over others.

I wish to establish two distinct key images in *Bloodsport* (and many Van Damme movies to follow), both already inherent in the real-life situation in which Van Damme talked himself into the film: the split and the butt shot. Of these, I first address the split which is by far the more frequent in this first outing, shown on no less than four separate occasions. In this image are expressed many of the fears and anxieties surrounding a built male body on display. More consequential in terms of screen theory is the butt shot, wreaking havoc in the fabric of traditional accounts of gendered ways of seeing. Both images are granted a metonymical relationship with other images and are "privileged" (Sihvonen 1984, p.84-85) because they provide, even when detached from the film, the key to the interpretation of not only particular film content, but also of Van Damme's star image as a totality.

2. Split trouble: an uneasy oscillation between active and passive positions

Bloodsport traces the quest of Frank Dux, a US army officer who goes A.W.O.L. to compete in the 'Kumite', an underground no-rules tournament in Hong Kong. There he befriends two other Americans: Jackson, a gigantic boxer also invited to the

Kumite, and Janice, a female reporter who is determined to unearth the clandestine tournament in order to make a headline story. Before the start of the Kumite and the first day's fights, Frank meditates in his hotel room, stoically poised between two chairs that support his legs in a side split. His eyes are closed and his upper body unclothed as Jackson enters the room.

As such, the split is a problematic image in terms of male spectacle, clearly working to halt narrative procession in the same way as, say, dance numbers in a musical. "[T]he genre star performs his signature 'routine' outside the narrative, and is presented as a star performer before character and story claim him entirely. Character and performer are hard to separate from each other and from the artifice" (Bingham 1994, p.183). This is a description of solo numbers performed by Fred Astaire in his numerous musicals, but it is equally adaptable to Van Damme. And as this passage maintains, such feats foreground the performer's physical indexicality: the viewer's attention is called to the star's body at the expense of the fictional, narrative character. Van Damme vehicles, however, would become very inventive in figuring out ways to make his split routine appear less gratuitous and in finding functional narrative justifications for the display of his agility.

Frank's eyes are closed in meditation under Jackson's gaze, and his half-naked, passive stature suggests (in the scheme advocated by Laura Mulvey in her classical 1975 article *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema*) a strong degree of feminization on him. Thus Jackson jibes: "Stop that, you may want to have kids some day." Anatomically speaking, Jackson's concerns are groundless: even a severe ligament tear during the split will not, of course, in any way affect a man's sexual abilities, much less his reproductional ones. It is not the split that threatens Frank with the suggested emasculation, but rather his position as the semi-naked, languidly immobile object of another man's gaze. Jackson's comment may be read as a displacement of a fearful anxiety concerning a visually mediated position of femininity.

Frank offers himself not only to the gaze of the diegetic Jackson but also to those of all the viewers. Richard Dyer's study of the male pin-up maps the ways in which the male body under the gaze does violence to the visual (unwritten) gendered codes of looking and being seen, established as early as in the photographs of Edward Muybridge, decades before the reign of classical Hollywood cinema, let alone the work of Laura Mulvey. Vulnerability, passivity and femininity all coincide in the object of the gaze. Whenever a man is positioned as this object, he must battle the inevitable feminization by stressing invulnerability and activity. Dyer (1992, p.269-270) states that "the idea of looking (staring) as power and being looked at as powerlessness overlaps with ideas of acitivity / passivity. Thus to look is thought of as active; whereas to be looked at is passive...[I]t remains the case that images of men must disavow this element of passivity if they are to be kept in line with dominant ideas of masculinity-as-activity." Dyer (1992, p. 270) then goes on to describe the ways in which to counteract the violatory position of passivity: even when male models pose in supine or languid positions, they "promise activity" by tightening their muscles, emphasizing a dormant potential for masculine activity.

3. Muscles as the tissue of compensation

The immobility and passivity suggested by Frank's split position indeed seem to demand a showcasing of the compensational potential of musculature. Thus the viewer is given close-ups of his large pectorals. As Dyer (1992, p.274) maintains, muscles are traditionally associated with males, and can thus work as a natural sign and guarantee of claims for conventional masculinity. In addition to the associated virtues of self-sufficiency, strength and hardness, large muscles are also semiotically equipped to evoke visions of violence, as exemplified by Heywood's (1998, p.50) description of Linda Hamilton's famously pumped body in *Terminator 2*: "The first frame in *T2* in which we see Hamilton focuses on Sarah doing pull-ups, the camera

zooming in on her biceps...[H]er body is composed of taut ropes of muscle. A body with potential for violence." As in this description, although unable to perform pull-ups, Van Damme's Frank Dux resists a designation of passivity by the display of musculature, which distracts attention from his relative immobility. The muscles, in a sense, claim Frank belongs to the domain of not only physical but narrative activity, and are presented as a potential future advancer of the narrative drive: they deny and deflect the viewers' gaze. It would thus seem that the capacity for violence legitimizes the display of the male body, resisting an interpretation of the image as a mere fetish or a narrative-halting number. Appropriately, in the jargon of bodybuilders biceps are dubbed "guns" and well-developed shoulders "destroyer delts" (Heywood 1998, p.69). Such language and imagery remedies the passive position of being seen (as in a bodybuilding contest), yet poses another, equally anxious problem for the built body: the decorative quality of the muscles.

The way an action movie bodybuilder gains his shape is far from natural – it is not created by work but through leisure, a notion that brings into spotlight the ornamental character of the muscles. In other words, the functionality of these muscles is made questionable by their spectacularity. Exactly what is being "destroyed" by the builder's "guns"? The practice of bodybuilding was introduced into popular consciousness in the first decades of the 20th century by the figure of Eugen Sandow, in whose body all the contradictions plaguing the modern builder could first be sighted. Boscagli (1996, p.69) writes on the emerging figure of early bodybuilders: "The contradictory character of the modern male body, the fact that its larger-than-life natural qualities appeared at the very moment when they were being rendered obsolete by technology, is a nodal point for my argument of the transformation of the body into a spectacle." Sandow accomplished amazing feats of strength in his stage shows, but ironically died when, after witnessing a traffic accident, he tried to lift a car out of a ditch. The spectacularly muscular body fails in the very moment when its strength is being tested by practical functionality!

Boscagli (1996, p. 111) argues that Sandow's body serves as a cultural example of kitsch, which by definition juxtaposes use value and decoration. While the strength of Sandow's muscles bespoke functionality, their beauty suggested an evocation of spectatorial desire that threatened to turn the male body into a commodity. "Just as the commodity's use value, its function, is displaced by its phantasmagorical image, so the excessive and decorative prowess of these male bodies disavows the phallic plentitude claimed by the image of masculine physical perfection" (Boscagli 1996, p.95). Thus muscles, despite indicating a potential for violent (and by extension, masculine) activity, are plagued by their baroque character. To try and use built muscles for compensating a passive position might even exacerbate the problem by further underlining the builder's position of commodified display through their ostensible ornamentality. This leads us to legitimation through the realm of martial arts, which gives a functionality to the muscles.

4. Martial arts: exploring the use value of muscles

Martial arts, in short, seem to claim the built muscles do serve a purpose. States Kyong Myong Lee (1996, p.7), the chairman of the World Taekwondo Association: "There is barely a part of the human body that could not be used as defensive weapon: hands, fingers, fists, ankle, elbow, knee, feet, head, and so on." In action films in general, and martial arts films in particular, human body is 'naturally' reinscribed as a weapon. Any body has the same capacity for destruction due to its natural anatomy, which martial arts instruct to put into 'proper' use. It is as if martial arts, in suggesting a natural, yet dormant penchant for violence rooted in the human anatomy itself, provided an ideological defense of the built body. Martial arts remedy the question of ornamentality by imminently showing a world of violence and masculine rampage in which the muscles, their usefulness otherwise largely extinct, may yet find func-

tionality. This insistence on functionality is mirrored by the peculiar fact that Van Damme's characters, despite their lengthy martial arts training sessions, have consistently shied away from bodybuilding in his movies. The logic: the austerely functional practice of martial arts built this body, not a Nautilus machine.

The built body is in a problematic position, and while in many Van Damme's films the body is of course visually privileged, it is the martial arts practice which takes both narrative and ideological precedence. *Bloodsport* features a lengthy flashback scene that images Frank's past training with his master, yet not a single second of bodybuilding is included. Amidst all the stretching, kicking and striking, not a single image of a muscle endurance exercise is shown, let alone an exercise for increasing mass. No barbells, no bench-presses, no push-ups. The message is, obviously, that the muscles are a "natural" result of the martial arts training regime, and as such are not ornamental but functional. The practice of martial arts remedies the visual excesses of Van Damme's body which the camera lovingly portrays.

In the martial arts genre, the fighting scenes offer a readily available explanation for the overblown muscles, and at the same time allow for their display, under the pretense of frightening the opposition. Consequently, boxing arena can be understood as 'a safety zone' in which it is permissible to reveal the body. This is not true only in relation to movies but to actual historical precedents as well. The revealing of the acquired strength and size of the body can have the effect of intimidating an opponent, as exemplified by this account from Willy Ortiz (1999, p.51), a renowned karate instructor:

> A while ago, Tatsuo Suzuki explained about a shiai (contest) he remembered from years ago. It was between Wado-ryu and a group of Tatsuo Yamada students. Yamada was a tough-guy type of karate teacher who stressed body conditioning and hard technique. As the two groups faced each other the Yamada students took off their gi jackets to reveal powerful, muscular torsos. When the Wado fighters saw this they grew **ap**prehensive.

In this passage, the muscular development of the body is straightforwardly interpreted as a visual deterrent. Martial arts provide a chance for a practitioner to decode his nakedness as a preparation for battle, a sight which might instill fear in an opponent, qualifying the fact that here a male subject offers his body as an object of another's gaze. However, the situation is different for a viewer of a martial arts cinema, which frequently portrays events similar to this historical incident. The spectators witnessing the naked male bodies will not engage in fighting, and can freely speculate the aesthetic aspects of the fear-inspiring bodies. To such a detached viewer, the sight may be solely an erotic one. Nevertheless, martial arts films legitimize bodily exposure with their pretended ignorance of the non-diegetic viewers, ostensibly working under the assumption that the fearful intradiegetic looks will motivate the spectators' gaze within a framework of fear and aggression.

We might turn for a moment to investigate a figure who probably has more in common with Van Damme than the Okinawan karateka described above. Walser (1993, p.129) discusses the ideological problems connected to spectacular visibility of the male body. His specimen of example is David Lee Roth, the flamboyant singer of the band Van Halen.

> And singer David Lee Roth self-reflexively connects his enthusiasm for bodybuilding and martial arts training to his 'feminized' image on stage: "A lot of what I do can be construed as feminine. My face, the way I dance, or the way I dress myself for stage...But to prove it to myself, to establish this [his masculinity], I had to build myself physically. I had to learn to fight." Roth's private regimen allows him to go on being androgynous in public. His personal anxieties about masculinity are shaped by conventional patriarchy, yet the attraction of

androgynous transgression is also strong.

Roth shares with Van Damme a position as an object of the gaze as well as a desire to transgress the prescribed limits on representations of masculinity. In making an attraction of themselves, both men apply the same strategies to compensate for their self-imposed visibility. Their purpose is to harden the body so that it can absorb not only the hits and kicks delivered by opponents – but also the gaze of the spectators. Yet the ideological tracks of a desire for transgression are not completely covered: instead of simply shielding the performer from the look of his audience, the body building and martial arts become themselves a constituent part of that spectacle.

5. "I don't know whether I should fight you or fuck you"

-"Garage fighter", one of Van Damme's opponents in Lionheart (1990)

In *Bloodsport*, the fears surrounding visibility and passivity are worked through in the action of the fighting arena of the Kumite. As we have seen, martial arts movies have, in their narrative setting, the power to allow for a "feminized" (as in the sense of being an object of look) display of built bodies. And they also allow the protagonist to attempt to resist and deflect the spectators' gaze, reclaiming traditional and orthodox manhood through a redemption by violence and control over the bodies of others. Heywood (1998, p.151) illustrates the importance of violence for masculine identity: "[A]s many researchers have indicated, the foundations of violence rest firmly in cultural constructions of masculinity, in the images and definitions of masculinity *as* violence that floats indiscriminately everywhere in popular culture from romance novels to journalistic reports, from the movie screen to the legislature."

As one of *Bloodsport*'s many set-piece matches begins, a towering opponent grapples Frank's karate uniform to topple him. Frank is 'forced' to throw away his jacket and reveal his upper body. Now his musculature and his agility are conflated and granted functional activity in martial arts battle, which the setting defines not as (mere) spectacle but advancement of the narrative, as each fight brings Frank closer to the main event and the resolution of the narrative tensions. Frank's opponent catches his kicking leg and drags him around the arena, holding his one leg. Frank is forced into the split position, and this time the agonizing pain of the stretch is obvious in his face. Frank diffuses this passive position, which mirrors his earlier immobility in the hotel room scene, by freeing himself from the hold on his leg and ending the fight with an unusual move. The split is reappropriated from its previous state of passivity as Van Damme gives another inflection of the routine by sliding between his opponent's legs and punching him fiercely to the groin. Frank has responded to fears of emasculation, evoked by Jackson in the previous split scene due to Frank's potentially narrative-halting position, by symbolically castrating his male opponent, displacing in a rather reified way onto him the mentioned problems in 'having kids'.

Pertinent here is the frequency with which punishing blows during the martial arts fights are aimed at an opponent's genitals. It may have something to do with fears of emasculation, caused by the inevitable display of the fighters's bodies, but this symbolic castration also works to literally remove the threat of homosexual violence imposed by the other man. Therefore, the groin punch possesses an ideological import: violence aimed against male genitals presents yet another compensation strategy against the inherent erotic aspects involved in the male display. Such acts of violence remedy Van Damme's status as a bodybuilder, who is always at risk of being considered an erotic object. It is almost as if Dyer (1997, p.302) were describing the bodybuilder Van Damme in his first film, playing a character obsessed with displaying himself, but also, and compensating for this desire, obsessed with "the absolute value" of winning:

> Bodybuilding is recognized as a place of display but only ambiguously as a potentially erotic one. It is a space that contains male body display but also, until recently, comes with rhetorics that deny the eroticism of the display. These include the invocation of classical idealism, the virtues of sport, exercise, and health, 'Nietzschean' superheroism, and, embracing many of these, the absolute value of competition and winning.

Next, I would like to take a little look at the way martial arts and eroticism have been conflated in films not part of the martial arts genre. In quite a number of films, a distinct sexual charge has been imbricated with martial arts. In considering the success of the strategy of using martial arts fighting to dispel eroticism in the genre proper, it is worthwhile to make a little digression to those representations. I wish to put forward that the link between sex and martial arts violence has been well established in films of other genres, even if martial arts films themselves (usually) repress the issue in a vehement fashion.

Peter Lehman (1993, p.1) describes Pedro Almodovar's *What Have I Done to Deserve This* (1985) in which " a cleaning woman watches a group of men practicing the martial arts, including Kendo. As she looks at these men costumed in their athletic gear, wielding weapons, and boldly posturing in combat positions, desire arises out of her initial curiosity." The scene leads to shower room sex with one of the participants. Kendo, with its phallic bamboo swordplay may be an inspiring art in this respect, as is evident in *Black Rain* (1989), in which Michael Douglas remarks to his new Japanese partner in a kendo dojo: "If you pull it out, you better use it". The same kind of eroticization, however, pertains to other martial arts: In *Storyville* (1992), James Spader portrays a corrupt politician who allows himself to be seduced by an Oriental woman. The backdrop for the love scene, interestingly, is a dojo where the girl's father teaches martial arts. As Spader enters, the girl is dressed in an aikido uniform and instead of sexual intimacy, she attacks him and by applying wrist locks, throws him to the floor several times. Only as the baffled Spader finally stays on the ground, the woman suddenly undresses herself and initiates sex. The scene recalls, genders reversed, a similar one from *Goldfinger* (1964), in which Honor Blackman's attempts to grapple Bond ("Pussy! Who taught you judo?") lead to one of those instances of 'forced consent' rape scenes so typical of Bond films. The cult classic *Emmanuelle* (1974) features a scene in which Sylvia Kristel's mentor in the subtle ways of love takes her to see a thai boxing bout. Surrounded by an all-male audience, two thai fighters take on each other while an excited Kristel looks on. The winner knocks his opponent out and is awarded an immediate sexual intercourse with Kristel, on the same floor where the fight took place, onlooked by the same crowd of spectators. In all these films, martial arts violence is represented as not only metaphorically but literally a foreplay, a corporeal contact that heightens the sexual tension of the participants / onlookers, promising and momentarily postponing a softer denouement.

Van Damme's directorial debut *The Quest* (1996) actually reworks the scene from *Emmanuelle*. It takes place, as in *Emmanuelle*, in Bangkok. A con artist played by Roger Moore has befriended a female journalist, Carrie Newton and attempts to "win her most intimate confidence". Reversing the roles in *Emmanuelle*, it is Newton who wishes to see a thai fight, while Moore's character is reluctant. He derides the low social esteem of fighting and the questionable human value of the bloodthirsty peasant spectators, but must give way. Both are amazed to see a white fighter (Van Damme) in the ring, knocking his Siamese opponent unconscious in the ensuing fight. Newton is as excited about the winner as Kristel in *Emmanuelle*, but the narrative displaces the sexual arousal created by the fight unto a journalist's interest for a white man being a champion of thai boxing. In *The Quest*, the promised satisfaction is indefinitely postponed, and instead of a sexual consummation between Van Damme

and Newton, the narrative culminates in a series of more male fights in a mythical tournament of Ghan-Gheng in Tibet. So, whereas in *Emmanuelle* the martial arts spectacle is conceived of as a foreplay to sexual activity, it is a trait of martial arts films that whatever arousal is generated gets channeled into ever more fights, forever postponing satisfaction, forever heightening the levels of violence and sadomasochism in the process. Yet no matter how brutal the violence, it cannot diffuse the viewers' potential erotic interest in the displayed bodies. Although martial arts grant a certified function to the built muscles, they cannot conclusively avert the eyes away from the eroticism of those bodies. For it sometimes happens the purely visual elements of bodily training take precedence over the values of spiritual progression and fighting ability, as Busen et al. (1987, p.11), the authors of this taekwondo training aid, proclaim:

> We came to tae kwon do for purely superficial reasons: We wanted to look great. And what's wrong with that? Overweight, with muscles that were large but undefined due to weight lifting, we were looking for an exercise regimen that would give us the kind of body that you order out for: well-proportioned, defined, slim, strong, flexible, and healthy - in that order.

What is interesting here is the reluctance of the authors to cloak their visual desire for an ideal body with the rhetoric of health (as healthy body is the last item on their wish list) or of self-defense. The authors celebrate their aesthetic and avowedly visual physical perfection. Even the martial arts -related and ostensibly spiritual practice of meditation is given a physical spin-off as the authors guide their reader through proper technique: "[R]emove every negative thought from your mind. Think pleasant and soothing thoughts for 30 to 45 seconds, then clear your mind completely. With your last minute of meditation, focus on how you would like to look. This will help you to begin the exercises with a receptive and willing attitude." (Ibid.)

Despite the functionality and violence martial arts practice is able to bestow on the built muscles, it reveals an all-too-familiar desire for ornamentality and narcissistic showing-off, precisely the situation we encountered in relation to bodybuilding. Even the spiritual dimensions offered by martial arts' connections with Zen Buddhism are in the example above replaced by daydreams of a better-looking body. The authors flaunt their willingness to invite the gaze, implicating martial arts culture in the same ideologies of narcissism as body building. In her discussion of the bodybuilder as the 'Nietzschean superman' (equally adaptable to the martial artist), Boscagli (1996, p.17) directs attention to "[t]he ambiguous disjunction between functionality and excess that characterizes the body of the superman. It is this ambiguity that made available, in the spectacular rituals of the gymnastic or military parade, the desexualized and unclothed male body 'absorbed in the sportive gesture' as an object of desire both for the female and for the male gaze." Van Damme's most famous key image invests in this same desire, with anxious results for the theories of gendered spectators and their operations of identification and desire.

6. Seeing oneself being seen: The butt shot and the fourth look

As Laura Mulvey had described in her classical *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema*, the cinematic viewer is aligned with the protagonist and can, through a process of identification, derive vicarious pleasure from the pleasure of the (male) protagonist. In Mulvey's example, one such typical scene of introjected pleasure takes place as the protagonist controls sexually the desirable females of the diegetic world. In *Bloodsport* Frank's love affair, the only one in the film, is plagued by visual unorthodoxies. Frank rescues the reporter Janice from rape by Syrian fighters and wins her confidence. After a candle-lit dinner Janice invites Frank to have sex. As Tasker (1993, p.16) points out, the woman in an action narrative carries out the important ideo-

logical function of establishing the hero's heterosexuality, and thus heterosexual sex scenes work to make the protagonist's body safe for the (heterosexual male) viewers. In *Bloodsport*, however, the visuals belie this narrative convention. Instead of witnessing the intercourse, the film cuts from the dinner to the next morning and to a sight of Janice satisfied but alone on the bed, looking obliquely into the camera. Cut to a reverse shot in which we see Frank standing next to the bed, pulling his underpants on, just in time to glimpse his naked buttocks as he draws the pants over them. The romantic scene of *Bloodsport* purports to give the viewer a reassuring heterosexual intimacy, and in purely narrative terms, this is what it does. However, the cinematography is in blatant conflict with the narrative as we do not get to see the conventional, naked body of the romantic interest but are treated to a squint of Van Damme's buttocks. So, while the narrative follows the traditional formula, the visuals of the film cater to other pleasures. This buttshot was to become a visual signature in many films to follow, a much-acclaimed key image in the celebrity texts surrounding the actor. Brown (1997, p.131) considers Van Damme, quite rightly, as one of the first and foremost pioneers of the male butt shot, but points out that the procedure has become exceedingly commonplace among other male stars as well:

> It is now almost a prerequisite that action films must show not just the hero's well sculpted chest but also, and more explicitly, his butt. This penchant for 'dropping trou', as the popular press has referred to it, has become so common that almost every major actor has done it (or used a 'butt-double'), their butts being rated comparatively in magazines. Debates ensued about the undesirability of Michael Douglas' butt as shown in Basic Instinct (1992).

Brown (1997, p.132) maintains that the new emphasis in action films on the butt shot "capitalizes on the notion that contrary to what most men may think, the rear, not the phallus is the focus of visual arousal for women." Here is a most notable transgressive (in terms of screen theory) feature of Van Damme films: their tendency to cater explicitly to a female viewer's pleasure, a considerateness that is exhibited narratively as well as visually. Frank's suave politeness and handsome demenour form a perfect contrast to the Syrians' misogynistic masculinity. He seems to offer to the female viewer an option, however fleetingly, to Mulvey's "cul-de-sac alternatives (as phrased in Bingham 1994, p.165): 'masculinized' subjectivity or a masochistic identification with the brutalized female".

Another unorthodox aspect of the butt shot is that it is not framed by any such masculine compensatory devices of violent activity as discussed above. I have at some length recounted martial arts cinema's efforts to stave off explicit eroticization and frustration of the narrative drive through emphasizing conventionally masculine signification. In the butt shot, all such pretension is suddenly dropped and Van Damme's body is unequivocally fetishized. We might now ask how film theory has in the past responded to equivalents of this irregular imagery. For surely Van Damme is not the first male on screen to be eroticized in one manner or another. Earlier examples include, to name just two who have aroused interest in the field of cinema studies, Rudolph Valentino and Rock Hudson.

In *Masculinity as Spectacle* (1983), Steve Neale discusses an instance of transgression against those gendered rules of being seen that Laura Mulvey had described. Neale (1993, p.18) admits that in Rock Hudson's films, the male star's body has been eroticized in a manner traditionally reserved for females, but quickly writes off this unorthodoxy by maintaining that in those moments Hudson's body becomes 'feminized'. On the one hand, Neale acknowledges that eroticized images of men have occurred in the history of cinema, and on the other, he explains away this finding with his contention that these images deprive the fetishized male of his masculinity! As Tasker (1993, p.115) notes, this is a peculiarly circular logic: "Hudson's 'feminized' image in these films is then equated by Neale with *women*, through reference to

the cinematic conventions which allow 'only women' to be positioned as the explicit objects of an erotic gaze." As a consequence of this logic, instances of eroticized male bodies can paradoxically be used to confirm the claim that only women are ever eroticized in Hollywood cinema. Such reasoning belies the presence of strong gender ideologies, but not within the apparatus, but within Neale's own habits of perception. In *Bloodsport*, Van Damme is certainly eroticised and yet hardly feminized. Brown (1997, p.132) confirms this, firmly rebutting the analytical purchase of the scheme advocated by Neale in relation to the male fetish spectacle in question:

> It is here with the emergence of the butt shot that ultra macho males like Van Damme become clearly and undeniably objectified. What the hero does not become is feminized. The template of gender binarism that links objectification with the feminine is no longer appropriate in this case. In no way is the hero portrayed as unmasculine; indeed his virility, documented in the rest of the film, is only compounded by his innate desirability.

Not only does Van Damme usurp woman's to-be-looked-at-ness and inscribe it into his own body instead, but he also shuffles the Mulveyan cards of identification. As Bingham (1994, p.164) here notes, the phenomenon of narcissism is already embedded in the spectatorial alignment offered up to the viewer of classical cinema. "A male spectator is encouraged to identify with a fantasy projection of himself as a socially constructed male. This projection lures an irresistible narcissism." Van Damme adds an alarming feature to this narcissism by making the spectator share his exhibitionistic self-display with him, causing in the male viewers a distinct displeasure (or a 'perverse' pleasure). To the extent that the viewer identifies with Frank, he must also experience Frank's position as the object of the look. Frank thus commits visual transgressions that extend all the way to the actual audience: the viewers become complicit, through spectatorial alignment, in Frank's narcissistic excesses. In other words, Frank is for the viewer both "he" and "I".

The visuals offer the (presumably male) viewer a glimpse of his identification object's buttocks, mystifying the viewer by showing, in effect, an eroticized image of himself. Bingham (1994, p.421) discusses Freud's formulation of narcissism as "a perversion [..] in which an adult treats his own body with all the caresses that are usually devoted to an outside sexual object (The Libido, 416). This extreme self-love leads the libido away from objects and into the ego where it 'cannot find its way back to objects.'" This visual narcissism is echoed in the whole narrative of *Bloodsport*, a film that arms its protagonist with abilities that verge on omnipotence.

Brown (1997, p.132-3) discusses the experiences recited by a group of film students watching Van Damme performing similar exhibitions and butt shots. He reports that while heterosexual women and gay men in the group abandoned their identification with Van Damme to voyeuristically contemplate his image as a source of erotic pleasure, a straight male viewer either experienced an embarrasment of being "caught (literally) with his pants down" or a narcissistic pleasure through sharing Van Damme's position as the object of a desirous gaze. I next attempt to explain how the 'pants down' reaction of the straight male viewer is deeply problematic to narrative economy and viewer participation in the diegesis.

What has been said so far of the spectacular male, relates to the question of whether it is cinematically feasible to entirely separate, as Mulvey attempted to do, the look of identification from that of desire. We might, however, also ask whether the viewer could be implicated in a more active exhibitionist pleasure through identifying with the displayed male protagonist. Even in Mulvey's (1986, p.201) article it is briefly admitted that dominant cinema's male position (as the one who looks) may be in fact a reversal of a desire to be the one who is *looked at*: "Among other things, the position of the spectators in the cinema is blatantly one of repression of their exhibitionism and projection of the repressed desire onto the performer." This, however, is a

theme that Mulvey does not press further. Willemen catches on this motif by drawing from Freud's *Instincts and their vicissitudes* the idea that instincts have a proclivity to be reversed and manifested as their opposites, and claims that the scopophilic drive to gaze upon others is in fact a reversed desire to gaze upon oneself. Willemen (1986, p.212) quotes Freud: "At the beginning of its activity, the scopophilic instinct is autoerotic: it has indeed an object, but that object is the subject's own body." Consequently, a desire to be seen is paradoxically already implicated in the desire to see; ergo, the institution of cinema can simultaneously satisfy two ostensibly contradictory desires. By employing Willemen's concept of the fourth look, I suggest that Van Damme discloses the repressed desire of being looked at in his blatantly exhibitionistic performances.

Mulvey's classical analysis is celebrated for its analysis of the looks of the spectator and the intradiegetic characters, and the intersecting gendered power relations expressed in both. Mulvey (1986, p.208-9), however, also accounted for the way in which the spectator's look, as well as the look of the camera at the profilmic event, is kept invisible, so to say, by the intradiegetic looks: the spectator's look remains hidden insofar as it is aligned with the look of the diegetic characters; they are articulated to each other via operations of identification. By consigning all these forms of looking to the diegetic world, the spectator is allowed to deny an awareness of his/her own act of looking, and engage in a secretive voyeuristic pleasure. It is up to the cinematic apparatus to pretend ignorance of its own products as the exhibition objects that they are, lest the pleasurable voyeurism is erased from the viewers' experience. The cinematic apparatus thus comprises three looks, the spectator's, the camera's and those of the diegetic characters. To this delineation, Willemen adds 'the fourth look'.

Some filmic images work to destroy the audience's unawareness of itself as an invisible voyeur and vicarized exhibitionist. Any image that implicitly pronounces: "This is for you to look at", threatens to uncomfortably unveil the spectator's position, forcing the audience to acknowledge the interplay of the acts of seeing and being seen. The screen, in a sense, *looks back*, and this is called the fourth look. Willemen (1986, p.216) resorts to a parable in his description of the look: it can be imaged as a beam of light projecting back onto the face of the viewer. The fourth look is, as Willemen (1993, p.179) points out, of different order than the other three, because it is a look imagined by the spectator "in the field of the Other." It occasions a feeling of shame for being caught in voyeuristic – and through inversion, exhibitionistic – pleasures: "The viewing subject has become the exhibitionist" (Willemen 1986, p.216).

Typically, images arousing the fourth look are pornographic or under some similar social sanction: "The fourth look gains in force when the viewer is looking at something she or he is not supposed to look at, either according to an internalized censorship (superego) or an external, legal one (as in clandestine viewings)…This way, that fourth look problematizes the social dimension, the field of the other of the system of looking at work in the cinematic institution" (Willemen 1993, p.174). The last sentence indicates that the fourth look resides not in the film text: its source lies in social authority. Such authority's presence was felt by the viewers who expressed a 'pants down' embarrassment, being suddenly unable to repress the knowledge of their (actual) voyeuristic and (vicarious) exhibitionistic position.

The butt shot is a pure-bred, passive fetish image despite Janice's token point-of-view shot. As Brown noted, it cancelled the participation of some heterosexual viewers (by bringing into play the fourth look), whereas others reported a narcissistic pleasure. The latter group felt no social sanction in identifying with Van Damme's exposures. The implications of such pleasurable narcissism, experienced by heterosexual male viewers, brought about by identification with sexually displayed male bodies remain a relatively uncharted territory. The implied viewers' relationship with Van Damme's exhibited male body has more often been discussed, in both academic prose and interviews, in terms of objectifying the male body for a specific target audi-

ence, gay men. In analyzing the situation, we must briefly turn from textual economics to financial ones in the world 'out there', describing, as Willemen advised, the social along with the textual.

7. The Gay Karate Man, star image, market niches

Despite the efforts of Van Damme's 'people' to stop the release of the subtly-titled video *Hollywood Sex Scandals*, Van Damme and Stallone unwittingly joined forces in 1994 when their embarrassing film debuts, *Monaco Forever* (1984) and *Italian Stallion* (1970), respectively, were published as a double feature (Empire n.50 /August 1993, p.19 dedicated a half-page news section to reporting the event). In *Monaco Forever*, Van Damme appeared in his first credited role, so explicit in its definition that it was omitted from Van Damme's official filmographies until the film's rerelease. In the film, Van Damme plays Gay Karate Man, and Clarke & Henson (1996, p.143) offer the following description of the star's performance:

> Three minutes into the story of an ex-Nazi jewel-thief (Charles Pitt) stealing through Monaco in 1956, Van Damme gives Pitt a lift in his Jaguar. In a French-speaking role, Van Damme makes flourishes with his hand, pronounces the sky "formi-DAH-ble", and starts grabbing at Pitt's thigh. When Pitt pulls the emergency brake and challenges the flirtatious driver to a fight, the barefoot Van Damme cows him by showing off a few of his now-famous kicks, then flounces off as a humiliated Pitt heads for the hills.

This debut is embarrassing for Van Damme in that it casts a doubtful shadow on all his early martial artist roles. While the conventional male sexual unity and heteronormality are called into question in an unusual manner also in these early 'legitimate' films of Van Damme, their display of muscle drama is nevertheless tempered by all the masculine compensatory devices described above. These movies present a double register concerning traditional masculinism and perverse transgression, and this register must remain ambiguous to avoid a too explicit conflation of martial arts and homosexuality, lest these films lose their status as mainstream actioners and be relegated to the reservoir of subcultural homoerotic camp. Hence the desire of Van Damme's 'people' to prevent the release of *Monaco Forever*: it provides an unsettlingly explicit framework of interpretation for Van Damme's intentionally ambiguous star image.

Van Damme has declared on the cover of the magazine *Movieline* (August 1994), "If people see me naked to the waist, they can imagine anything they want". Van Damme thus offers himself consciously and voluntarily to a large spectrum of viewing positions. His star image has exhibited flexibility indeed, as Van Damme has ventured from covers of *Penthouse* to *Playboy* to *Playgirl*. The two former magazines emphasize in their articles his bodybuilding and martial arts skills, while *Playgirl* concentrates on Van Damme's romantic inclinations and love-making skills. Brown (1997, p.130) concludes, "he is equally adept functioning as a point of identification for heterosexual men as he is as an object of desire for women and gays."

It remains an open question, however, whether Van Damme's readiness to appear as a homoerotic icon is a result of ideological crusading or good business sense. Mel Gibson found out that gay men indeed formed an economically powerful market niche when his negative comments to questions about his gay following resulted in protests, boycotts, and the title of 'Homophobe of the Year' in the gay press (Brown 1997, p.130). Van Damme, on the other hand, has rather encouraged the affection expressed by gay fans and allowed for a less traditionally masculine reading of his image. From the very start, Van Damme's star image has been seductively bisexual, this being an element of attraction as well as of repulsion. Even in denying his alleged homosexuality he manages to conjure up some imagery that

seems to fuel further speculations:

> I'm not homosexual but I'm a very big fan of friendship. And I've been training for many years in schools and camps where all guys are together for weeks training. And it's good to feel the strong handshake of a friend. It's different than the handshake of a woman. And I love women. So, in a sense, I understand homosexuals, because the body of a man and the body of a woman are two different types of paintings. Like I said, I'm not disturbed by homosexuals. They're great people (Naughton 1994, p.63).

In this passage, Van Damme describes a masculine realm of training, a realm of homosociality if not homosexuality, his star persona simultaneously disavowing and exploiting his gay publicity. This kind of teaseful approach is common to many Van Damme interviews; they *both* cater to the fascination of seductive bisexuality *and* attempt to defuse the actor's transgression of gender norms. It might be said that Van Damme continues in his interviews the self-conscious masquerade he began in his films. Consequently, Van Damme will only ever offer a possibility of a queer reading of his star image as well of his films. He shyes away from a strictly, unequivocally homosexual definition. After *Monaco Forever*, too explicit a display of homosexuality is taboo for Van Damme, as it is taboo in his 'legit' films, always hedged by the narrative alibi of martial arts display, or dissipated through sadomasochistic chastisement of the male body.

Bodily display, with its possibilities of erotic interpretations, is ambiguous and skewed in all martial arts movies, and *Bloodsport* is no exception, but an extreme example. The audience gets to choose whether it attributes the characters' nakedness to the intrinsic qualities of the martial arts genre or to the film's suspected desire to display a homoerotic spectacle. On the one hand, the emphasis on the masculine activity, violence, and the progression of narrative in the tournament setting suggest a conventional 'actioner' reading, while on the other, the narrative-freezing fetish images like the butt shot offer glimpses of more unruly pleasures. It is up to the viewer to decide for the proper reading; the one of eroticism or the one of heroic winning. This latitude of interpretation suggests that Van Damme's polysemous body is able to function as a covert vehicle of taboo sexuality as well as a bearer of traditional masculinity.

Bibliography

Bingham, D., 1994. *Acting Male - Masculinities in the Films of James Stewart, Jack Nicholson and Clint Eastwood.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Boscagli, M., 1996. *Eye on the Flesh - Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century.* Colorado: Westview Press.

Brown, J.f., 1997. "They can imagine anything they want...": Identification, Desire and the Celebrity Text. *Discourse*, 19 (3), 1997, 122-143.

Busen, W. et al., 1987.*Tae Kwon Do - a karate program of fitness and self-defense*.

Clarke, Eric & Henson, Mathew: Hot Damme! Reflections on gay publicity. In Smith 1996, 131-149.

Dyer, R., 1992. Don't look now: the male pin-up*. In* SCREEN, ed. *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 265 - 277.

Dyer, R., 1997.*White.* London: Routledge.

Fiske, J., 1999. *Television Culture*. London: Routledge.

Freud, S., 1965. *The Libido Theory and Narcissism.* Standard Edition Vol. 16. London: Hogarth Press.

Gire, D., 1989. Jean-Claude Van Damme, fighting his way into movie stardom. *Cinefantastique*, 20 (1/2), 108-109.

Heywood, L., 1998. *Body Makers. A Cultural Anatomy of Women's Bodybuilding*. London: Rutgers University Press.

Lee, K.M., 1996. *Tae Kwon Do - Techniques & Training*. New York: Sterling Publishing. Lehman, P., 1993. *Running Scared - Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Mulvey, L., 1986. Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *In* P. ROSEN, ed. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 198-209. (First published in *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975.)

Naughton, J., 1995. What are you looking at? Empire, February 1995, 58-63.

Neale, S., 1993. Masculinity as spectacle - reflections on men and mainstream cinema. *In* S. COHAN AND I.R. HARK, ed. *Screening the male: Exploring masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. London: Routledge, 9-20. (First published in Screen Vol. 24, No.6,1983)

Ortiz, W.J., 1999. *Shotokan Karate - Its History and Creator*. Tampere: Multiprint.

Sihvonen, J., 1984. *Kuva ja elokuvan merkkikieli*. Turku: Turku University press. 1984.

Tasker, Y., 1993. *Spectacular Bodies - Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*. London: Routledge.

Thompson, C.(ed.), 1999. *Current Biography Yearbook 1999*. New York/ Dublin: The H.W. Wilson Company.

Walser, R., 1993. *Running with the Devil - Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

Willemen, P., 1992. Letter to John. In SCREEN, ed. *In* SCREEN, ed. *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 171- 183.

Willemen, P., 1986. Voyeurism, the look, and Dwoskin. In *In* P. ROSEN, ed. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 210-218.

Lesbographic Pornography

Moira Sullivan,
Living Communication International, Sweden

mjsull@algonet.se

An important domain of affective encounter is pornography. The non-verbal elements of images and sounds which convey meaning, mood, and emotion in this discourse often seem to have an embodied dimension of perception. It is clear that female emotional response to pornography is divided in terms of spectator interest. The fact that pornography is a source of pleasure for some and dis-ease for others makes it a volatile and controversial subject. This article is meant as a 'door opener' into a polemic area which divides feminism. Its concern is the reproduction of the moving body imagery of pornography foremost by lesbians, and secondly, by heterosexual women.

In classic pornography woman is a commodified entity where the exchange of females among males is the main currency. Female desire in moving picture imagery is often equated with prostitution, rape or bondage where the female body is displayed fragmented and dismembered. Pornography which literally means 'writing about prostitutes' is a tool for the reproduction of imagery and text to facilitate this equation.

The definition of pornography will be used operationally in this text, defined by law professor Catherine MacKinnon:"graphic sexually explicit materials that subordinate women through pictures or words". (MacKinnon:1993, p. 22) According to radical feminist Andrea Dworkin,"Pornography is central in creating and maintaining the civil inequality of the sexes". Anti-pornography ordinances authored by Dworkin and MacKinnon successfully passed in Minneapolis but ruled unconstitutional in Indianapolis, USA are considered problematic by both feminists and gay and lesbian activists in terms of 1)what should legally count as pornography and 2) the limitation of freedom of expression. In order words, the debate is a battle between anti-pornography feminists and freedom of expression feminists. The defeat of the Indianapolis ordinance in part came from the fact that conservative politicians backed the ordinance causing feminists/activists to withdraw support. Furthermore the application of the ordinance was believed to be primarily targeted at gay and lesbian pornography. Judith Butler, to name one example, is an advocate of pornography because censorship is often particularly leveled against homosexuals.

The mark of Dworkin and MacKinnon nevertheless can be noted in cinema studies programs where pornography is studied such as by Linda Williams at University of California, Berkeley. In fact, for the purposes of research at academic institutions it is common to designate sexually explicit videos as either Dworkin/MacKinnon-pornographic or non-Dworkin/MacKinnon-pornographic.

In order to come to terms with what is meant by pornography in this paper, it is crucial to identify the criteria used by Dworkin and Mackinnon: " (i) women are presented dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities; or (ii) women are presented as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation; or (iii) women are presented as sexual objects who experience sexual pleasure in being raped; or (iv) women are presented as sexual objects tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt; or (v)women are presented in postures or positions of sexual submission, servility, or display; or (vi) women's body parts--including but not limited to , vaginas, breasts, or buttocks-- are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts; or (vii) women are presented as whores by nature; or (viii) women are presented as being penetrated by objects or animals; (ix) women are presented in

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

scenarios of degradation, injury, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual". (Dworkin and MacKinnon*:* 1988)

It is the thesis of this paper that safeguarding freedom of expression ultimately means that the 'coding' of pornography will remain uncontested. Therefore, in order to insure this freedom a high price must be paid. The mass-production of women as prostitutes by the adult entertainment industry is part of the imaginary realm of pornography. Equally, the sexually liberated woman, heterosexual or lesbian is obliged to be an advocate of pornography, for it is perceived that harmless indeed is the scope of the imaginary, with no causality in societal effects, as witnessed by the backlash against Dworkin and MacKinnon. The issue of pornography has taken many twists and turns during the second wave of feminism. One major observation that can be made is 'anything that can be said against pornography can be used as an argument for it'. In a perplexing matrix of reversals where philosophy over feminism has won many inroads, the roots of pornography and its effect on the image of women has been sidestepped.

In the 'backlash' against feminism, pornographic films by heterosexual women and lesbians are on the upswing. During the last years, two popular women's film festivals in Paris have showcased pornography made by women: *Cineffable* ,a lesbian film festival in its 11th year (November 1-5 2000) and the 23rd *Créteil Film de Femmes International Women's Film Festival* (March 23-April 2, 2001). Both venues have standards for film selection which scrutinize how the image of women is used so the question is why these films which 10 years ago would have been rejected made it to the front line. In fact would they have been made 10 years ago? Festival organizers claim that the films were selected because more and more pornographic films made by women are being sent in for consideration and therefore need to be addressed-- to be more precise--because they 'awaken debate'. The films were 'packaged' at *Créteil* for raising 'taboos'. At *Cineffable* , the films were shown late Saturday night, seemingly for their 'entertainment value ' as they are for cable television.

There has been a trend in film distribution lately to regard pornographic films made by women as examples of 'feminist films'. Liberal feminists, like their male counterparts, argue that the prohibition of pornography is a symptom of an archaic morality. The preciousness of freedom of expression, the denial that there is any causality to pornographic imagery and the subordination of woman in society, and an indifference to the conditions under which sex workers work in the adult entertainment industry safeguard the territory of pornography.

Despite attempts at 'reinventing ' pornography, there is nothing revolutionary in the iconography that would suggest that films made by women are, as their distributors advertise, 'feminist'. The current application of a feminist label to films made by women or involving female characters occurs with the use of violence or sex traditionally in control of male filmmakers and male characters in mainstream film. A panel discussion held at *Créteil* with filmmakers Catherine Breillat (France)and Shu Lea Cheang (USA) failed to qualify if pornographic films made by women were however a 'new genre'. French feminists, the bulk of the *Créteil* audience, boycotted the event and those women venturing arguments against the use of pornography in the films were booed and whistled at. There was an invisible kinship between the two filmmakers in the promotion of pornography as film currency without any explanation of how it was any different than that made by men. Here are examples of films chosen at women's festivals this year:

I.K.U

I.K.U starts where Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* ends. In the year 20XX the Genom Corporation manufacturers robots called 'IKU Coders ' which collect orgasm data. I.K.U.databases are on the net and I.K.U.chips sold in vending machines. A cyber tool that looks like a gun is used to plug in the client to a number of fantasy hosts


I.K.U. by Shu Lea Cheang
Japan 2000.

and hostesses.There are heterosexual and homosexual possibilities where sex is simulated.The title of the film is derived from a Japanese expression used in reaching orgasm. [http://www.i-k-u.jp]

Cheang originally from Taiwan, had been New York based for the last 20 years.She previously made *Fresh Kill,* a popular film shown at Créteil about pollution in New York featuring a lesbian couple.She wondered why all the women were mad at her this time at Créteil and didn't show up for *I.K.U.* which she considered a 'meta level ' of classic pornography. Seemingly knowledgeable of pornographic film techniques as the result of making this film,her first 'porno'venture, Cheang explained how the Japanese actors enjoyed working on her film and that the exploitative working conditions of porno industry production were non-existent.

When challenged about her use of conventional pornographic iconography during the *Créteil* panel, Cheang said she had not heard the word 'patriarchal' in a long time, and argued that her film did not fit within this paradigm. The human body in *I.K.U.*, she argued, is a gigabyte hard drive--and body parts, compressed bytes. She denied that her film used phallic symbols but were just 'images'. Cheang furthermore claimed the vagina is the matrix of desire and no human sexual organs touch in *I.K.U*. Cheang identifies herself a 'trans'sexual which for her means that she has transcended hetero and homo-sexuality. She advocates returning to the underground porno films of the 1970's in which viewers participated in group masturbation and also advocates pornography for all sexual lifestyles.

How to Fuck in High Heels

Shar Rednour and her partner Jackie Strano of S.I.R.productions (Sex Indulgence and Rock'n Roll) are the producers,directors and stars of this new dyke porno, a 'mockumentary' about making lesbian pornography--made like a documentary to poke fun at the genre.[http://www.sirvideo.com]


How to Fuck in High Heels, 2000 USA
Shar Rednour, Jackie Strano

Actress Shar is filmed by partner/director Jackie who compares their work to John Cassavettes and Gena Rowlands.The film is about a dominatrix with high heels who has sex with several women.There are classic sex industry closeups of sex organs and the staging of sexual acts is consistent with industry iconography. The main dialogue of the film consists of,'yeah,yeah ', right, yeah, oh baby,shit', consistent with the dialogue of classic pornography.The concern that lesbians own their imagery may be valid but a huge portion of lesbians walked out of the film at *Cineffable* this year. The common complaint was that there was nothing new with this kind of pornography, made by lesbians or not. In the postmodern era of recycling,the case can be actually made.What can be noted about this film and many of its kind by lesbians is that the sexual acts appear to be a parody of heterosexual pornography, in many ways a theatrical mockery mirroring back the power relations of industry porn.It is also true that lesbians making pornography use the imagery in the same way as heterosexual pornography although it seems clear that women relate to each other in non-hierarchical ways in this particular film even while parodying butch/ femme roles.

Jackie Strano is also the lead singer,(third from left in photo) one of the main songwriters and founder of the all woman hard rock band,'The Hail Marys' featured on the soundtrack of the Hollywood film, *Bound* (1997) by the Wachowski Brothers. Strano is a former worker-owner of *Good Vibrations* and worked for five


The Hail Marys

years as a sex educator in GV's retail and mail order businesses.(Susie 'Sexpert Bright was the advisor for the sex scenes between Meg Tilly and Gina Gershon in *Bound* ,shot in one take to avoid censorship).Shar Rednour (top left) is an editor, author, performance artist, zine publisher and author of "The Femme's Guide to the Universe".

Romance

In *Romance*, a young woman named Marie tires of her boyfriend's lack of sexual intimacy. Instead she begins a journey into sadomasochistic sexual adventure where she is bound and blindfolded by a teacher and subjected to bondage. She enjoys this, likening it to death, almost. She has anonymous sex with one man, who then rapes her but she tells him afterwards that she is not ashamed. Marie also fantasizes about being gang-raped,her lower and upper body partitioned by a wall where the lower half is penetrated by anonymous men. The journey is necessary, argues Breillat, in order to break the bonds of male domination that occur in the female imaginary. According to Andrea Dworkin, these 'dreams' are not erotic but 'dreams of torture and of hate, in this case hate being used against female bodies, the instruments of hate (mental or flesh) being used to maim". (Dworkin, 1983, p. 303.) At the end of the film as Marie gives birth to a baby her boyfriend is blown up in the apartment where she intentionally left the gas stove on. The teacher assumes the role of father, and birth, bondage and death are united.


Romance, Catherine Breillat, France, 1999

Heterosexual filmmaker Catherine Breillat had a small part in Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) a film about sex and the death urge, banned at first in Italy and in several cities of the USA. She admits to being inspired by Georges Bataille,who believes that women have two choices: to be chaste or prostitutes, and the Marquis de Sade--a batterer, rapist and child abuser. (Dworkin: 1983, p. 70, 151). Out of this pool of mentors, Breillat claims she wants to highlight female desire in her films. She admitted at the *Créteil* panel however that her biggest victory to date was in portraying the male sex organ. This breakthrough is praised because it has not been done, she says,--only the female is naked and exposed in film.
[http://www.lionsgatefilms.com/dnm/profile.html?pid=IN-T-00082]

Baise-Moi


Baise- Moi, France, 2000 ("Rape Me") France, Virginie Despentes

Baise-Moi is a film making its way around the art house cinema circuit based on a novel by heterosexual Virginie Despentes. It concerns two women who go on a killing spree: one is a prostitute who strangles her roommate for wanting to drink her alcohol and the other is an underage porn star who gets raped and subsequently shoots her brother for getting upset about it. They both team up, pick up men at bars and have sex with them. There is one homoerotic scene in which the women dance together a common device in pornographic films which serve as foreplay for male viewers before the 'real' heterosexual sex.


Filmmaker Virginie Despentes (on right)

The two women shoot a lot of cocaine and eventually one of them is gunned down at a gas station.The other is caught by the police while flashbacking about the dance scene with her slain killer friend/lover(?) In addition to the film being pornographic, it was banned in 23 countries quite probably because the women killed men (and one woman) and used them as objects. Hence the label, 'feminist', the backlash definition. The film has been shown since April 2001 at Kvartersbion, a small off beat neighborhood theater in Stockholm to 'awaken debate'(as at *Créteil* and *Cineffable*) and was not allowed to be advertised nor critiqued in Sweden in advance of the film's theatrical release.
[http://www.baisemoithemovie.com/]

Disarming Pornographic Moving Imagery

Laura Mulvey wrote the seminal article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in the 1970's, since rewritten. What still remains valid is the role of sadomasochistic voyeuristic imagery in the construction of 'pleasure '. Mulvey argued that there is no clear female gaze in film put perhaps it can be argued that pornography made by women is a speculation in which to measure the presence of a female gaze.

Breillat claims she provides a female gaze in her films as a heterosexual woman.With a voice over, the character Marie in *Romance* fantasizes about bondage and rape which become for her the only way to awaken desire. This is a consistent convention with Breillat where she tries to construct Eros in the eternal male and female. However she merely succeeds in role reversals where men do not want to have sex and women must find other partners, or where young men's hearts are broken with lecherous 'older' women such as in her most recent film *Brève Traversée* (2000).It is the *Thelma and Louise* (1991) syndrome where woman put on the guns and become outlaws but wind up having to die as punishment (one of the first films during the backlash against feminism labeled 'feminist').Despentes ' bonding of the female protagonists and exchange of men becomes a similar suicidal mission. These women do not sweep aside the existing order and break it up,nor rewrite it, but re-echo industrial codes of pornography.In one scene in *Baise Moi*, the two female protagonists visit a sex club and shoot all the patrons including an exploitative sexually violent murder of a male patron. The rape scene of *Baise-Moi* which has been censored in Britain includes raw close- ups which are eroticized. Most of the sex scenes in the film were not simulated, all shot in close range.

Shar Rednour and Jackie Strano borrow some of the conventions of classic pornography from a woman's point of view, where bondage becomes a metaphor.Since it's a 'mockumentary' it becomes a theatricalization of classic pornography, but still with no obvious female gaze. Shu Lea Cheang attempts to transcend sexuality to provide a host and donor without a body.But it is expected of the spectator to ignore the visualization of sexual organs and instead imagine them as a hardrive with gigabytes, proving that the speculation of the virtual is still in an embryonic stage.

When lesbians are behind the camera making hard core pornography are the film conditions different? Most pornographic shots are close-ups of sexual organs or substitutes for sexual organs minus the 'money shots ', i.e.shots of male ejaculation--athough there is a revolutionary upswing in depicting female ejaculation, the subject of many new lesbian documentaries. An inaccurate assumption is that the construction of these films does not constitute pornography because of lesbian agency. Even if the films are constructed as a lesbian narrative with camera angles,lighting,and mis-en- scéne,and even if the codes,argot and lifestyles are represented by lesbians for lesbian consumption, the codified images of pornography prevail where desire is often equated with bondage and rape, like a bandaid on a broken leg.

In fact, pornographic films appear to be inherently incapable of revealing a

female ordering of space. According to Luce Irigaray,male desire is based on the exchange of females among males. Female desire among women on the other hand, argues Irigaray, circumvents the economy of heterosexuality,and goes beyond the seller-buyer commodity structure. This is a dated assumption in light of the content of a number of recent pornographic films made by lesbians. Marketing mainstream or lesbian pornography as soft pore or erotic often involves bonding and rape fantasy, where the erotic and pornographic is inherently complicit.

While pornography may be just a 'speculation' it nevertheless is a voyeurist narrative with affective domains. Not only is there an 'erotic gaze' for women but also for the spectators in the audience. Different degrees of pleasure and distress are noted by film theoretician Linda Williams in the same way that images in horror films cause pleasure or dis-ease. She argues that pornographic films are moreover 'choreographies ' designed to affect emotions, understandably in multiple ways. Citing Linda Lovelace's film *Deep Throat ,* she claims that by studying the choreography of images we will understand more about power relations. That is however an analysis confined to the screen only. When confronted with the fact that Lovelace was beaten,harassed and financially exploited by her husband,Williams answered,'well she still earned a lot of money as a porn star'. Indeed, the corruption and graft of the porno film industry is well documented where 60% of the actors in porno films are incest survivors.One Internet website includes the story of a woman whose first lover was her father,adorned by pornographic pictures and an animated insert of the woman giving a blowjob. Jackie Strano also tells of how her first sexual encounter was with a trusted male relative on the *S.I.R* website. Do these revelations affect the speculation of pornography? Is it still possible to regard this imagery as just choreography and a document on power relations?

Disassembling images such as the ones used in pornography can be employed as a tool for understanding the expression of the roots of pornography. By seeing beyond the choreography of images and how they affect us on a knee jerk level we will come closer to an understanding of why pornography 'distresses' us. Dworkin and MacKinnon's argument against the dehumanization of women when presented as sexual objects or commodities is central to this understanding.

Literature

Cornell, Drucilla, 2000. *Feminism & Pornography*, Great Britain Oxford University Press.

Darren, Alison, 2000*. Lesbian Film Guide*, London: Cassel.

Dworkin,andrea,1983.*Pornography:Men Possessing Women*, Great Britain: The Women's Press.

Dworkin, Andrea And Mackinnon, Catherine, 1988. *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day*, Minneapolis: Organizing Against Pornography.

Irigaray, Luce, 1985.*The Sex Which is Not One*, New York: Cornell University Press.

Mackinnon, Catherine, 1993. *Only Words* ,Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

Williams, Linda, 1990, *Hardcore*, London: Pandora Press.

Moira Sullivan, a.k.a. Juanita Palomablanca, is the founder *of Living Communication International*, a film art enterprise, and received her doctorate in cinema studies from Stockholm University in 1997. She is a world expert on the avant-garde filmmaker Maya Deren and has been invited to Spain, France and Italy for special film programs. A film journalist and lecturer, she regularly attends the Paris based *Cineffable* and *Créteil* women's film festivals regularly to keep abreast of new developments in women's filmmaking.

Cineffable Film Festival,Paris:
http://www.dpi-europe.fr/~ebrun/cineffable/index.htm
Créteil Films de Femmes Festival, Paris : http://www.filmsdefemmes.com/

Moira Sullivan's websites:

The Maya Deren Forum: http://www.algonet.se/~mjsull
Living Femme Communication: http://www.angelfire.com/ms/livingcommunication
Living Communication International: http://www.livingcommunication.nu
Email: mjsull@algonet.se

Biotechnological Embodiment: Gender and Scientific Anxiety in Horror Films

Rebecca Sullivan, University of Calgary

rsulliva@ucalgary.ca

The horror film has long been a locus for feminist cultural analysis, particularly as concerns psychoanalytic readings of archetypal fears. However, recent developments in feminist cultural studies of science and technology suggest alternative avenues of research. The tensions between science facts and fictions can lead to investigations of the ways in which human identity is embodied and assigned value in culture and how those representations persist despite claims of progress in scientific practices through bioethics. On the one hand, horror films establish limitations to the definition of human-ness and offer cautionary tales of scientific hubris. On the other hand, they continue to assert long standing dichotomies of the body as feminine, natural and instinctual while the intellect is robustly masculine and the source of humanity's superior distinctiveness over animals and other life forms. I am looking here at five films that are based on two classic horror narratives. The first is arguably the most endearing figure of horror in popular culture, Dr. Frankenstein and his unnamed monster creation, brought to life by Mary Shelley in 1816. The second is the fiendish Dr. Moreau and his island laboratory, based on the 1896 novel by H. G. Wells. I am interested in exploring how these archetypal stories have adjusted to specific social conditions of science and biotechnology while continuing to enforce hegemonic constructions of feminized embodiment.

I am examining here filmic adaptations from the 1930s and revised representations over sixty years later, in the 1990s. The goals is to see if shifts in the discourses and power relations of science have led to changes in the cultural value of women through gendered dichotomies of mind versus body, culture versus nature. The films in question here are James Whale's two B-movie gems *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935); and *The Island of Lost Souls* (1933), featuring Charles Laughton as Dr. Moreau. The more contemporary versions of these tales meet the criteria for what Roger Ebert recently called Big Budget Bs, films with B-movie plots and characters but with bloated budgets to signify importance. Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994) certainly meets that description, as does the 1996 Marlon Brando vehicle *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. While in all films, the lead protagonist and monster-antagonist are male (even in *Bride of Frankenstein*, the groom gets all the screen time), there are two strategic ways to investigate their gender relations. The first and most obvious is in the representation of the supporting female characters. However, I want to do more than just that by using a feminist critique to analyze the representation of science and its efforts to circumscribe the relationship between mind and body, as seen in these films.

When science is treated as part of culture, it can be analyzed in terms of the way it seeks to legitimate certain epistemologies of the body, as set in contradistinction to intellect in the construction of the self. Conversely, cultural representations of scientific practices intervene on these discourses to turn the tables on the scientific establishment. As Annette Burfoot points out in her article "Technologies of Panic at the Movies" we are dependent on scientists and the media to explain their advances, we can't simply walk into their laboratories to see for ourselves (1999:125). Thus, concerns are brought into the public domain through fictional narratives of what many might argue are very real – and very frightening – possibilities. She argues, and I agree, that feminist critical theories are crucial to this kind of cultural analysis. Even when the particulars of the argument do not directly relate to women's experiences

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

as different from men's, a feminist perspective retains the cultural memory of being cast in a subordinate and devalued position by the omnipotent authority of science.

Science makes value judgements about life according to assumptions that are often both patriarchal and colonial, and then masks these judgements as merely observable, empirical fact, unassociated with society or the actual lived experiences of individuals. Donna Haraway identified the processes by which science creates nature out of culture in her earliest works, including *Primate Visions* (1989). I mention this text because it brought together issues of race and gender as well as the human-animal divide that tends to not be as thoroughly scrutinized as her other boundary fictions of human-machine and physical-ephemera. These three elements – race, gender and animalism – are deployed in the discourses of science to assign differing values to life. As will become clearer especially in my analysis of the Dr. Moreau films, the cordonning off of nature, animalism and the exotic and their association with women or racialized others is a common strategy in asserting boundaries between human consciousness versus natural instinct. The nature/culture dichotomy is ultimately false because both are socially constructed and subject to relations of power and authority. Once religion held the reins but since the Enlightenment Age, science as the ultimate practice of reason has taken control. Susan Bordo has defined this as "The Flight to Objectivity," away from a holistic, feminized world view and into a hierarchical, masculinist vision. I don't want to necessarily contest her gendering of these oppositional philosophies at this time. However, the easy acceptance of this ordering has been internalized by cultural narratives that continue to associate the feminine with the natural and the body, which ironically have led to continued representations that signify women as a lower or at least more manipulable human form.

While science and scientific practices changed dramatically during the course of the last century, in many ways it seems that only the language of science was altered, while underpinning ideologies of racial and patriarchal authority continued. I am interested especially in how the films under question here represent a transition from science-as-medicine to science-as-biotechnology. This is marked by a change from a mechanistic approach to the body and its invasion by huge instruments to a more fluid theory of the body as code to be cracked through microscopic interventions. In other words, eugenic models of the 1930s emphasized social engineering through medical intervention. These slowly transformed into our present day faith in genetic engineering through biotechnological enterprises.

The traditional model of science was contested even in the 1930s, perhaps a contributing factor to the popularity of "mad scientist" narratives and horror films. Already by then, science had been corporatized to a point where nearly seventy per cent of all chemists working in the United States were employed not by universities or government laboratories but by private industry (Skal 1998:109). Critics complained that the model of pure science was akin to "a dark mystery cult" and "a foul corruption in the very heart's blood of society" (ibid:139). However, it was not until the late sixties that bioethics was conceived when Bernard Barber began a social scientific study of medical researchers and their professional practices. His discovery that scientists valued "scientific ability" far beyond "ethical concerns" when determining laboratory procedures, experimental methods and research partners shocked and outraged the scientific community (Restak 1973:124). An interesting point is that this sudden interest in medical research ethics arose at the same time as women were beginning to gather force in opposition to the profession's domineering attitude over their reproductive rights and general health concerns. Sheryl Burt Ruzek explained this key transitional moment in the second wave feminist movement as a protest over the demise of a "female culture" of medicine beginning early in the nineteenth century when obstetrics and gynecology became areas of specialty (1978:14). By the early 1970s, the women's health movement identified the body as a locus of power and authority and a site for struggle between women and the medical-scientific establish-

ment. The new field in the life sciences of medical or bioethics allowed for increased public participation in guiding publicly funded research. However, what remained intact was a model of "good science" versus "bad." Ironically, that division claims good as dispassionate, empirical, rational and institutional. Feminist cultural scholars have long pointed out that such characteristics are all too often deemed appropriately masculine values, asserted into primacy alongside Enlightenment philosophies of self-oriented rationality and an epistemological division between the intellect as the locus for human supremacy and the body as its tame-able other (Bordo:1987; Lundin:1997, 1999; Balsamo:1996; Burfoot:1999). Thus, definitions about good science justify practices that determine what counts as good bodies and even better minds. That these purportedly sound scientific rationales for science itself eventually manifest in tales of fear, loathing and anxiety suggests that these universal principles are in fact constantly contested and must shift focus in order to steel themselves against new and different protests. Thus the seemingly subtle differences in films based on the same narrative do not merely contemporize enduring myths but ground concerns in particular, historically-located discourses of scientific power and legitimation. Thus the films of the nineties are not merely remakes or rehashes of the same themes and conventions as they existed in the thirties. They are instead distinct articulations of specific cultural anxieties related to the status and authority of science, and its relationship to cultural notions of the body versus the mind as the locus of human identity.

The original Gothic novel *Frankenstein* has been subject to many feminist critical interventions for its foreboding themes about the displacement of women from the centre of reproduction, not only the biological process of birth but also the cultural practices of creating sound, moral persons. This is not so much in evidence at least in the 1930s variations, which focus more on eugenical concerns about normal versus abnormal or criminal mentality. In Whale's version, Frankenstein's goal is to improve humanity and unravel the secrets of eternity but he has no personal reasons other than driven by a purely – albeit deeply perverted – scientific desire for knowledge. By contrast, Branagh's doctor is given a kind of Oedipal motivation, spurred by the gruesome death of his mother while giving birth to his younger brother. It is, perhaps, the most disturbing scene in the film as the mother offers up her life so that her son will survive. Unlike the rest of his family, he alone cannot reconcile himself to her death and sets about to uncover the mystery of immortality.

What I find interesting about these films is not so much their representations of reproduction or parent-child relations as the differences in which the mind and the body are set in opposition to each other as life is created and then judged to be sub-human. Whale's monster is entirely criminal, stitched together from the bodies of reprobates but supposedly redeemed by a perfect brain. Unfortunately, an abnormal brain is unknowingly implanted in the monster; thus it is unable to overcome the failings of its body. There is no such mistake in Branagh's creation but still the corrupt body overcomes the intellect. The monster's search for identity is buried within the collective residual memories of its different body parts. His mind, once belonging to Frankenstein's mentor, seems to have little impact on his sense of identity In both cases, however, the monster is loathed and feared precisely because it cannot control its instinctual, bodily urges. Its lack of humanity is ultimately portrayed as a lack of rational intellect, despite the fact that it is created fully from human bodies. Thus, the primacy of mind over body remains unproblematized even though the scientific rationales for it have changed considerably.

By the 1930s, the darwinian model of eugenics was already under fire. In its place, was a movement to develop a "science of man," that encompassed the natural, social and medical sciences. According to the Rockefeller Foundation, which spearheaded this program, the goal was "the conscious control of race and individual development with rather particular reference to mentality and temperment" linked to "the study and application of knowledge of social phenomena and social controls"

(Paul 1998:54). Their language was clearly concerned with preserving a hierarchy of white, patriarchal Euro-centrism and to curtail the mobility of racialized and sexualized others. Yet, they claimed to be launching a new era of modern science, one that replaced mental hygiene and eugenics with the pure sciences of psychobiology and genetics. As genetics slowly usurped eugenics, the focus was less on definitions of normality and brain physiology as on the body's genetic make up and microscopic interventions to correct faulty wiring at the source. Antisocial behaviour ceased to be a problem of the mechanics of the mind and became one of the body and its programming. This transition came into fruition around the same time as the feminist movement was also shifting from public policy concerns of labour and education to a body politics of women's health and reproductive rights. Thus the body became an increasingly important locus for the definition of human identity as well as identified in increasingly essentialist, holistic terms as the cosmic link between humans and nature. That relationship could be benignly exotic when associated with women but was a monstrous assault on the cosmic order if attempted on men. The tale of Dr. Moreau makes this ambivalence more explicit.

The original Wells story was written at the height of the anti-vivesection movement in England, spearheaded largely by middle class women who claimed an affinity with innocent animals. It features a mad scientist who retreats to a remote island to conduct experiments on the wild animals in the jungle, turning them into hybrids of human and animal. The irony of darwinian theories of evolution placed animals and humans along a continuum, creating an irrevocable link at the level of fundamental biology and genetic memory. This created a model of biological give-and-take, where animals were both sentimentalized as our evolutionary cousins and therefore also exploited as raw material for our improvement (Lundin 1999:22). In both films, a virile young man is lured onto the island so that he can be used to stabilize the human transformation of the wild panther woman, called Lota in the first film and Aissa in the later adaptation. In the mechanistic-surgical lab of the first film, it's unclear how this is to happen except for Lota to seduce Edward and be rehumanized through love/lust. By the nineties, the rapid advancement of cellular manipulation precludes the need for sex. Aissa can be penetrated instead with a needle filled with Edward's genetic material. Lota/Aissa is the doctor's only successful animal/human hybrid because she is both beautiful and pliant, whereas the man-animals are grotesque abominations requiring strict controls on their behaviour. What's more, as an animalistic woman, she alone is depicted as highly erotic and sensual. That sexually charged persona is highlighted not only by her gender but also by her racial character. Lota appears to be of Asian descent (although it could just be the make up) and her dark hair is set in contrast to the luminescently blonde features of Edward's fiancé. In the 1996 version, Aissa is introduced through a classic male gaze apparatus. Dressed in a kind of sari, she performs a generically eastern-influenced dance to the secret and silent delight of Edward. Despite sixty years of feminist critique, the panther woman character reaffirms scientific representations of women as lower-order humans, prone to emotionalism and instinct like animals. Such connections were solidified in women's protests against vivisection during the Victorian era and explained by Coral Lansbury in 1985 as a uniquely feminine response to the threat of medical sciences against women's bodies (in Turney 1998:53). When even certain feminist responses to the cultural practices of science assert an argument about women's connection to animals in scientific discourses, it is not surprising that films that are supposedly critiquing the ethical practices of science still make exceptions when it comes to the animalistic tendencies of women.

We are currently at a crossroads in the development of biotechnology. Recent debates over xenotransplantation, embryonic stem cell research, and gene therapy are challenging the physical limitations of the body and blurring definitions of humanity or even of life itself. Understanding the cultural constructions of the body, not only as corporeal matter but also as the template on which is inscribed notions of history,

identity and authority, seems to be increasingly more important as science fiction narratives account for deep ambivalences in this new scientific order. However, as the body gains force especially in feminist thought, its traditional association with the femininized, racialized and animalized other needs to be further critiqued. To what extent does a focus on the body in our cultural fictions assist in scientific discourses that claim the body as a map to be probed, itemized and then fit back together? As life is reduced to the microscopic and the biogenetic, and claims of holistic oneness at the cellular level become more prevalent, there is the concern that some may be deemed a little closer to nature than others. The challenge to feminism is to undermine that language of the body without erasing our embodied difference in our relationship to science, culture and history.

Literature

Balsamo, Anne, 1996. *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bordo, Susan, 1987. *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Caretesiansim and Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Burfoot, Anne, 1999. "Technologies of Panic at the Movies: Killer Viruses, Warrior Women and Men in Distress" in S. Brodribb, ed. *Reclaiming the Future: Women's Strategies for the 21st Century*. Charlottetown, PEI: Gynergy Books, 125-148.

Haraway, Donna, 1989. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge.

Lundin, Suzanne. 1999. "The Boundless Body: Cultural Perspectives on Xenotransplantation." *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 64:1, 5-31.

--- 1997. "Visions of the Body." in S. Lundin and M. Ideland, eds. *Gene Technology and the Public: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press. 71-85.

Paul, Diane B., 1998. *The Politics of Heredity: Essays on Eugenics, Biomedicine and the Nature-Nurture Debate*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Restak, Richard M., 1973. *Premeditated Man: Bioethics and the Control of Future Human Life*. New York: The Viking Press.

Ruzek, Sheryl Burt, 1978. *The Women's Health Movement: Feminist Alternatives to Medical Control*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Skal, David J., 1998. *Screams of Reason: Mad Science and Modern Culture*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Turney, Jon, 1998. *Frankenstein's Footsteps: Science, Genetics and Popular Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Missing the Point - Situated User Experience and the Materiality of Interaction

Heidi Tikka, University of Art and Design, Helsinki

htikka@uiah.fi

Introduction

How to speak about interactive media art? That question concerns me both from a media artist's perspective and from a researcher's. As a practicing media artist I often face the difficulty of communicating my work to someone, who has not experienced it, for in the case of interactive work, seeing is not enough. As a researcher of interactive art I observe a similar concern. In order to be able to discuss an interactive piece, I have to have encountered it personally. And when speaking about an interactive experience, witnessing someone elses interaction with a piece is not enough. One has to place oneself into the place of the user in order to really grasp the work in its complexity.

In many cases however, one has to settle with the conceptualization of the piece: descriptions of spatial arrangements, visuals and various schematizations of interactivity. But something is missing there, something, that immediately changes the entire perception of the piece, once it is entered. In this paper I am interested in approaching that aspect of interactive media art that cannot be reduced into a concept of an interactive situation. I will address this irreducibility as the materiality of an interactive experience.

The notion of materiality, has to be handled with caution. It is not my intention to posit materiality itself as the sign of irreducibility. Instead, I am interested in inquiring into the constitution of that material dimension of interactive art, which risks staying outside the general conventions of media art discourse. For me, it seems, this materiality involves the embodied and psychical aspects of an interactive experience, but it also involves an entire field of technology, that consists of various human and non human actors, setups and decissions concerning their place.

For me then, the question of how to speak about interactive media art is both a strategical and a methodological question. In my own work I pursue what I call a situated user experience. It consists of a sense of locatedness and embodiment as well as a more or less complex series of identificatory positions that the user will occupy when interacting with the piece. Now I will propose that this kind of situatedness should also concern the place from which interactive media art is approached theoretically. It seems to me symptomatic, that in contemporary media theory, only a handful of interactive installations are being discussed. Moreover, many of these installations seem to have rigidified into concepts that are being circulated between texts, as the various discussions addressing them appear surprisingly identical. And as long as interactive installations are approached through concepts of interactive situations, leaving out the writers situated user experience this homogeneity of the discourse is likely to continue.

I want, therefore, to argue for the fruitfulness of a situated perspective for writing about interactive media art. It seems to me that if one is willing to put oneself into the picture, that picture would also accommodate more personal accounts of one's situated user experiences. Would that change the way interactive art is being theorized in contemporary discourse? Perhaps not entirely. It might, however, introduce a more nuanced understanding of interactive media by opening up spaces for discussing socially and culturally specific, embodied encounters staged and structured by contemporary media installations. It might also contribute to bringing into

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the realm of intelligibility some interactive experiences that might now be absent in the contemporary discourse.

But how to bring oneself into the picture? How to frame one's experience? Presently, I find it necessary to overlap two frames: that of the user and of the spectator. From a user's perspective I am able to focus into the interactive experience. My problem with the notion of the user is that, as the product of a usability discourse, it lacks the cultural and philosophical depth provided by contemporary visual theory. Therefore, it seems essential to carry out my discussion also in relation to spectatorship. Both in my artistic and my research work I am interested in inquiring into the idea of border breakdowns, shared by many contemporary discourses. I have previously elaborated on the notion of skin in this context, investigating those discourses under which skin as the border between the inside and the outside becomes technologized.

In this paper, however, I propose to frame the user experience from the point of view of trauma, which for me figures as the border breakdown between the subject and the world. I am interested in the experience in which something, as if by chance emerges from outside the frame of the situation, agitating and agonizing the user. In the discourse that draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis, this traumatic encounter is refered to as the return of the real. Within this frame, I will narrate two encounters with interactive installations, that left me in the state of anxiety. In these rather embarassing encounters something unanticipated took place: in the first case someone got hurt, in the second one my excessive bodily presence overshadowed the idea of a smooth interactive exchange.

Epizoo

Epizoo is a computer mediated, participatory performance. In Epizoo, Marcelli Antunez Roca offers his body for the members of the audience to play with and essentially, to torture. In the beginning of the performance, Marcelli's body gets connected to a series of devices that move separate areas of muscles and skin in his body. These devices are operated by a computer. The user interface for the system consists of a visualization of a stylized male body, the avatar of Marcelli, that the user manipulates with a mouse.

Epizoo displays an excessive male body in a ridiculous and humiliating situation. It turns that body into an object of control, taking away its autonomy and as such repeats the theme of the male body as a (sexual) automaton, that characterizes some of Marcelli's work. In another piece by him, a natural sized male robot, constructed from pig skin, displays its member in erection every time the audience whistles or yells loud enough. In Epizoo, his performance consists of a stylized audiovisual dance, triggered by the audience input. This input can be looked at in two ways at least. On one hand he represents his male body as an automaton, that the audience is free to control and humiliate. On the other, he can be seen to take the audience input as the inspiration for his performance. In that sense the performance becomes more like a perverse, improvisational dance. When following the performance, one learns to tell the difference between different moments of exchange with audience. Whenever somebody tortures his body imaginatively enough, the pain he experiences perceivably electrifies his performance.

In Epizoo, Marcelli obviously plays with both the themes of control and the materiality of the body. The graphical user interface, that in the everyday experience tends to situate the user into a simulational space, in which the actions do not have direct material concequences in the "real world", is here used to produce direct effects in the flesh of the performer. This excessive control that reaches beyond simulation, has, as its outcome, a body that seems to be out of control, and as such, a bit too much. The body performed by Marcelli is rude, exaggerated, decomposed and loud. But in all its ridiculous excess, it also recalls and carnevalizes some historical

moments in the technologization of the body: the body as the instrument of Inquisition, the body as the source of medical precission and inquiry - and the apparent failure to conceive of the cyborg body as seamless and neat. All these moments suggest certain loss in the autonomy of the body. And as such they facilitate the perception of the performed body as an automaton, subject to endless repetition of trauma.

But what is the trauma that is being repeated? In order to approach it I need to resituate myself. Now I am playing with Marcelli's representation on screen. It is a pleasurable game. I am astonished at how fast his body becomes instrumentalized in my perception. I don't feel his pain at all. Instead I engage in, what I imagine is a mutual improvisation. I try to torture hims as cleverly as I can. I am having fun. But gradually I notice that something has taken place. Marcelli is being hurt. His harness is malfunctioning and the pain he now experiences is more than just an input for a little improvisational dance. His pain is real. But the pain does not show at once. What I, we notice first, are the clicks from a little box hanging from his waist as he tries to reset the system. The performance stops for a moment. Mercelli's technical assistant, who is the builder of the system, enters on stage. Marcelli looks upset and we know that something is wrong. But he continues to play. Somehow he manages to the end.

Later I feel horrified. Was it my fault? Was it my sense of omnipotence that produced the accident. With these guilt feelings I am being thrown into some unrecognized childhood experience. Or, perhaps it is the other way round. Perhaps this accident that appears as if by chance, is called by something, a missed encounter from my childhood that has something to do with omnipotency and guilt. Perhaps it was not even during my play that the accident happened. For we did not see it happen. Perhaps there was no accident at all - just an accumulating set of malfunctioning parts that gradually gained visibility.

It seems to me then, that the failure of the technology to function properly in this particular case produced a set of effects, that, in spite of their heterogenity should be considered together. The failure brought an entire set of new performers on stage: the clicking box, another person, cables, electricity, a rupture in the flow of the performance. But for me this new staging appeared as an accident by chance, that produced another rupture in my subjective reality. The coinsidence then marks a certain border breakdown in my relation to the work, for the rupture opens simultaneously towards my psychic reality and the reality in which Epizoo as a piece of technology is conceived.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, what emerges from the dimension of the real, emerges from outside the frame of the symbolic. In this schematization, repetition serves to screen the traumatic real. Repetition, in a sense can be understood as a continuously failing effort to integrate the traumatic event into the psychic reality of the subject. And as such, repetition also marks the failure of representation, as the traumatic real insists outside the frame in which it would become representable. What interests me then is, how technology in Epizoo functions as if such a frame. It seems to me that in Epizoo technology operates on two levels at least. On one hand technology serves as a dramatic display, as the stage onto which the user subject enters. But on the other, technology is used to produce that stage in a particular way, for a certain subject position. And in this role, technology is essentially organized to stay out of frame. An instance of a machine jam that emerges from outside the frame into which the user subject is integrated, appears then as a traumatic event.

Interestingly enough, that, exactly, it seems to me, is the structure that Marcelli plays with on a representational level as well. The obscene bodily gestures generated by his interactive system figure as a certain refusal to become completely integrated into the technology as it is framed by his installation. In a sense then, the failure of the technical system in this case strangely duplicates and haunts that which takes place as the representation of an automaton.

InConversation

The second encounter, that I am going to discuss, alhtough more briefly, is an interactive installation staged on street: InConversation by Susan Collins. The piece consists of an exchange between two participants, one on street and the other one in the internet. On street, there is a video projection of a mouth, that may address a person passing by, if there is someone on line in the web site. The street situation is made visible in the website that enables the user to not only see but also intervene in the situation by typing his or her comments anonymously. These comments will then be transcribed into spoken words, heard on the street as if spoken by the video mouth. The piece can then be seen as a strange interface connecting two participants in two incommensurate spaces, the global space of the internet and the local space of a particular street corner.

Here I am, on street, eight months pregnant. As one of the curators of the event in which InConversation is participating, I think I know what the piece is about. My intention is just to have my interactive experience documented. It is raining, I feel exhausted, my baby has just woken up and keeps pushing his body agains my rib, I want to get home - and yet, I will be surprised. The surprise is how vulnerable I feel talking to or through the piece. Standing there, in front of the two video cameras, the one documenting my presence for the web site and the other for future reference, I do not know who to talk to, the projection of the mouth on the sidewalk or the invisible camera mounted somewhere above me. I feel as if my beequeen body was watched from everywhere: from the unlocatable spatiality of somewhere in the internet, from the exterior point of the video camera next to me articulating the place of the other, the place from which I cannot see myself ... and from that impossible place inside me, where this strange consciousness, already displaying the will of his own is about to emerge. These impossible places from which I am being "seen" unfold in a space that is unimaginable within Euclidean coordinates.

My sense of confusion is accentuated by the apparent presence of several participants in the conversation through various locations in the internet - and God knows how many others just silently observing the streamed video footage. The entity represented by the video mouth has a split personality to say the least. I have to pick up threads of conversations that keep shifitng as users on line come and go. Interestingly, nobody comments on my pregnancy. It is interesting, because, in a sense, my pregnancy insists on the multiplicity that structures exchange in InConversation. In my experience of the piece, the embodied multiplicity of myself constitutes a mirror image for that fluid entity, the giant orifice of a mouth personifying the collective anonymous user. Moreover, the certain overpresence of my body seems to push the audiovisual representation of the mouth towards other kinds of oral pleasures. However, in this situation, as much as in the previous one, this sense of overpresence is produced as much in relation to technology as to my carnal existence. In the encounter, my body does not only become multiplied as the pregnant body but also as the body of someone being videotaped as if behind the scenes, but which is nevertheless visible for the other camera. This overpresence that keeps pushing from outside the edges of the frame in which the work would be digestable, prompts someone to ask: Are you an artist? And I, missing the point of the question completely, simply answer: Yes, I am.

Conclusion

How then, should these kinds of narratives be placed? As contingent and particular experiences they obviously cannot claim any truth for themselves. I would like to suggest however, that the place of a situated user might turn out be extremely productive for writing about interactive media. What I have been developing here, could perhaps be understood as an effor to address the significance of failure. It seems to me,

both as an artist and as a writer, that interacive work is characterized by an aspect of materiality and heterogeneity that only becomes approachable through personal involvement. However, this involvement may also include the failure to conceptualize the work from the point of view in which it is visible in its entirety. In the place of a situated user one is likely to miss that point.

A Cataclysm of Carnage, Nausea, and Death: Saving Private Ryan and Bodily Engagement

Julie Turnock, University of Amsterdam

jturnock@hotmail.com

> "The American soldiers stare silently, occasionally vomiting with seasick fear. The fronts of the boats drop open, and the enemy gunfire explodes with a sickeningly dense and relentless cracking, the camera trembling as if the earth itself were coming apart. This may be D-Day, but it looks more like a mass suicide, and the profound shock and horror is that it doesn't stop. For nearly half an hour, Spielberg uses his unparalleled kinetic genius to create an excruciatingly sustained cataclysm of carnage, nausea, and death."
> –Owen Gleiberman, (*Entertainment Weekly*, 1998)

> "Using the overpowering techniques of modern film, Steven Spielberg has cut through the glory-tinged gauze that shrouds World War II to reveal its brutal reality, creating a phenomenology of violence unsurpassed in the history of cinema."
> –Gary Kamiya (*Salon.com,* 1998)

In Steven Spielberg's 1998 film *Saving Private Ryan*, the opening "Omaha Beach" sequence was without a doubt the film's most consistently praised and discussed aspect in popular reviews, virtually all of which singled out the virtuoso film-making of that sequence. Even otherwise lukewarm reviews gave Spielberg his due for producing "quite possibly the best combat sequence ever made" (Schickel 1998) and an effect that was"...a powerful experience... a lot of people will weep." (Ebert 1998).

The reactions elicited by the 25 minutes long Omaha beach sequence, were not inadvertent. In interviews promoting the film's release, Spielberg said he intended to avoid what he called the romanticism of earlier World War II films, and create a kind of "newsreel" realism in the vein of Robert Capa documentary photographs. This conception he framed in the rhetoric of greater realism: he believed this was the way to get closest to how war really was and really is. Of course the film techniques of bleached negatives, an unsteady camera, unexpected cuts and disjointed time sequencing tell some part of the story for how this reality effect was constructed. But this does not tell us how, specifically, this effect of extreme bodily and emotional engagement described by so many critics and ticket-buyers, and even veterans is achieved in this film.

The academic study of the physically manifested effects of film (why for example, do films make us cry, feel turned on, or start with fright?) tends to be a particularly gendered and genre-oriented discourse. Study of the so-called "body genres" has been limited primarily to horror, pornography, and melodrama by feminist scholars, most influentially by Linda Williams, Carol Clover, and Vivian Sobchack, and expanded upon in other realms by other scholars Laura Marks and Steven Shaviro. It would seem obvious that war films, with their excessive interest in pain and the manipulation of the body would have been well-studied in this context. However, this seems to only sporadically be the case.

In my paper, I intend to examine the way in which recent, usually feminist writings on the viewers' physical response effect in so-called"body genres," can be applied to the Omaha Beach sequence in *Saving Private Ryan*. However, I do not only want to show how this effect can help explain the viewers' intense bodily reactions to the film. I wish also to study this moment in the popular discourse surrounding

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

war films and their depiction of "realism" or what I will call, a feminized bodily realism in relation to war, and how the attention this sequence received betrays a distinct change in Hollywood's approach to war films. More specifically, I will illustrate how the commentary by film-makers and critics demonstrates the rhetorical merging between realism and bodily engagement. Finally, I hope to understand how the visceral body effects in *Saving Private Ryan* mean in the film, and what this choice means for contemporary war films within the popular discourse around the recent renewal of interest in World War II.

Film Reviews/rhetoric

Popular press reviews contemporary to the release of Saving Private Ryan attest to the bodily impact the Omaha Beach landing scene had on its spectators. Mainstream American critics with broad readerships such as Richard Schickel of *Time Magazine*, Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly*, and Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* all emphasize this sequence's visceral effects as the film's highlight. When Gary Kamiya in *Salon.com* calls this sequence, "the most vivid and visceral war scene ever filmed," he brings to the fore the bodily engagement that all these American critics noted, and further explicitly equates "realism" with bodily engagement.

The rhetoric of "realism" continues in interviews (Daly 1998; Gordiner 1998) promoting the film's release with Steven Spielberg, who continually referred to the Robert Capa documentary photographs and "newsreel" authenticity, saying, "I wanted to achieve reality." He pushed this further by asserting he was, "assuming the role of a combat cameraman, not assuming the role of an artist." Spielberg presented greater realism and his idea of a less mediated romanticism as his moral duty: "I would be doing an extreme disservice to veterans if this was simply one more movie that glamorized World War II." In another interview, Spielberg stated explicitly how he wanted the viewer to feel during this sequence: "I wanted the audience in the arena, not sitting off to one side. I didn't want to make something that was easy to look away from." (Schickel 1998) Although Spielberg and his associates constantly invoke "reality" and "realism" as their objective, it seems that what they really want to construct is a reality effect based in visceral bodily engagement.

Bodily Engagement Theory Review:

The above quotes leave little doubt that a visceral reaction was both carefully constructed and vividly experienced in the Omaha Beach landing sequence. The problem of how physically-felt effects are engendered in the spectator is a question only recently begun to be studied in depth by scholars. Though these studies treat different genres and have various polemical interests, a review of the research in particular by Linda Williams (1991), Vivian Sobchack (2000), Laura Marks (1999), and Steven Shaviro (1993) on bodily effect can help shed light on *Saving Private Ryan's* power.

Linda Williams has been among the earliest and most influential theorists on describing and critiquing what she calls the body genres: Horror, melodrama, and pornography. These marginal genres usually address the "lower" emotions to elicit a bodily effect in the spectator (what she calls the "jerk" effect, as in tear-jerk, fear-jerk, or jerk-off). The genres she has chosen to study rely heavily on the highly gendered spectacle of the female body displaying the pertinent features of bodily excess: the spectacle of the body caught in the grip of intense stimulation or emotion, the display of ecstasy, and the uncontrollable convulsion or spasm of the body "beside itself" with sensation. Though Williams notes the rise of what she calls "male weepies," she does not treat the spectacle of the male body caught in sensation. However, her categories are useful for rethinking how war films might harness the system of physical and emotional excess, marking a more male-gendered cite of bodily display.

Vivian Sobchack in her more recent writing ("What My Fingers Knew," on *The Piano*) seeks to account for the "as if real" feeling experienced by the viewer in his or her lived body, or as she puts it, the carnal foundations of cinematic intelligibility. Most importantly, Sobchack wants to show how we are touched by films in a non-metaphorical way, and how meaning is created as the senses bleed into each other, collapsing the presumed clarity of objectivity and subjectivity, commingling our bodies and the representations on the screen. To describe this process, Sobchack renames the spectator the "cinesthetic subject," coined from the words synaesthesia, a medical condition that causes the vivid, automatic crossing-over of sense boundaries (so one tastes a the color yellow, for example) and coenaesthesia, the pre-logical way sensory information is varyingly heightened and diminished, like a baby's non-hierarchical experience of sensation at a birth. Unlike in familiar psychoanalytically-based subject theory, the cinesthetic subject is ambiguously located both on- and off-screen.

Sobchack's phenomenological account emphasizes the pre-rational, reflexive connection between the literal and figurative bodies in the seats and on the screen. "On the rebound" from the screen, the spectator experiences an intense but diffuse sensual solicitation. The skin becomes sensitized in the reciprocal exchange of what she calls, "an overwhelmingly general and intensely extensive mode of being." While Sobchack's conception is somewhat abstract, this "rebounding" sensual sensitivity is an adroit way to describe the experience of the Omaha Beach sequence in *Saving Private Ryan,* as will be illustrated in an example later on.

Laura Mark's larger project in *The Skin of the Film* (1999) describes sensory activation within intercultural film as a way of engaging with memory. Her notion of "haptic visuality,"(Marks 1999, p.162) is also concerned with how the image addresses the body multisensorily, as an extension of the lived body, providing a more specific description of the kinds of cinematic images and formal elements that encourage this effect. Crucially to Marks, in haptic visuality, "Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish forms so much as to discern texture," (Marks 1999, p.162) de-emphasizing a cognitive engagement with the narrative. Marks describes the techniques for producing cinema's prohaptic properties as those that privilege the materiality of the film, for example: changes in focus, graininess, effects of under/over exposure, optical printing, and emulsion work on the physical surface of the medium. All of these discourage the viewer from distinguishing objects and encourage a relationship to the screen as a whole, and also multiply points of visual contact all over the screen. The physical response is activated, not through visual mastery, but when the viewer makes him/herself vulnerable to the image, losing a sense of proportion within the image. The Omaha Beach sequence relies heavily on this same seeming lack of proportion, narrative incoherence, and mutuality with the image for its prohaptic power.

Steven Shaviro's polemic project in *The Cinematic Body* (1993) is to reject even more strongly than Marks the idea of psychoanalytic "mastery" or "stability" as the source of visual pleasure, and suggest in its place a kind of masochistic pleasure based on the violent shattering of the subject. The spectator takes pleasure in the image precisely because of the abdication of control. In this way, visual pleasure is amplified by the fragmentation, defamiliarization, dislodging, and de-contextualization experienced in the viewer's body. The abolishing of distance and the cutting off of objects from their referents (like Sobchack's collapsing of objective and subjective) means that sounds and images are "reactivated," multiplied and intensified, precisely by being cut off from their source or origin.

Shaviro describes the pleasure of filmic images as primarily violent, the "...images literally assault the spectator, leaving him or her no space for reflection." This violence "... literally anchor[s] desire and perception in the agitated and fragmented body." (Shaviro 1993, p.55.) Shaviro's ideas are useful in pointing out the visual pleasure activated by the shock effects of violence. *Saving Private Ryan's* diso-

rienting visual techniques (which will be discussed later), along with its movable, fragmented, panicked-soldier POV camera and masochistic subject positioning make Shaviro's theories of visual pleasure particularly useful in this study.

These positions begin to create an aggregate vision of the kind of bodily engagement at work in *Saving Private Ryan*. In valorizing physical response as an essential part of cinema, they share a disdain of attempts at "critical distance" in film viewing, and they emphasize the transformative possibilities in excessive genres and forms. Further, all four theorists reject any Mulvian psychoanalytic "mastery" as the explanation for bodily response. These studies can help us re-think cinematic response experienced by a highly sensitized "cinesthetic subject" within a system of physical and emotional excess and (here male) bodily display in relation to *Saving Private Ryan*. The collapsing of the on-screen and off-screen space, (of subjectivity and objectivity) is experienced bodily as an abject pleasure, and aesthetically, pleasure and sensation are multiplied by disorienting and shattering visual and audio techniques.

Saving Private Ryan/omaha Beach And Bodily Engagement

Theories of physical response to films help to grasp how film engages the body and understand how we can experience genuine, non-metaphorical sensations as film spectators. Though specific films are mentioned in the studies cited earlier, it is often unclear how much these sensations are effects of film in general or even specific genres, as opposed to how individual films work to effect the body. It can be interesting and instructive to test these ideas on a particular film outside the range of the specific genres treated. In *Saving Private Ryan*, the film uses these same "general" cinematic effects described above, though exploits and amplifies them, leading to a particularly deliberate "assault" on the body of the observer.

It is obvious that the film-makers desired a sense of "reality," but what did that mean when they made technical and aesthetic choices for the film? In a popular press interview largely to help explain the visceral effects of the film, (Daly 1998; Gordiner 1998) cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, editor Michael Kahn, and sound designer Gary Rydstrom explained their approach and how they used it to enhance the film's sense of "realism." It is interesting that the rhetoric of "realism" around the aesthetic techniques used follows quite closely Laura Marks' descriptions of the "prohaptic" properties of haptic visuality. In addition, the film-makers seem to largely conflate realism with bodily engagement.

For example, cinematographer Janusz Kaminski's conception for building an overall visual style came from a desire to achieve a spontaneous documentary feeling by evoking Capa's bleached and faded look of the color film he shot during the war. To do this they stripped the lenses of protective coatings to flatten the dark-to-light range, turning blacks gray and blue skies white. To further convey the sense of rapid change and a jerky, inconsistent point of view, Michael Kahn, the film editor, took footage shot at half the normal speed – 12 frames per second – then double-printed each still frame. "When projected at 24 frames per second, the pacing of the action is "normal," but everything moves in a strobed-out manner (a common music-video look)." Interestingly, Kahn says, "Doing it in traditional slow motion was not realistic."

Sound designer Gary Rydstrom's job was to create a 360-degree sound field, part of Spielberg's plan of enveloping the cinema-goer in the battle "arena." Rydstrom emphasizes the "authenticity" of his created sound world, referring to interviews with veterans about the "blur of bullets" coming from German machine guns, and also recording the sound of bullets connecting with animal flesh. The alternation of the constant deafening din of battle contrasting with the quieter "rest" sounds, (to mimic, for example, the temporary deafness after a shell explodes near by) results in a strongly felt "lack" of sound.

The "affect" of these formal choices is made evident in one particularly wince-inducing scene, coming about ten minutes into the film. In this representative short scene, lasting about 5-10 seconds, a man lies on his side facing the camera, a field surgeon behind him tries to care for a wound in his shoulder. The framing is tight, and in the scene's few seconds the camera shakily moves in even tighter on the gaping shoulder wound. Vivid red blood spurts out of the wound and the surgeon's inadequate scissors glint as they roughly stab deep into the exposed lesion. In agony, the wounded man wails, "My God, it hurts." Although it is very loud around them with gun fire and explosions, the man's words and torturous screams of pain are very clear.

If bodily engagement occurs in the individual lived body, I must rely on an interpretation of my own reaction in demonstrating this scene's visceral effect. Lacking a sense of context, (I have no idea who the soldier is, or where he is lying on the beach, and I am lost temporally in the landscape of the battle) I focus on the planar texture of the wound. The subjective (my shoulder) and the objective ("his" shoulder) collapse, and as Sobchack describes, "on the rebound" from the screen, and without rational thought, I flinch as the scissors probe. My body squirms and cringes, but it is not "my" shoulder I feel, but some diffuse "in-between" body. The close-up framing of deep, rough bodily penetration, along with the spectacle of the body in agony and the gushing of bodily fluids melds this scene to a kind of pornographic regime described by Williams. I feel helpless and shocked by the carnage, but when the camera cuts away after only a few seconds, I am left ambivalently exhilarated by the intense, though dispersed feeling.

From the comments and example above, it is clear that the film-makers have a surprising and unconventional, though effective, idea as to what constitutes "realism." It seems that in order to gain more in "realism," the film-makers needed to manipulate the profilmic image and recorded sound to an extreme degree, with the intention of how to best engage the body of the spectator. These techniques, according to Marks (1999, p.174), enhance haptic visuality because they, "... multiply points of visual contact all over the screen" and "...discourage the viewer from distinguishing objects and encourage a relationship to the screen as a whole." (p.172) In re-creating the inconsistency of the senses of the human subject in an extreme, panic situation, the film-makers acknowledge the need to simulate the sense of a living subject, and address the body directly. In joining these techniques to the spectacle of the body common to "body genres," the film-makers have created a potent and imaginative conception of "reality," or feminized bodily realism.

Narrative Emplotment And Implications

As virtually all the commentators point out, the Omaha Beach sequence in *Saving Private Ryan* is extremely long. Moreover, to the remainder of the film, it is completely gratuitous from a plot standpoint. If the sequence is absolutely unnecessary and therefore "excessive," why was such a great effort made to film it, and what does its inclusion mean to contemporary emplotments of war narrative? As has been established above, much of the popular rhetoric of the film surrounds a desire for or appreciation of "realism" in the film. The film-makers clearly felt this bodily engaged "realism" would serve as the best vehicle for transmitting their interpretation of the historical "meaning" of D-Day.

It seems the subtext underneath this conflation is the perception on the film-makers part that our spectacle-driven, post-classical film climate of bigger explosions and bloodier shoot-outs has dulled audiences' senses to violence. When Spielberg defends the gore in his film by saying, "I would be doing an extreme disservice to veterans if this was simply one more movie that glamorized World War II," he means, these men didn't die doing a heist or rubbing out gangsters, but rather, died for a noble cause. A noble cause deserves steadfast realism.

This sort of "justifiable violence" in film rhetoric corresponds smoothly with the current view on World War II as the last "justifiable war." As several of the reviewers imply, Spielberg's oeuvre is highly indebted to notions of World War II as a just war. After the questionable morality of Viet Nam and the perceived economic motivations of the Gulf War (not to mention the messiness of ethnic conflicts world wide) *Saving Private Ryan* uses bodily engagement to exploit a nostalgia for a "righteous," non-post-modern war when words like patriotism and sacrifice for your country "really meant something." A tagline summation for the film might be: War is hell, but some things are worth dying for.

Saving Private Ryan seems to have been made with the assumption that not only are audiences are de-sensitized to "gratuitous" violence, but that it is also a situation that needs rectifying. In order to achieve (and further explain) this "re-sensitization", the discussions around realism in *Saving Private Ryan* have remotivated feminist film discourse on body engagement in a surprising way. The kind of "realism" employed in *Saving Private Ryan*, relies heavily on William's characteristics of body genres: penetration of the body, the spectacle of the body in the throes of emotion, and the "jerk" effect. These attributes have long been associated by theorists of many stripes with the gendered visual pleasure of feminine display. It is striking to see this approach appropriated in the highly masculinized war genre. However, Spielberg's comments suggest that for him, adding feminized bodily realism; the explicit display of intense pain, suffering, and sacrificial bodily penetration, was the way to "re-sensitize" viewers to the extraordinarily corporeal and heroic, however distant, sacrifices of a just war. Both Spielberg's team and the critics, find the use of bodily engagement an appropriate way to cut through what they see as the cynicism bred by post-modern irony and spectacle. In other words, critics and ticket-buyers were clearly "touched" by what they saw in *Saving Private Ryan*, but lacking a precise expression for their emotion-filled experience, could only call it "realistic."

Conclusions

While often problematic, feminist film theoretical projects' desire to revalorize previously denigrated genres, and problematize "male subjectivity" has opened up a broader range of possibilities not only for interpretation and analysis, but also for filmic expression across genres. Their project has found surprisingly successful popular relevance in the case of *Saving Private Ryan*. Although Steven Spielberg has long relied on emotion and the "jerk" effect to "touch" audiences in the greatest number possible, this film seems to attempt to solicit the viewers' body in a particularly direct way. Though there is no doubt that the emplotment of *Saving Private Ryan's* Omaha Beach landing sequence reinforces a mythology about World War II being the last "justified war," it manifests unexpectedly in a melodramatic, de-subjectivifed, abstract, abjectifying pornographic spectacle of death. I am not suggesting that *Saving Private Ryan* is a "feminine" war film, or that war films are becoming "feminized." I am suggesting that *Saving Private Ryan* is evidence of war films' engagement with concepts of "realism" which are strongly indebted to feminist theoretical discourse on haptic visuality, the re-evaluation of rigid subject positioning through the collapse of on-screen and off-screen space, and above all revalorizing the "carnal density" of the lived body.

Literature

Clover, C. 1992. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Marks, L. U. 1999. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and*

the Senses. Durham: Duke UP.
Mulvey, L. 1989. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
Shaviro, S. 1993. *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
Silverman, K. 1992. *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. New York: Routledge.
Sobchack, V. 1992. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*.
Princeton: Princeton UP.
Sobchack, V. (2000, forthcoming). What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh, exerpted on the web (www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/05/fingers.html)
Williams, L. 1989 *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible."* Berkeley,: University of California Press.
Williams, L. 1991. Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Summer 1991), 2-13.
Williams, L. 1995. Corporealized Observers: Visual Pornographies and the 'Carnal Density of Vision, in P. Petro, ed. *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 3-41

Popular Press Reviews and Interviews

Burr, T. War is Well. *Entertainment Weekly,* February 5, 1999. www.ew.com.
Daly, S. Allied Forces. *Entertainment Weekly*, August 21, 1998. www.ew.com.
Ebert, R. Saving Private Ryan, *Chicago Sun Times*. July 1998.
Gleiberman, O. Saving Private Ryan. *Entertainment Weekly*. July 24, 1998. www.ew.com.
Gordiner, J. Message in a Battle. *Entertainment Weekly*, July 24, 1998. www.ew.com.
Kamiya, G. Saving Private Ryan Review. *Salon.com*. July 24, 1998. www.salon.com.
Maslin, J. Saving Private Ryan: A Soberly Magnificent New War Film. *New York Times*. July 24, 1998. www.nytimes.com.
Schickel, R. Reel War. *Time Magazine*. Vol. 152, No. 4, July 27, 1998.

An Audiovisual Brain: Towards a Digital Image of Thought in Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*

Pasi Väliaho, University of Turku

papeva@utu.fi

> "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images."
> - Georges Dahumel[1]

Chapter Four in Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (France, 1989-1998) is titled "Le contrôle de l'univers". It starts off with an investigation into, what thinking is, and then proceeds to explore how the cinema, under the name of Hitchcock, is able to take almost total control over human thought, memory, perception, and sensibility. The implicit question deduced from the ones above goes: Is there a substantial connection between the cinema and thought? In its formal organization as well as in its subject matter, *Histoire(s)* questions what cinematic thinking is, or, what is called thinking in the age of cinematographic technologies.

Of course, when posed in the form of "What is?", the question concerns transcendental critique. *Histoire(s)* reflects upon thought and the cinema by plunging into the universe of moving images and meditating on its working mechanisms. Essential here, as Friedrich Kittler describes, is that the cinema is a "psychotechnology", a medium that "instantiates the neurological flow of data" (Kittler 1999, p.159-161). In other words, the circuit between the cinema and thought is of a special kind. Gilles Deleuze calls it "a spiritual automaton" "*producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*" (Deleuze 1989, p.156). In my analysis I shall pick three machines – an editing machine, a typewriter, and a television set – which function as circuits, through which the transcendental critique of cinematic thinking in *Histoire(s)* proceeds. In fact, these machines are parts of the concrete assemblage of concepts, i.e. the spiritual automaton of *Histoire(s)*.

However, the transcendental critique in *Histoire(s)* presupposes an immanent principle of functioning, an image of thought, of its own. Shifting the emphasis from "What is?" to a simple "How?", I find through a more direct study on the aesthetics of *Histoire(s)* a digital synthesizer underlying the audiovisual events on the screen. Although the digital synthesizer refers to the digital image processing techniques used in *Histoire(s)*, it exceeds a purely technological definition, for it aims at naming the force and the structure (of digitality) immanent in the distribution of the spiritual automaton in play. The digital synthesizer is a concept that describes the digital Idea – an Idea which Deleuze defines as "a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual terms" (Deleuze 1994, p.183). The digital synthesizer traces here presicely the way in which consistency is given to audiovisual assemblages in order to enable something to be thought. Thinking, determined by Ideas, takes place in spatio-temporal dynamisms, and therefore focus shall be put on space and time special for the digital circuit produced by the synthesizer.

A Conceptual Machinery

One recurring visual theme in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is a close-up of a strip of film rolling back and forth, accelerated and decelerated in an editing machine. In Deleuze and Félix Guattari's terminology, the machine would be called an abstract machine and

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

the results of production machinic assemblages. In the cinema, a machinic assemblage can be defined as a shot, or as a composition of ”signaletic material” which ”includes all kinds of modulation features, sensory (visual and sound), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written)” (Deleuze 1989, p.29). The abstract machine, on the other hand, is the principle or logic of composition of assemblages, i.e. montage. Especially in the case of *Histoire(s),* montage plays a central role; being the main subject of concern, montage is the principal ”tool” used to explore movement and therefore cinematographic thinking as such.[2]

As the strip of film rolling in the machine suggests, the connection between thought and the cinema relies on the autonomic status of cinematic movement. According to Deleuze, cinematic movement is independent of a moving body or of individual consciousness. Movement has two aspects, a translation of parts in space and a qualitative change in duration. Movement crystallizes in the shot which expresses both a relative change in space and an absolute change in time. In addition, montage constitutes the shot by forming intervals of movement and therefore introduces the temporal dimension into the cinema. This temporal dimension, an interval, ”acts like a consciousness”. It is in the first place a mental dimension, and it founds the connection between the cinema and thought. Deleuze thinks there is no difference between the working of the brain and the cinematographic interval: both function by forming a temporal gap, a duration, between action and reaction. (Deleuze 1986, p.11 & 19-20 & 61-64.) In this way, it is to be understood that ”[t]he brain is the screen. […] Cinema, precisely because it puts the image in motion, or rather endows the image with self-motion [*auto-mouvement*], never stops tracing the circuits of the brain” (Deleuze 2000, p.366).

Consequently, there is a spiritual aspect *a priori* in the cinema, the thinking ”machinism”. Being the logic of the composition of assemblages, montage consitutes an audiovisual image of thought – an image of the preconditions for thinking, of what it means to think and to direct oneself in thought (Deleuze & Guattari 1993, p.45). But this does not mean abstract reasoning conditioned by, or pointed towards, supersensible transcendental ideas, since a film is always already a body composed of sensible material. This is suggested in *Histoire(s) 4A*, when a decelerated shot of moving hands follows a voice-over saying:”But the real human condition is to think with one’s hands.”[3] Being and thought go hand in hand; they presuppose one another and are inseparable from one another (ibid., p.46).

In addition, we are repeatedly (e.g. *2B*) told that ”only the hand that effaces can write”[4]. Along with the editing machine, an electronic typewriter (an old IBM) is a recurring theme in *Histoire(s)*: usually Godard taps a few letters and then the machine starts its own, seemingly endless writing process – like the constant flow of images in *Histoire(s)* in general. According to Trond Lundemo, the basic visual element, or ”alphabet”, of the cinema is the photogram, which in *Histoire(s)* is scrutinized in various ways, like for example, by images of paintings set in motion, by shots of a moving film strip, by extreme decelerations, or by dissolvings of two or more layers of images. For Lundemo, ”the status of the photogram is paradoxical as it constitutes the premise for the visual dimensions of a film, but it is never visible in isolation” (Lundemo 1995, p.32). The photogram cannot be singled out into a frame on a film strip and therefore it cannot be regarded as an empirical object solely. In addition, the photogram is not a privileged instant in space and time. Rather, the photogram exists and can be conceived only in movement. It is the ”matter of movement” central to the interval, and therefore it can be posited as ”the germ” of a mental activity in a film, constantly shifting between visibility and invisibility. (ibid., p.32-37.)

Being material as well as immaterial, the photogram marks the immanence between the cinema and thought. The ambiquity of visibility and invisibility, of being and thinking, gives the photogram an existence as a cinematic Idea (ibid., p.44). A decelerated shot of moving hands is a reflection on the movement of cinematic thinking proceeding through photograms – a decomposition of movement and thus a dif-

ferentiating study on the immanence (see ibid.). However, as the differentiation of the simultaneously writing and effacing hand suggests, an Idea consists of only partial, or even disparate combinations, and therefore it lacks in its essence a coherent identity. An Idea is not a representation but an act – movement – of thought. In this sense, Ideas should be considered, as Deleuze suggests, ”pure multiplicities which do not presuppose any form of identity in common sense but, on the contrary, animate and describe the disjoint exercise of the faculties from a transcendental point of view” (Deleuze 1994, p.194). An Idea is a ”differential of thought”, which is actualized in spatio-temporal dynamisms in accordance with a time and a space immanent in the Idea. The actualization is a violent event, in which the spatio-temporal determinations incarnated in the Idea are capable of directly affecting organisms. (ibid., p.194 & 211-219.)

A third encounter with a machine takes place in *Histoire(s) 2B*, in which Godard puts his head into an empty television set. This is a rather fundamental way of exhibiting the connection between man and machine which resembles the state of almost total immersion: the brain can be said to be the screen. According to Philippe Dubois, in *Histoire(s)* ”Godard plunged into a sort of absolute of image-being, where video as a state, a mode of being, thinking, and living, became a second skin, Godard’s own second body” (Dubois 1992, p.182). In this circuit, the signaletic material in movement forms neuronal shock waves, which force us to think (see Deleuze 1989, p.156 & 189). The act of thinking is a shock created by cinematographic signs, the violent actualization of an Idea. Thinking is an affect forced by a fundamental encounter which is to be separated from recognition, for it can only be sensed (Deleuze 1994, p.139-140). A film can not be reduced to an object of recognition consisting of perceptible qualities only, and as an assemblage of ”imperceptible” signs it exceeds the limits of human consciousness, those of a Cogito. There is an unthinkable modality in cinematographic technologies. The actualization of Ideas is an accidental event, which occurs – like Godard’s brain – in between the constant flow or noise of moving images reacting to each other.

The Digital Circuit

In *Histoire(s) du cinéma* there is an invisible machine that pre-exists and is immanent in the three other machines considered above – the digital synthesizer, of which the principle of functioning extends both to visual and auditive assemblages. The digital synthesizer encodes all auditive and visual information into virtually infinite number of combinations between 0s and 1s, and consequently renders malleable two hitherto distinct formal categories. Without this malleability of categories into an unexplored synthesis, the transcendental critique of the three machines would not be possible, for every conscious exercise implies the unconscious of ”pure thought”, in this case the digital Idea (see Deleuze 1994, p.155). Or, as Kittler asserts, ”[t]echnologically possible manipulations determine what in fact can become a discourse” (Kittler 1990, p.232).

According to Philippe Dubois, a completely new figure of style in Godard’s video works emerging after 1988 is ”the repetitive, blinking effect of super-fast flash shots” (Dubois 1992, p.182). In *Histoire(s)* shots accelerated to their extreme make up the breath-taking pulse of formal organization of assemblages inscribed in computerized editing system. Extremely rapid, flickering montage between two images or two or more layers of images obscures contours and characteristics of objects even to a point of irrecognisability, and the accelerated throb of images constitutes a perception that is closer to vibratory sensation than to visual recognition (ibid.). The screen becomes a field of energetic rhythms instead of a locus of representation. Blinking ”video-vibration” approaches pure movement and thus pure form (see Aumont 1999, p.98). Vibrating reverberations and superimpositions call for what Paul Klee named ”*point gris*”, the gray point that is non-dimensional, situated in the

intersection between dimensions (Klee 1985, p.56). In this sense, the synthesizer is a purely expressive machine that harnesses the intensive and informal forces of Cosmos. In the digital circuit thinking becomes a creative, rather than a pre-modeled event, for it takes place in the rhythmic synthesis between malleable material and force, not between matter and form.[5]

In terms of technology, the material circuiting in the synthesizer are electrons. Therefore, as Laura U. Marks notes, the digital synthesizer, even though encoded in a string of 0s and 1s, does not form purely symbolic and immaterial space. Electrons partake in wave forms that unify all matter, and consequently digital image in its essence plunges into a material being which it owes to interconnected subatomic particles. (Marks 1999.) However, the logic of the connections of electrons does not conform to traditional modes of representation (e.g. logical causality). In accordance with the quantum theory, the relations between electrons are non-localisable. Electrons perform discontinuous quantum jumps. As Arthur Miller describes, ”The electron makes a quantum jump by disappearing from one stationary state and reappearing in another one, somewhat like the Cheshire cat” (Miller 1996, p.92). Therefore electronic space cannot be viewed in Cartesian terms as consisting of constants and organized in privileged directions. Space has no center and it is conceived as being under continuous becoming. Yvonne Spielmann notes that this transgression of coherence and fixity concerns the inflation and mapping of space rather than its depiction (Spielmann 1999, p.138). Relatedly, Deleuze defines that space approaches omnidirectionality, constantly varying its angles and co-ordinates. Digital images ”are the object of a perpetual reorganization, in which a new image can arise from any point whatever of the preceding image”. (Deleuze 1989, p.265.) In *Histoire(s)* boiling lava is a constant figure; at this point the screen reaches, as Jean-Louis Leutrat puts it, a ”veritable atomism” consisting of bombardment of aural and visual particles (Leutrat 1992, p.27). The digital image is a condensation, and perhaps in the last resort even a burst, of pure energy.

The condensation is achieved with matte and layering techniques, through which the synthesizer produces ”clusters” of multiple layerings of different images or image elements. These clusters form a huge collage called *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. The ”method” of assembling images or layers of one image together, in other words of cutting and pasting, is precisely what Deleuze suggested when speaking of Godard: the conjunction AND (Deleuze 1992, p.40). However, ANDs between visual and aural images do not mean dialectical either-or relations. After having taken his head out the TV set, Godard yells ”Albertine”, the words ”un mystère” appear on the screen, and the image of Godard begins to dissolve with an image of a boy playing a flute; at a certain point of the dissolving, the combination of the two images forms vague contours of a female body. The AND is a multiplicity that includes all actual and virtual relations and destroys existing identities situated on a boundary between the two elements. The digital synthesizer is able to affirm what is as well as what is not – even difference as such (see Spielmann 1999, p.143). It can simultaneously present the factual and simulate the non-factual and thereby form disjunctive syntheses between traditionally contradictory elements. Consequently, in *Histoire(s)* unitary or organic being is replaced by synthetic becoming. Thought that proceeds by disjunctive ANDs is always acentered in between as a rhizomatic system that makes disparate connections between remote things. As Gregory Ulmer suggests in his teletheory of electronic audiovisual technologies, a logic of conduction has priority over traditional modes of inference (e.g. induction, deduction) (Ulmer 1989, p.61-67).

AND-assemblages emphasize spatial density and texture. Multi-layered images, superimpositions, and vibrations are devoid of out-of-field, and therefore, as Deleuze argues, the screen itself constitutes an opaque and intensive surface of information on which data are inscribed (Deleuze 1989, p.265). This results in breaking up the linear continuity and temporal connecting function of montage of classical (analogue) cinema (Spielmann 1999, p.139). Instead of a chronological and rational linkage,

clusters induce an interstice, irrational false continuity, between two images or elements of images (Deleuze 1989, p.179). Movement in an interstice is ”aberrant”. It proceeds by quantum jumps; it is the form of change through time. Time, on the other hand, is not subordinated to movement. Time is nonchronological and change itself, ”’the affection of self by self’” which manifests in an interstice (ibid., p.83). In *Histoire(s)* each pixel is a transformational point; imperceptible, unthought energy glows on the image surface when one image suddenly grows out of a part of another image. Transformations are due to the ”pure empty form of time”, the absolute outside, which breaks the order of the present and directly affects bodies causing sudden metamorphoses. The digital image regarded as a burst of energy is an event, an instant, in which the past and the future get mixed and even disperse relations in the present by opening forms with their actual qualities up to purely virtual elements.[6] The extreme velocity of aural and visual particles achieved by the force of pure empty form of time in *Histoire(s)* exceeds the limits of formal categories of ”here-and-now”, and brings to the surface that which was unpresentable. Thus, with the digital image perception tends towards halluzination, towards a super-human and unnatural ”third eye” consisting of mental relations.

The editing machine, the typewriter, and the television set are concepts set in accelerating motion by the digital synthesizer, which trace how cinematic thinking proceeds. In other words, they extract from an audiovisual brain called the cinema the essence or ”entity” of its movement, i.e. the act of thinking when all qualities are erased, in its pure form. This is achieved only through disjunctive synthesis of the digital image: in *Histoire(s) 4A* a rapidly repeated shot of flying birds growing out of a still image of Marilyn Monroe is neither a thought – or an idea – of ”birds flying” nor a thought – or an idea – of ”Marilyn”, but rather an imperative ”to think”. In this way the transcendental critique is restored in non-localisable and virtual relations in a rhizomatic digital brain, and consequently, digital assemblages can do nothing but stammer. *Histoire(s)* lacks self-expression: quite often the speech of Godard is rendered almost incomprehesible by metallic reverberation. In fact, there is no I to express oneself. There are only cybernetic loops or circuits of images produced by the synthesizer. However, the synthesizer never reproduces one image as it is. The machine thinks, although in a brutal way from a human point of view, since it produces absolute – inhuman and unthinkable – differences. The photogram, i.e. a burst of energy, in an interstice is an anomaly, a monster that effaces an individual memory[7] – like the repeated flickering between a porno clip and shots of corpses in a concentration camp in *Histoire(s) 4A*. The digital Idea is never clear. It is distinct, because it grasps the differential relations of energetic rhythms on the image surface but obscure because it is always already divided by time and therefore never actualized in its whole.

Endnotes

[1] Georges Dahumel: *Scènes de la vie future* (1930) cited Benjamin 1988, p.238.

[2] For example, Jacques Aumont thinks *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is in the first place a study on the possibilities of cinematographic montage, especially in regard to thought:”Les gestes de montage sont multipliés: plusieurs par seconde à certains moments, répétés, variés grâce notamment à la nouvauté du mixage d’images. Mais tous ont cette même charge d’essai: il faut essayer de savoir *ce que peut* un geste de cinéma, comme Spinoza voulait savoir ce que peut un corps” (Aumont 1999, p.15).

[3] ”Mais la vraie condition de l’homme, c’est de penser avec ses mains.”

[4] ”Seul la main qui efface peut écrire.”

[5] Deleuze and Guattari define the synthesizer as follows:”[Le synthétiseur] unit les disparates dans le matériau, et transpose les paramètres d’une formule à une autre. Le synthétiseur, avec son opération de consistance, a pris la place du fondement dans le jugement synthétique à priori: la synthèse y est du moléculaire et du cosmique, du matériau et de la force, non plus de la forme et de la matière, du *Grund* et du territoire” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980, p.424).

[6] In *Logique du sens* (1969) Deleuze opposes the pure empty form of time that he calls *Aiôn* to the chrono-

logical order of time, *Chronos*, in a following manner:"D'après Aiôn, seuls le passé et le futur insistent ou subsistent dans le temps. Au lieu d'un présent qui résorbe la passé et le futur, un futur et un passé qui divisent à chaque instant le présent, qui le subdivisent à l'infini en passé et futur, dans les deux sens à la fois. […] Alors que Chronos exprimait l'action des corps et la création des qualités corporelles, Aiôn est le lieu des événements incorporels, et des attributs distincts des qualités" (Deleuze 1969, p.192-193).

[7] Jacques Aumont also notes the significance of the effacement of an indivual memory in *Histoire(s)*:"Les plans reviennent, les images reviennent, mais ce n'est jamais la même part d'eux qui demeure obscure, jamais la même part qui échappe au souvenir pour entamer ce dur et douloureux travail de l'oubli qui, seul, constitue le Souvenir sur lequel la pensée existe. Le montage est un outil de l'oubli, parce qu'on ne se souvient que de ce qui a d'abord été oublié […]" (Aumont 1999, 26).

Bibliography

Aumont, J., 1999. *Amnésies: Fictions du cinéma d'après Jean-Luc Godard*. Paris: P.O.L.

Benjamin, W. 1988. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. *In*: H. Ardent, ed. *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books, 217-251.

Deleuze, G., 1969. *Logique du sens*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Deleuze, G., 1986. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (*Cinéma 1: L'Image-mouvement*,1983). *Trans.* H. Tomlinson & B.Habberjam. London: The Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G., 1989. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (*Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps,* 1985). *Trans*. H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta. London: The Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G., 1992. On "Sur et sous la communication". Three Questions About "Six Fois Deux". *Trans.* R. Bowlby. *In:* M.l. Bandy & R. Bellour, eds. *Jean-Luc Godard. Son + Image 1974-1991.* New York: The Modern Art Museum, 35-41.

Deleuze, G., 1994. *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et répétition*, 1968). *Trans*. P. Patton. New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G., 2000. The Brain Is the Screen. An Interview with Gilles Deleuze. *Trans.* M.T. Guirgis. *In:* G. Flaxman, ed. *The Brain Is the Screen. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 365-373.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F., 1980. *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F., 1993. *Mitä filosofia on?* (*Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 1991). *Trans.* L. Lehto. Tampere: Gaudeamus.

Dubois, P., 1992. Video Thinks What Cinema Creates. Notes on Jean-Luc Godard's Work In Video and Television. *Trans.* L. Kirby. *In:* M-l. Bandy & R. Bellour, eds. *Jean-Luc Godard. Son + Image 1974-1991*. New York: The Modern Art Museum, 169-185.

Kittler, F.a., 1990. *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (*Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900*, 1985). *Trans.* M. Metteer, with C. Cullens. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kittler, F.a., 1999. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (*Grammophon Film Typewriter*, 1986). *Trans.* G. Winthrop-Young & M. Wutz. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Klee, P., 1985. *Théorie de l'art moderne* (*Das bildnerische Denken. Schriften zur Form- und Gestaltungslehre*, 1956). *Trans.* P-H. Gonthier. Paris: Denoël, Coll. Folio/Essais.

Leutrat, J-l., 1992. The Declension. *Trans.* R. Bowlby. *In:* M.L. BANDY & R. BELLOUR, eds. *Jean-Luc Godard. Son + Image 1974-1991*. New York: The Modern Art Museum, 23-33.

LUNDEMO, T., 1995. Decomposition of Movement and the Photogram; the Concep tion of the Photogram in the Work of Marey, Vertov, Eisenstein and Godard. *Lähikuva* 3/1995, 30-48.

Marks, L.U., 1999. How Electrons Remember. *Millenium Film Journal* [online], 34/1999. Available from: http://mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ34/LUMframeset_horiz.html [Accessed 4 Sep 2001].

Miller, A.I., 1996. Visualization Lost and Regained: The Genesis of the Quantum Theory in the Period 1913-1927. *In:* T. Druckrey, ed. *Electronic Culture. Technology and VisualRepresentation*. New York: Aperture.

Spielmann, Y., 1999. Aesthetic Features in Digital Imaging: Collage and Morph. *Wide Angle* 21 (1), 131-148.

Ulmer, G., 1989. *Teletheory. Grammatology in the Age of Video.* New York & London: Routledge.

Filmography

Histoire(s) du cinéma 1A-4B, 1989-1998. Video. Directed by Jean-Luc GODARD. France:
Gaumont International.

The positioning of Lou Reed from a profeminist perspective

Hans Wessels, University of Helsinki

jwessels@nettilinja.fi

Introduction

The question how to listen to the work of Lou reed from a profeminist perspective immediately raises another; which Lou Reed? Through his long career starting from the Velvet Underground, through the Glam Rock of the seventies, a short decline in the beginning of the eighties and his emergence as the serious rock icon in the nineties, Lou reed has had many faces and has voiced many often seemingly contradicting opinions. More important from a gendered perspective is that alongside this Lou Reed has also represented very different, and as I will argue contradicting, forms of maleness. Since the eighties however one form of what I would call hyper maleness has emerged alongside with a clear and distinct crystallisation of his music style as rock.

During this time Lou Reed's lyrics also became more involved with social, political and moral issues. Whereas the Reed during the seventies and beginning of eighties still could say 'give me an issue and I'll give you a tissue, you can wipe your nose with it' Lou Reed now seems an advocate for human rights, left wing politics and free speech. What interests me in this presentation is the manner in which this change coincided with a strong masculinisation and heterosexualisation of his style and how this relates to the problem of straight white male positioning from a profeminist standpoint.

I would like to put forward the argument that both the maleness of his visual style and his rock music are connected to this political and moral awareness and to the increasingly 'artistic' (poetic) content of Lou Reed's lyrics the last 20 or so years. I will also argue that alongside with this Lou Reed has used the historical and marginal 'Lou Reed' to legitimise his speech and to overcome the problematic position of a white male commentary on social and political issues.

Who is Lou Reed

Even though Lou already did some song writing before, his career and legend in popular music history begins with the Velvet Underground in which he sung, played guitar and did most of the writing. At the end of the sixties The Velvet Underground stood out as a band that represented a totally different scene than hippie and flower power ideologies. The velvets represented a much more cynical New York underground dressed in black with dark sunglasses. Over four albums the Velvets dealt with topics such as: S/m (Venus in Furs), drugs (Heroin), transvestism (Candy says) and even transexuality (Lady Godiva's operation), topics that also played an important part in Lou Reed's early solo song writing as in his most successful song 'Walk in the wild side'.

> Holly came from Miami F-L-A
> Hitchhiked her way across the usa
> Plucked her eyebrows along the way
> Shaver her legs and then he was a she
> She says, hey baby take a walk on the wild side.

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

Although many of the subject matters in his songs on his first three solo albums stayed the same, Lou Reed did establish a new sound and style in accordance to the Glam Rock of the early seventies. Whereas the Velvets had become famous for a rough uncoordinated punk sound, these three albums are heavily arranged and produced albums in line with Glam rock. This is also the time where Lou Reed starts experimenting with different looks, hair colours, androgyny and a theatrical stage presence. Enjoying more commercial success than during the Velvets period, Lou Reed also established a notorious reputation for bad and often violent behaviour during interviews, his bisexuality and most of all his use of drugs. On his album 'Coney Island Baby' Lou Reed explain the life style himself:

> Hey man what's your style
> Where d'you get your kicks for living
> *How d'you get your adrenaline flowing*

Although the legend continued Lou Reed's career suffered a decline both in commercial and artistic acclaim during the eighties with a number of albums that seem to be transitional in music and that seem to reflect a self-conscious change in lifestyle, getting of drugs and getting married. The result of this transition period were three highly acclaimed albums; the very political 'New York' album (1998), the philosophical and morally charged 'Magic and Loss' (1991) and a collaboration with former Velvet Underground partner John Cale on 'Songs for Drella', a tribute album to the late Andy Warhol, discoverer and patron of the VU. Since then three more albums have been released, a book with the selected works of Lou Reed has been published, the VU has had a reunion tour and Lou has written music for the rock opera 'Time Rocker' with Robert Wilson, who before collaborated with Tom Waits and William Burroughs on the opera 'The black Rider'.

Lou Reed and the art of rock authenticity.

If there is one achievement that Lou reed should certainly be credited for, it is the ability to overcome the problem of ageing in rock while still being taken seriously. The argument that I would like to build up is that he has done this by a strong masculinisation of his music, lyrics and visual style.

Especially since the mid eighties Lou Reed has become more and more a true rock musician, going back to a basic set up of guitar, bass and drums, the use of power chords and simple song structures. Another important feature has been a different use of voice. Lou Reed's seductive manner of singing has been replaced by a new more declamatory way of singing, almost like talking and with a strong emphasise on the deepness of his voice. Probably one of the best example of this development can be found in the manner Lou Reed has been playing the classic Velvet Underground song 'Sweet Jane' over the years; the original version on 'Loaded' (1970), the highly theatrical one on 'Rock 'n' Roll Animal' (1974) and the rock version on 'Live in Italy' (1983). What makes this song so interesting is the manner in which the lyrics increasingly seem to contradict the music in the later rock versions. Rock as a genre in popular music that has strongly excluded women (see: Frith/McRobbie), directs itself primarily at white middle class males and defines itself through strongly masculinised ideologies of playing live, authenticity and realness hardly seems a appropriate music style for the lyrics in Sweet Jane: *'Jack is in his corset, Jane is in her vest and me, I'm in a rock and roll band'.*

On the other hand it seems hardly coincidence that Lou Reed's change to pure Rock in the eighties happened at the same time with the growing popularity of musicians like Bruce Springsteen and Bryan Adams in what has been labelled as the 'New Authenticity' movement. Simon Frith argues that this movement, in which most of the musicians and groups are obviously male, was in fact a reinstatement of the old

rock myths of natural sex and gender after the gender blender period of the seventies in which Lou Reed himself played such an important role. (Frith, S 1990,422)

In a recent interview with the web site N.Y rock Lou himself described this search for authenticity in contrast to the Glam rock and behaviour of before:

> The music business doesn't interest me anymore. In the late '70s I started to search for the perfect sound -- whatever that might be, before that I was mainly interested in drugs, insanity and the rock'n'roll lifestyle. I cleaned up my act because otherwise I would have kicked the bucket. So, I started to search for another insanity. I started chasing the perfect sound, the perfect album. It's just another way to survive. (N.Y. rock)

What this perfect album is becomes clear in the same interviews:

> I'm too old to do things by half. I'm in this business for too long to be half-hearted about anything. When I record an album I'm trying to get as close as possible to that perfect moment. I try to capture as much of the magic as possible. Perfect Night has that magic and it has the raw energy that grabs you by the throat. That's how rock'n'roll should be. It has to be real and honest. (N.Y. rock)

Lou Reed wants to create pure rock that carries within it an authentic honesty, a raw throat grabbing energy but at the same time this appears to be something that clearly needs to be sought for. Capturing this energy in recording demands time and careful deliberation and is nothing to be half-hearted about. This is a good example of the contradictory relation between rock's authentic male 'energy' and the technology of music production and recording. By trying to 'capture as much as possible of the magic' and by trying to get 'as close as possible to that perfect moment' rock's ideology of realness becomes very clear. The recording itself can only possibly reflect something true and real; the raw energy of the live gig. This is a way of thinking of realness that clearly distinguishes rock from, for example, Techno or other dance genres where the difference between recording and live playing is not as clearly defined.

As a true rock musician Lou Reed tries however to create that perfect rock sound, the one that is real and honest and he needs to be in complete control over this process in order to define and maintain the boundaries between the real raw energy and the 'fakeness' that technology could create. Barbara Bradby (Bradby, B, 1993:156) has argued that in rock and pop this mastery of technology has always been connected to masculinity. Technology is either something that men can use and control for their own gain, as in rock, or something that threatens to take over the 'realness' of music and therefor the 'human (e.g. male)' aspect, as is often argued about electronic music and pop in general.

Interestingly enough when we listen to the old work of Lou Reed we find a distinctly different attitude. His two most famous albums of the seventies, 'Transformer'(1972) and 'Berlin'(1973), were clearly albums that depended very much on advanced studio technology and production for their glamorous sound. Probably one of the defining aspects of 'Transformer' in pop history was

Lou Reed's collaboration with David Bowie who, as the producer of the album, left a mark on the album's sound that seems as important as the quality of Lou Reed's songs.

Maybe as a compensation for this Lou released two live albums after this, 'Rock and Roll Animal (1974) and 'Lou Reed Live (1975) with a rock band after this and there is a huge musical difference in the way these songs are played. These albums however, even though they are rock albums, mark a special moment in the reception of Lou Reed in the sense that he did not play guitar himself on them but con-

centrated on the singing and theatricals. In both cases Lou Reed turned, like Bowie in his Ziggie Stardust creation, into an actor in his own songs instead of the origin of the creative moment. Lou Reed was produced as Lou Reed or acted Lou Reed on stage.

Even though lyrics have always been a striking feature of Lou Reed's work, over the last 10 years or so they have become more and more predominant in a form that apparently needs to transcend the constraints of rock lyrics. Over the last years Lou Reed has been doing poetry readings of his song lyrics as well as his poetry and to highlight the independent significance of the lyrics he chose in a BBC 'Late Night' special on the release of his 'Magic and Loss' album, to recite some of the songs as poems instead of actually playing them. In 1991 he also published the book 'Between Thought and Expression, the selected lyrics of Lou Reed' in which he includes an interview with Vaclav Havel and author Hubert Selby. The literary ambitions in his work manifested themselves already earlier, like on the album 'The Blue Mask'(1981) on which he for example sings about his friend and writing tutor Delmore Schwarz, but have increased up to the point where Lou states in an interview with Neil Gaiman

> There are certain kinds of songs you write that are just fun songs—the lyric can't survive without the music. But for most what I do, the idea behind it was to try to bring a novelist's eye to it, and, within the framework of rock and roll, to try to have that lyric there so somebody who enjoys being engaged on that level could have that and have the rock and roll too.
> (interview with Neil Gaiman)

I would like to argue that the emphasise on lyrics as a poetic form is a way in which Lou Reed authorises his own work as a serious art form while musically still remaining firmly within the realm of spontaneous male rock authenticity. One of the key issues in rock music is the constant battle between co-option and resistance to the mainstream Rock is constantly pronounce dead because it supposedly lost its edge. Obviously one of the main reasons for this is rock as a supposed expression of youth culture that defines itself against mainstream culture and commercial interests. That this is a constant problem seems obvious since in its production and distribution Rock depends as much as any other music forms on economic interests through record sales and is therefor as an industry very much part of mainstream culture. This is not to say that Rock cannot align itself with resisting subcultures or movements but that, as Lawrence Grossberg (Grossberg L.) argues, this resistance is not an intrinsical aspect of it. Because of this a major part of rock's level of authenticity depends on the male rocker's ability to act 'real' and as I have argued to articulate music through notions of 'realness' and authenticity.

Fred Pfeil argues that what differentiates rock music in that sense from for example film is the fact that the degree of realness is in rock as much part of the star's offstage persona as onstage (Pfeil, F 1995: 81). No one would wonder whether there is any connection to Brad Pit's masculinity in 'Fight Club' and his 'real life' behaviour. Rock stars however have to live their image everywhere. In that sense Lou Reed's drug abuse in hotel rooms was as much an expression of his 'realness' as part of a subculture as him shooting up on stage or singing about it. It is hardly surprising, following these demands of acting out the rock persona , that the age of the male rock star seems to take on a significant role in how he is perceived as 'real'.

Lou Reed is closing 60 but whereas other old male rock musicians either cling on to a rock rebellion attitude regardless of their age, The Stones for example, or others have become canonised and have subsequently lost their 'rock edge', like Paul Mcartney, Lou Reed seems to have found the solution through the combination of literature/poetry and rock's raw energy, thereby moving rock away from the battle between mainstream or subculture into a high art form in it's own right.

But if we consider how music is constructed as a high art form in western society both rock and pop lack an important element; a score. As Simon Frith (Frith, S 1996:258/259) has argued in line with Lydia Goehr western ideas on high art music as developed in the nineteenth century depend very much on the emphasise on the score as containing the 'truth of the work' which can be realised through the performance and, as argued in feminist musicology, this is connected to the idea of the male autonomous composer. In the nineteenth century music became part of the mind and moved away from the body.

Pop and Rock music usually lacks a score and this is one of the elements that, for a long time and maybe even still, have kept it outside the idea of art music. However, by using poetry and literary forms Lou Reed seems to overcome this problem. To score rock music would take away its edge, it's power as an authentic expression within rock ideology. Poetry and literature are however in well established and highly rated art forms and, maybe even more important; they are art forms that transcend the individual moment of pop and rock music that can only be captured by recordings.

Maybe even more important in this is that the score removes the composers body from the production and meaning of music. This is one of the key features that defines the notion of the disembodied romantic male composer. He writes music instead of playing it and the experience of music is mostly a non physical, something we can still observe in concert halls. Rock and pop on the other hand are supposed to make the body move and are music forms in which the presence of the performer's body is crucial. Whether it is, as Richard Dyer states, 'phallic' as in Rock or 'whole body eroticism' as in Disco, in its dance aspect popular music is in that sense clearly 'feminised' in relation to male disembodied romantic classical music. The emphasise on art forms such as literature and poetry, art forms that are often perceived as less-temporal and less bodily, as intrinsically in the meaning of Lou Reed's music can therefor be seen as a removal of the male body in favour of a much more serious male ideal of disembodiment.

This also seems connected to Lou Reed's visual style since the eighties. For someone who used to be famous for a change in style with just about every album Lou Reed has become rather monotonous in style. The androgyny of his former looks during the seventies has since the eighties been replaced by an strong male image based on leather jackets and trousers, jeans, dark and sunglasses. Again this seems to coincide with the change into a rocker, although it also seems to be a return to the distantiated look of the Velvet Underground. However, whereas the Velvets were clearly part of a current scene in New York at the time and developed a style that was later used in punk, by the Ramones for example, Lou has turned this outfit into a uniform of strong masculinity. On the New York album sleeve Lou poses in different, equally powerful, jeans and leather outfits against a wall sprayed with graffiti as some urban warrior. On the 'Magic and Loss' sleeve, probably his most intimate album since 'Berlin' again he stands in black with dark sun glasses.

Lou Reed at the margins, been there done that!

What makes Lou Reed so interesting from the point of view of the critical studies of men and masculinity that this change in maleness, which in many ways seems so radical, hardly seems challenged by critics and audience alike. Unlike many of his contemporaries Lou Reed is still critically acclaimed and has, especially since the 'New York' album, made a serious artistic comeback in both reviews and record sales. But in a rock and pop scene where the array of different representations of masculinity is staggering, whether they are challenging hegemonic masculinity or not, the kind of rock masculinity Lou Reed represents seems almost ancient.

The days of Glam, bisexuality and gender blending might still be present in playing old songs in concerts and in some of his lyrics, but a simple look and listen

to Lou Reed and we see and hear a white male performer in a style of music that is heavily dominated by men and, as I hope I have shown so far, relies strongly on male ideologies of music and identity.

I want to argue that it is through the historical Lou Reed living at the margins of society that he is able to do this. As a male artist Lou Reed seemed to transgress masculinity during the seventies. Not only because of his androginity and bisexuality but maybe even more for the simple reason that he didn't take on any issues. In that sense he contradicted the very norm of the modernist male subject in the same manner that the Pet Shop Boys do it nowadays. Men who do not have anything to say and have no opinion or significant insights into anything but are instead only interested in the mundane world of looks, attitude and thrills. It is in that sense no wonder that the Velvets had such a close relation to pop-art artist Andy Warhol.

> *This is an element that, even though Lou Reed does not live that life anymore, still constantly pops up in his own work. Like for example in the emphasise on drug use on 'Sword of Damocles' on the 'Magic and Loss' album:*
>
> This use of morphine and Dexedrine, we use it on the street
> *It kills the pain and keeps you up, your very soul to keep.*

Also in interviews surrounding the release of this album, in which Lou deals with the death of two close friends by cancer, Lou repeatedly referred to the irony of having survived long years of substance abuse while seeing 'innocent' others die. Or as he states in 'What's good':

> You loved a live others throw away nightly,
> It's not fair. Not fair at all

Lou Reed has been there, seen it, done it and knows it all. On the 'New York' album for example he laments aids victims in the song 'Halloween parade', a song that in atmosphere and structure closely resembles 'Walk in the wild side', and in a recent song 'Harry Circumcision' he deals with a man so desperate for a new identity that he cuts his penis off.

What is important though that this also coincides with a string sense of redemption in his work. Like the recent song 'Trade in' in which he talks about his old persona in almost a deconstructive manner.

> He actually got murdered
> I'd taken him apart
> But when I put him back together
> I couldn't find his heart.

So there appear to be two issues here. First of all appropriation of the margins of society and subcultures through the fact that he's lived the life, but also a conscious distantiating himself from that life and in true male rhetoric it comes hardly as a surprise that the women in his life have take on an important role as a motivation for this change. On his 'The Blue Mask' album, which could be considered as marking the end of his wild years Lou dedicates a song to his, then, wife Sylvia and references to her keep appearing in his work. On his 'Mistrial' there is the song ' Don't hurt a woman', which deals with male anger, and the chorus of the song 'Trade In' from which the above quote was taken explains the motivation for his need to redeem himself; his girlfriend Lauri Anderson:

> I met a woman with a thousand faces
> And I want to make her my wife

(An interesting note is that on his last album Lou sings in the song 'Modern Dance': '*It's no life, being a wife')*

> What seems to be most important in all these references to living the life and taking a critical distance is not only that he's been there and done it all, but also that he survived it and got over it. This apparently gives him as special insight on matters and in that sense he takes up what Susan Bordo has described as the position of being everywhere. (Bordo 1990:148)

Lou Reed is therefor a very good example of how white heterosexual masculinity can redefine itself while still maintaining a structural power position. Lou Reed can be both straight, gay, clean, junky and maybe even male and female for the simple fact that he lived all these roles in what Lawrence Grossberg has described as the Neo Liberalist collapse of the margins into an amorphous constantly reconstituted centre within which difference are commodified (Grossberg, L,2000)

To conclude I would like to position this 'new man' Lou Reed against a quote by Rose Braidotti in her contribution 'Envy: or your brains and my looks' in 'Men in Feminism' in which she draws the following highly ironically conclusion on being a white heterosexual man in our times:

> It must be very uncomfortable to be a male, white, middle-class intellectual at a time in history when so many minorities and oppressed groups are speaking up for themselves; a time when the hegemony of the white knowing subject is crumbling. Lacking the historical experience of oppression on the basis of sex, they paradoxically lack a minus. Lacking the lack, they cannot participate in the great ferment of ideas that is shaking up Western culture: it must be very painful indeed to have no option other than being the empirical referent of the historical oppressor of women, and being asked to account for his atrocities. (Braidottii, R 1987:235.)

The humanist and socially engaged Lou Reed of today does not seem to have any problems with lacking this historical experience as shows in his highly insightful comments on sexual violence in the song Endless Cycle on the New York album:

> The sickness of the mother runs on through the girl, leaving her small and helpless.
> Liquor flies through her brain with the force of a gun, leaving her running in circles
> How can she tell the good act from the bad, when she flat on her back in her room
> How can she do what needs to be done, when she's a coward and a bleeder.

The manner in which Lou reed deals with gender issues in the last quote is telling of where it goes wrong when white heterosexual men take on these issues without putting themselves on the stand first. The use of phrases like *coward* and a *bleeder,* and in general putting any kind of responsibility on women for male violence, not only reproduces a male rhetoric of power, is she supposed to stand up and fight?, but also demonstrates a disembodied distance from the issues that are criticised. It is simply another social issue and the woman is as much to blame for maintaining the problem as the men is. Lou Reed is a humanist after all and therefor everyone is equal.

The Lou Reed of the seventies might not have been concerned with anything, let alone gender inequality, but, just like David Bowie and nowadays The Pet Shop Boys have done up to some degree, white heterosexual masculinity was maybe at least challenged in the sense that it didn't speak in the first place.

Litetature

Bordo,Susan, 1990, 'Feminism, Postmodernism and Gender-scepticism' in: Nicholson, Linda, J (ed) *Feminism and Postmodernism* New York, Routledge

Bradby,B, 1993, 'Sampling Sexuality: gender, technology and the body in dance music' in: Popular Music Volume 12/2

Braidotti,R,1987, 'Envy: or with your brains and my looks', in: Alice Jardin / Paul Smith (eds), *Men in Feminism*. New York: Methuen.

Frith,S,Goodwin,A, 1990, (ed.) *On Record, Rock, Pop and the written word* New York, Routledge

Frith,S,1996, *Performing Rites, on the value of popular music,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Grossberg,L,1998, *Rock resistance and the resistance to rock*

Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media policy: http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/cmp/Grossberg.html

Grossberg, L, 2000, 'The figure of subalterity and the Neo Liberal future' in *Nepantla: views from the south 1:1* Duke University Press

Pfeil, F, 1995, *White Guys, Studies in Postmodern domination & difference.* London, Verso

Interviews with Lou Reed:

'The Gospel According to Lou' by Gabriella, November 1998
New York Rock
http://www.nyrock.com/interviews/loureed_int.htm

'Waiting for the Man' Lou Reed interviewed by Neil Gaiman.
http://www.softline.com/~shumway/lou-reed.html

Imagining the self

Jennifer Willet, Concordia University

jwillet@sympatico.ca

Patient 223-6D Williams, Jane S.
February 21, 2001 10:42 AM.

Patient admitted to clinic for observation of advancing degenerative symptoms. First recorded motor difficulties in April 1998, with steady progression until present time. Currently the patient's status is functional but severely reduced - complains of headaches, loss of sleep, and blunt pain in the extremities.
(*Fig*. 1)

In the clinical setting, the construction and maintenance of patients' medical records is of primary significance to the administrative regulation of the patient as well as the institution. Rather than simply a notation *of* the body, the medical dossier is the compilation of the inscribed pluralistic practices of contemporary medicine – it is the collected notations of what is seen of the body, or done to the body, through the lens and the hand of contemporary medicine. The dossier is comprised of digital and analogue texts, 3D and real time video footage, and satellite samples of the subject in terms of ovum, sperm samples, placenta, and DNA (*Fig*. 2). It houses appointment notations, prescriptions, hospitalization charts - test results – x-rays and CAT scans. The multi-media dossier is also multi-purpose. It is a wealthy mine of information - a resource tool - a site for cross referencing and statistical analysis. It captures the quality and rate of the physical deterioration of the social (or statistical) body as succinctly and with as much intent as it documents the fluctuating health status of any individual. For the practitioner the dossier serves as a receptacle and as a site of contemplation or study – a satellite body to reflect upon in the pursuit of good medicine. In terms of hospital administration, records are seen less as individualized documents, but as data bases used to analyze and forecast admission statistics, space requirements, treatment strategies and physician performance. For laboratory and field researchers, medical records provide valuable information about trends in disease and success or failure rates of different treatment regimes (*Fig*. 3). But what of the patient, and his or her relationship to the compilation of medical information about their body? For the patient the dossier is an exclusive and codified document; manufactured, mobilized, and referred to by trained professionals on behalf of the individual. It is confusingly technical – and extraordinarily high tech. The dossier is the test dummy, the stand in, the administrative and administered to clinical self. It is an alter ego, a reincarnation, only this version of the self is deemed diseased and requires institutionalization. *It is the concrete embodiment of the most private indiscretions of the body.*

This is Jane – Jane Stacey Williams. She is twenty five years old, a student, currently no serious romantic attachments, but owns a cat named Charlie. She has recently entered the clinical sphere and requires medical as well as critical and theoretical attention. She is a fictitious character - a case study of sorts – where we can ethically access and play out the relationship that one might have with their personal documentation. However this is not to imply that her experience is not authentic or valid. She is a compilation of dozens of very real individuals – ranging from

Koivunen A. & Paasonen S. (eds),Conference proceedings for *affective encounters: rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies* , University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies, Series A, N:o 49
E-book at [http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.pdf], Media Studies, Turku 2001.

Fig. 1.

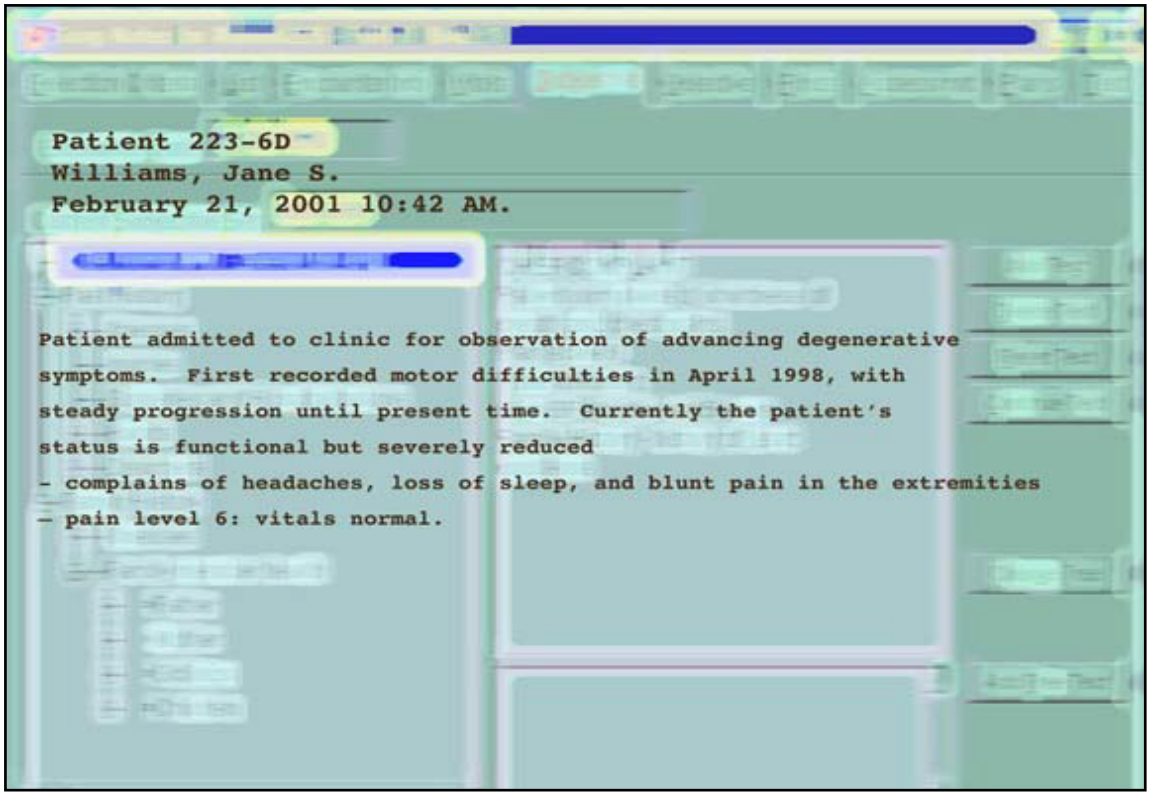
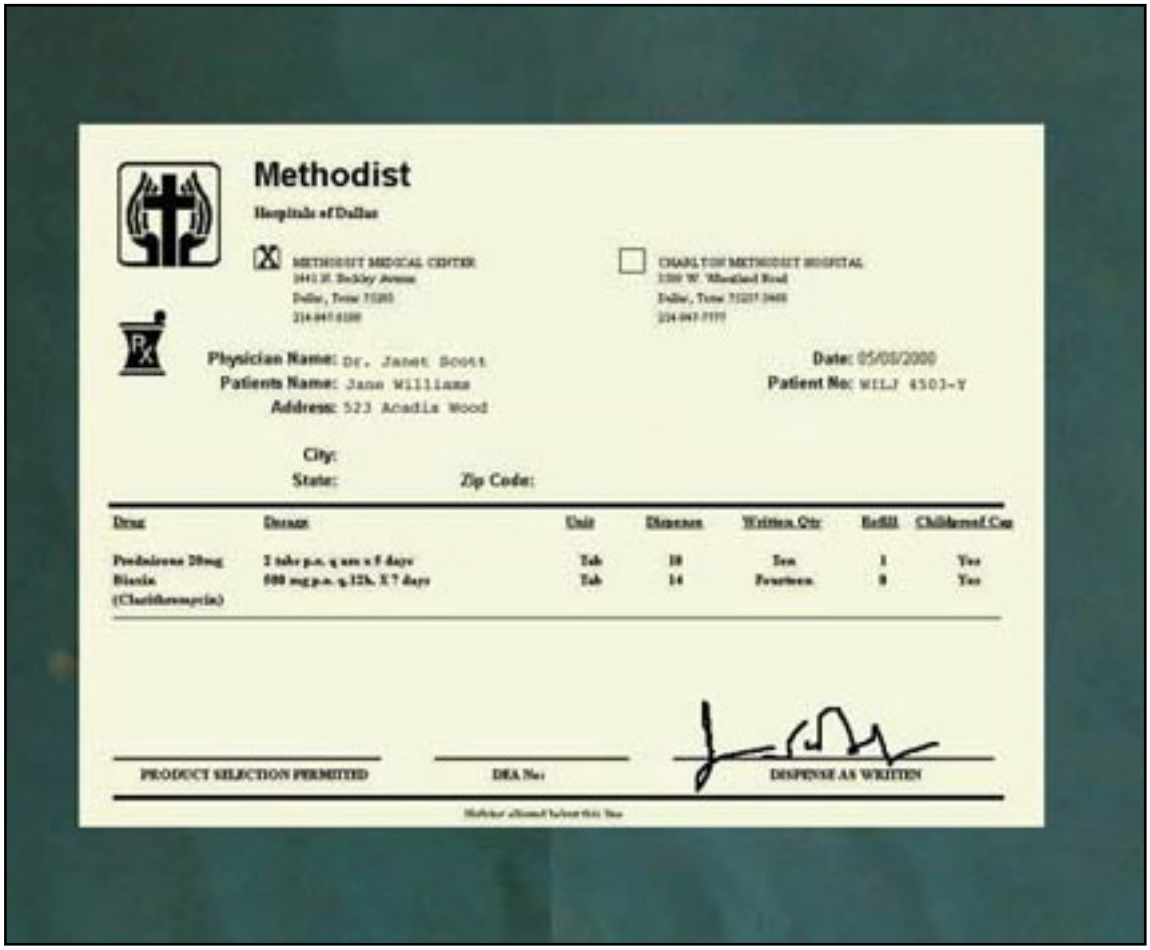


Fig. 2.



a woman who once dragged me into a public washroom to show me the stratified scar tissue covering her entire stomach – to my own mother who died five years ago of Cancer. She provides for us the possibility of focusing on the subjective experience of a single patient in a way that is so often overlooked in the medical institution. We are challenged to scrutinize the specialized language and images found within the medical dossier with the goal of uncovering the meaning that such texts hold for their correlated owners, patients – selves.

Fig. 3.

April 10, 1998
Williams, Jane S.

SOAP Notes

S: Patient complains of slight decrease in motor functions, muscle weakness, numbness in the extremities (especially the right hand). Also frequent headaches, emotional duress, and general fatigue.

O:
B/P: 110/70
Temp: 98.6
Pulse: 88
Respiration: 16

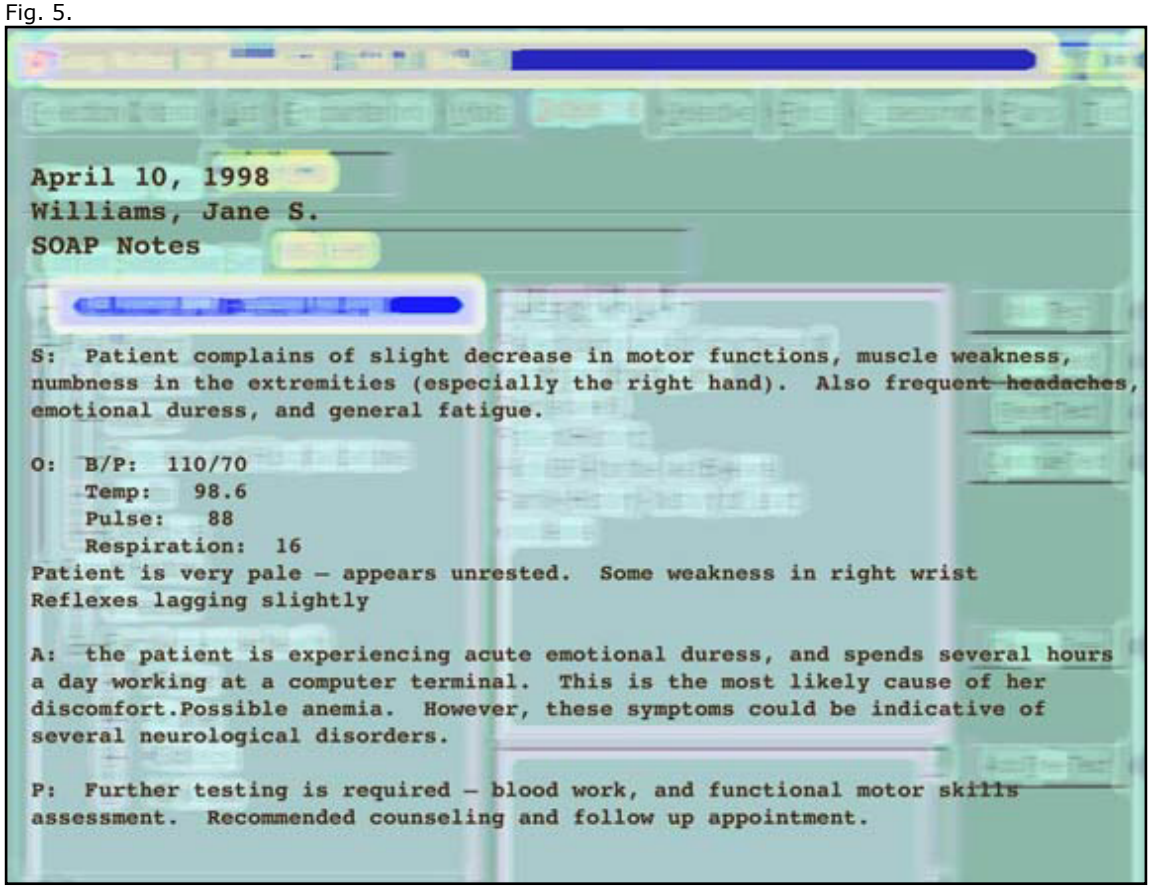
Patient is very pale – appears unrested
Some weakness in right wrist
Reflexes lagging slightly

A: the patient is experiencing acute emotional duress, and spends several hours a day working at a computer terminal. This is the most likely cause of her discomfort. Possible anemia. However, these symptoms could be indicative of several neurological disorders.

P: Further testing is required – blood work, and functional motor skills assessment. Recommended counseling and follow up appointment.
(Fig. 4)

In the medical setting, the patient's files serve as the primary source of qualifiable facts, and therefore reliable information, about the patient's condition. The medical text is the site of reference – the site of *knowledge* of the patient's body. Until the individual's condition and utterances are codified, categorized and written by the expert, they are unreliable in nature,

Fig. 5.



April 10, 1998
Williams, Jane S.
SOAP Notes

S: Patient complains of slight decrease in motor functions, muscle weakness, numbness in the extremities (especially the right hand). Also frequent headaches, emotional duress, and general fatigue.

O: B/P: 110/70
Temp: 98.6
Pulse: 88
Respiration: 16
Patient is very pale – appears unrested. Some weakness in right wrist
Reflexes lagging slightly

A: the patient is experiencing acute emotional duress, and spends several hours a day working at a computer terminal. This is the most likely cause of her discomfort.Possible anemia. However, these symptoms could be indicative of several neurological disorders.

P: Further testing is required – blood work, and functional motor skills assessment. Recommended counseling and follow up appointment.

based on hearsay, and tainted by the un-objective standpoint of the subject. Once inscribed, disease and malfunction becomes a tractable, and therefore controllable phenomena which better lends itself to medical notions of successful patient management. In North America there are several different records keeping protocols used by different institutions. The most common protocol is called SOAP (*Fig*. 5). SOAP is a medical records mnemonic for the Problem-Oriented Medical records system. The letters S–O –A – P stand for Subjective (what the patient says), Objective (what the doctor sees), Assessment, and Plan. Here the patient's voice is recorded, but immediately re-written and either substantiated or undermined by the authority of the expert. These practices serve to standardize records entries and the doctor-patient relationship and are considered promotive of objective fact finding as well as better cross-physician and inter-institutional data accessibility. The acronym SOAP suggests that through the act of assessing and recording – through the written word and the authority of the physician - what is felt and said by the patient is processed, run through the wash cycle, and rendered somehow clean. This inversely implies that what comes before the record, the experience and concerns of the patient, is dirty or tainted in some manner and thus requires purification. From the patient's vantage point, the subjective knowledge of one's body lacks currency when traversing the site of the clinic. The language ascribed to ones body is unknowable, but impressed upon by the physician as accurate and important in finding a solution to patient's problems (*Fig*. 6). It is here, in the clinic, and ever so vulnerable, that the patient conceives of herself as adorning the qualities that the physician ascribes to her. Before setting foot in a hospital Jane was a student, a lover, and an avid reader. She possessed talents, dreams, and insecurities. But when the threshold was crossed, and she entered the doctors office complaining of difficulties holding utensils in her right hand – she was transformed into a specimen of medical inquiry – a patient. It is here that the dossier retains currency becoming a better source of information then the patient herself.

I've started watching The Nature of Things on television, and reading any medical or scientific material that I can get my hands on, hoping that I will pick-up on the jargon that the physicians use to discuss my case. It's like learning a new language – as if my body has a secret voice I never noticed before – it speaks in a dialect foreign to me – and the doctors are my translators, my liaisons between me and my body. I an forced to trust that what they tell me about myself is true.

In Jeanette Winterson's work Written on the Body the protagonist imagines that the touch of a lover's hand is forever imprinted on the body of the touched (*Fig*. 7). That a cumulative process occurs with the layers of each subsequent touch impressing on top of the one before. Here the palimpsest is made – The body is written on (Winterson 1992, p.89). Winterson is not suggesting a physical or tractable phenomena, but a psychological one – a bodily memory of instances that are absorbed by the individual and reconstituted into definitions of the self. In terms of the medical dossier, I am arguing that the same applies to language. That each entry in a patient's dossier become entries into the body – into the self. The dossier is the textualization and technoloization of the patient's body, and as if in a cyclical embrace, the text informs the body as the body informs the text. With anthropomorphic likeness it grows and changes in direct accordance with the subject's body and the development and nature of its' disease. I would go so far as to suggest that within the site of the clinic the text *is* the body, metaphorically, inscriptionaly, and physically. In terms of the dossier, the text becomes an alternate version, an incarnation of the individual, that inhabits the clinic, and supersedes the currency of the

Figs. 6,7,8

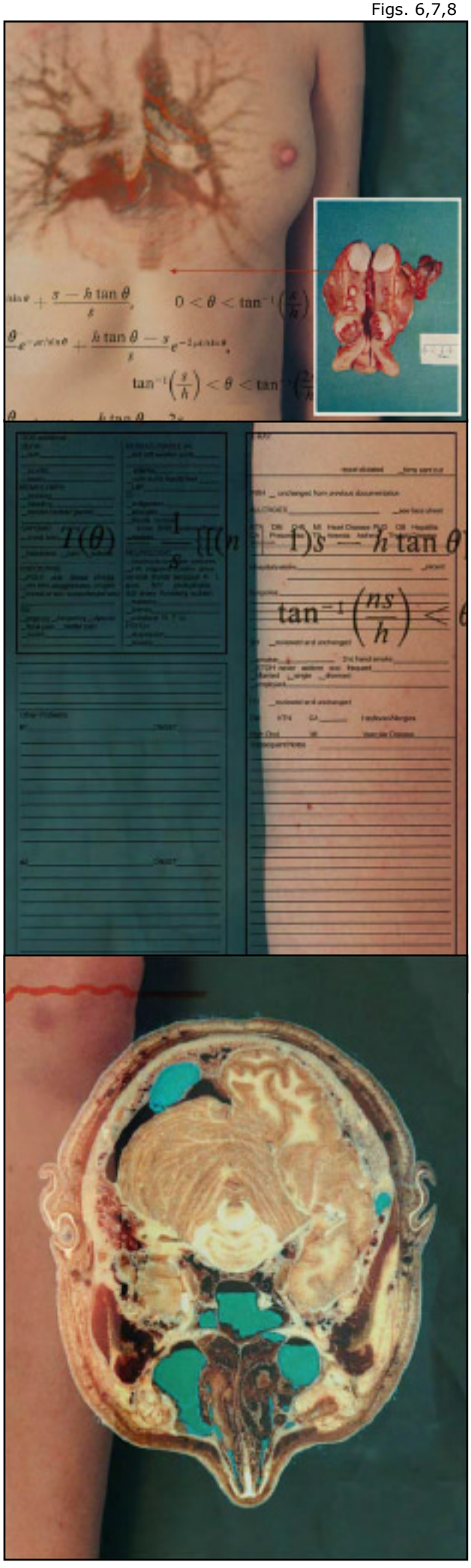


Fig. 9.

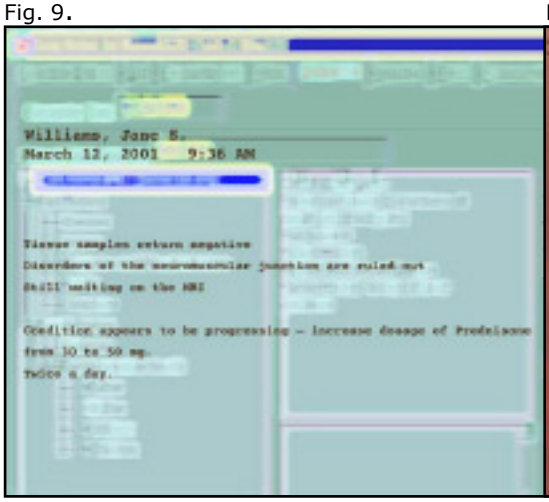
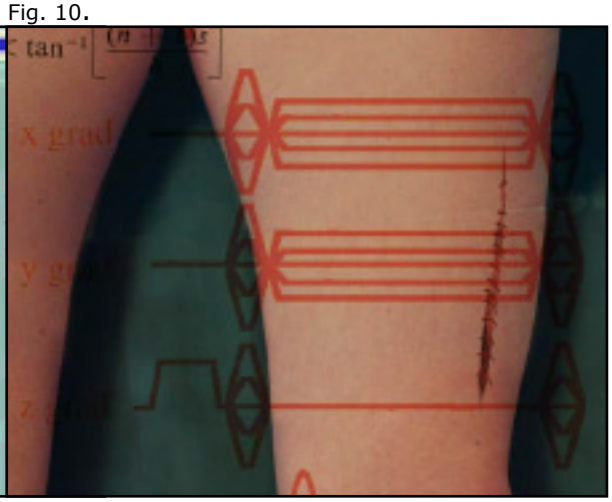


Fig. 10.

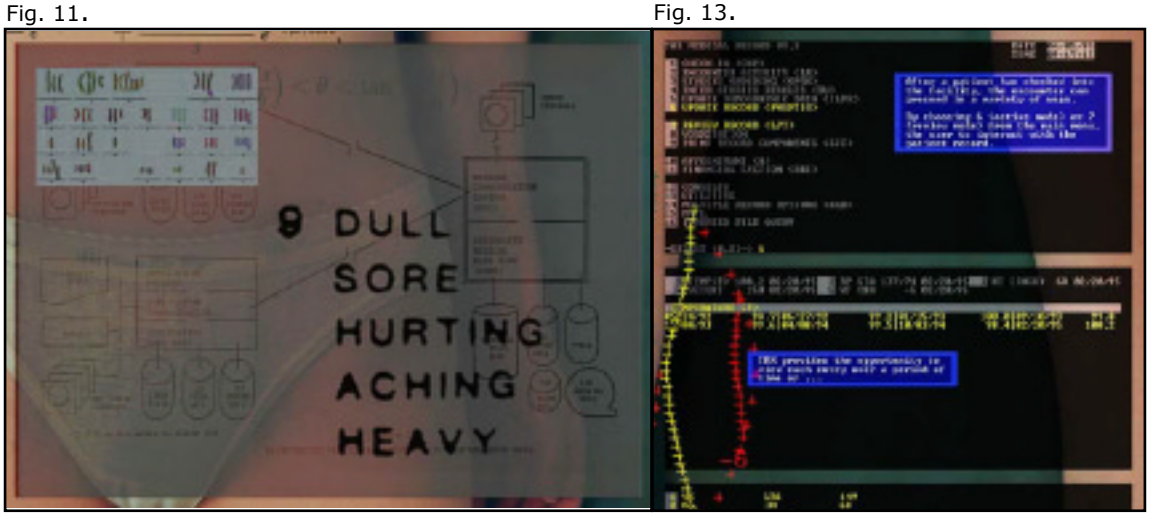


corporeality of the patient within that site. The dossier attains girth, history and personality. It traverses both time and space – each sheet of paper like a latitudinal slice of the specimen – compiled to make a whole (*Fig*. 8). Each entry into the digital data bank like a node, or chromosome, in our informatic conception of the human body. The record inscribes the body, but also physically possesses the body with minute DNA samples, preserved ovum, and placenta. The organism is transformed into a complex multi-functional text, and that text is in turn reabsorbed into the body – in to the constructed self of the patient (*Fig*. 9).

> *I had a biopsy last week. They wanted a sample of my quadricep to determine if the degeneration was occurring in the muscle tissue itself. I wonder what happened to that little piece of me – if it was tested and then disposed of – or if it was saved, and if so where is it? I often imagine endless store houses deep within the bowels of every hospital where records are kept for an eternity. It is like something out of a Peter Greenaway film – a bacchanal of bodily information – where paper meets organism – where each biopsy, tissue sample, and amputation is filed with it's correlative documentation. Rotting and infested. And there, along with pieces of everyone else is my muscle tissue contributing to the warm stench.*
>
> **Williams, Jane S.** **March 12, 2001**
> **9:36 AM**
>
> **Tissue samples return negative**
> **Disorders of the neuromuscular junction are ruled out**
> **Still waiting on the MRI**
>
> **Condition appears to be progressing – increase dosage of Prednisone from 30 to 50 mg.**
> **Twice a day. (Fig. 10)**

And so, we must ask ourselves; what is the nature of the codified document, and thus the medicalized body of the patient? Through such analysis and interpretation we can aim to not only access and understand the text, but to posses it and author it ourselves. However, as the patient is without the vocabulary and the expertise to read their dossier in the clinical manner for which it was intended, one must rely on folk knowledge of the field, cultural and linguistic assumptions, and visual signifiers by which to interpret the significance of the text for its owner. The patient's body is transformed at the moment of recognition - the instant the patient sees them self reflected in the complex and incomprehensible discourse of medicine (*Fig*. 11). Today I will elaborate on two specific incarnations of the textualized patient; including the

Fig. 11. Fig. 13.



patient as war zone, and the patient as lexicon.

The Patient as War Zone

In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag argues that cancer and its' treatments have been deeply codified by post war medical and colloquial language with harsh metaphors of the battle ground and tactical warfare. She illustrates for the reader how the language of battle is applied to the cancerous body.

> ..cancer cells do not simply multiply; they are "invasive." Cancer cells colonize from the original tumor to far sites in the body, first setting up tiny out-

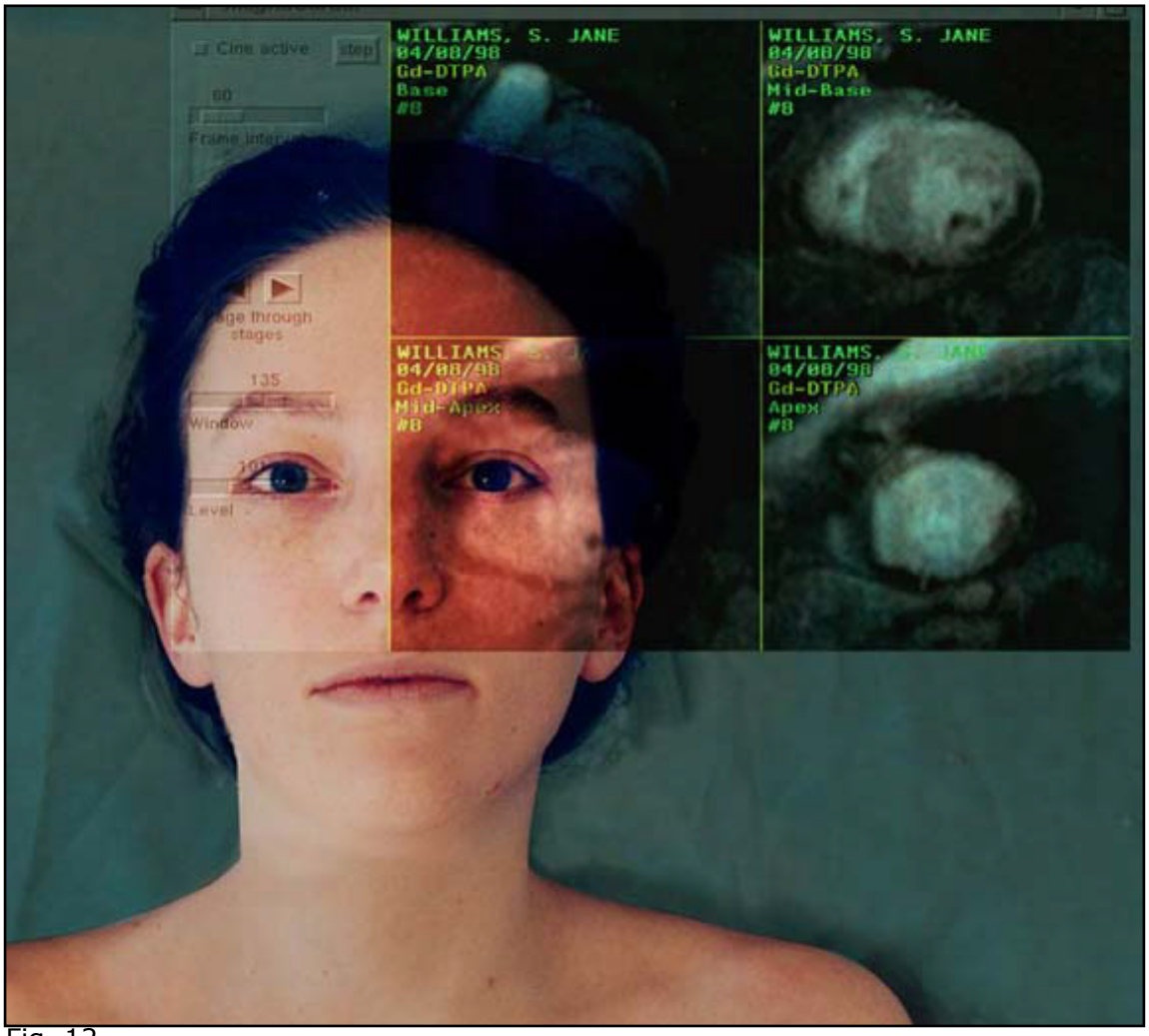
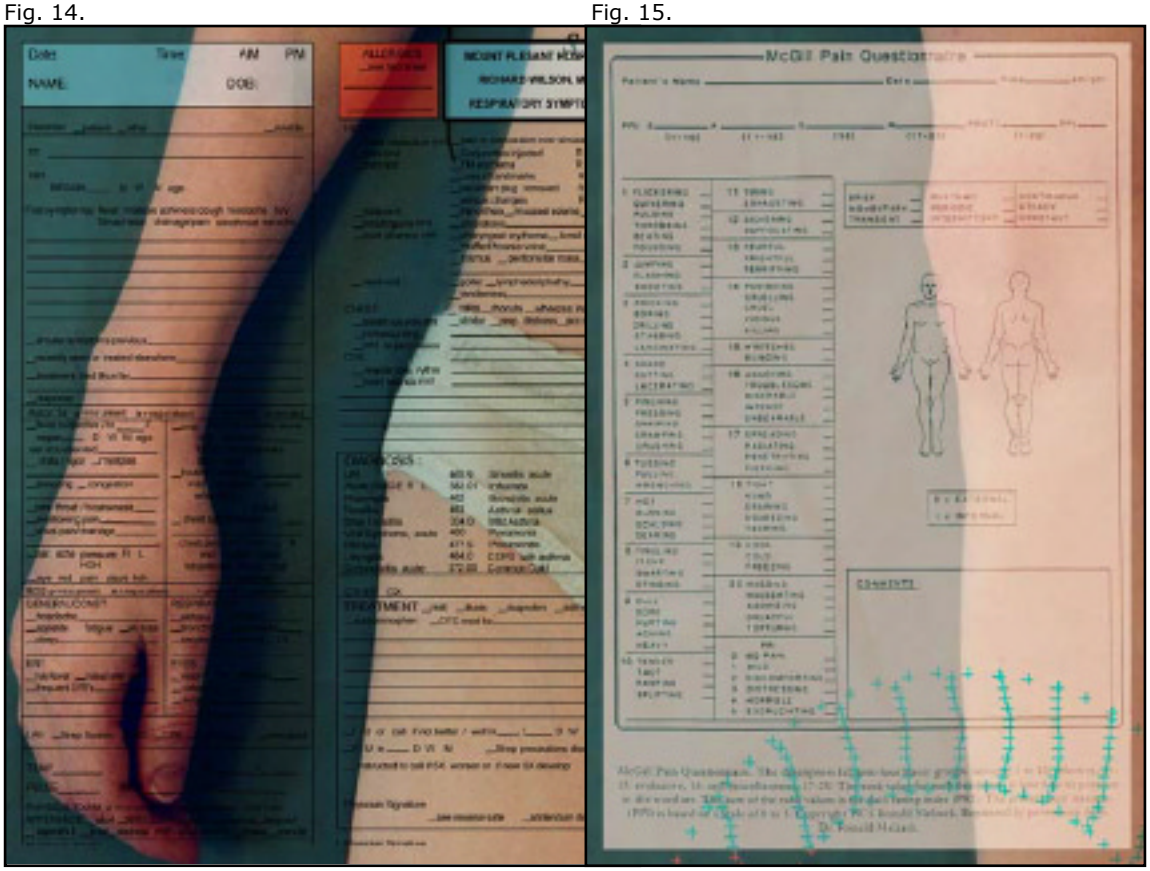


Fig. 12.

Fig. 14. Fig. 15.

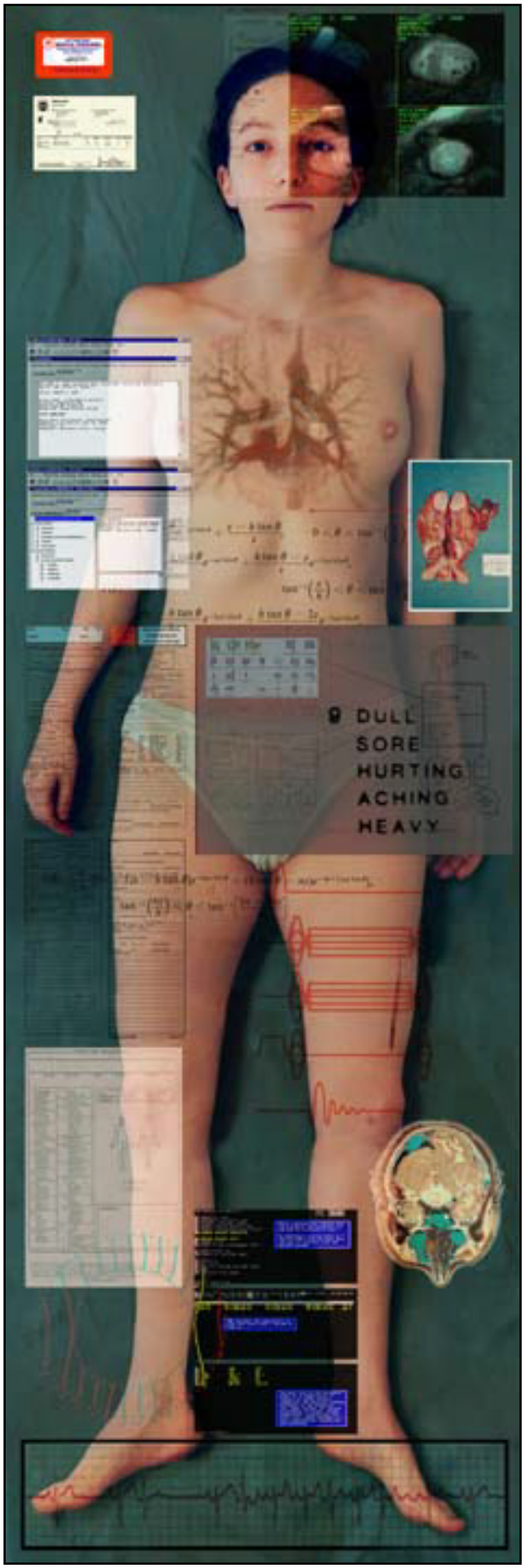


> posts ("micrometastases") whose presence is assumed, though they cannot be detected. Rarely are the body's "defenses" vigorous enough to obliterate a tumor that has established its own blood supply and consists of billions of destructive cells. (Sontag 1978, p.64)

These metaphors are not restricted to oncology wards. Notions of warfare are proliferated throughout modern medicine – particularly in the area of medical imaging. Seen here, is a myocardial perfusion (similar to an MRI) where organ tissues are targeted and surveyed from aerial perspective for evidence of enemy invaders (*Fig*. 12). The physician utilizes these types of images to diagnose internal abnormalities, and in turn presents them to the patient as evidence to better visualize and explain the problem. However, Jane isn't versed in the language of medical imaging, and finds the results difficult to understand. Through visual associations she sees indicators of surveillance, and is reminded of the televised target footage of bunkers and bridges about to be obliterated during the Dessert Storm conflict. The non-specialist imposes notions of night vision and heat seeking missiles on the images the doctor relies on for diagnosis. The patient believes that the mandate of scientific inquiry and medical intervention presupposes objective truths, and thus how can one *not* come to the conclusion that their body is in fact a battle ground; that these images are not constructions, they are merely reflecting facts about the state of their interior surfaces? Under these circumstances - if the records say so, and the patient believes so, and acts so – and so it is inscribed. Technological warfare is being waged within the body of the patient (*Fig*. 13). The dossier in it's digitized form becomes the command center, and physician is the commander in chief. Here decisions are made, tactics strategized, and the enemy – the enemy is depersonalized to non-human status to render warfare more palatable for the offensive line. Only this is misleading, as in both cases – within the hospital and the battle field - the targets *are* human, and both will suffer injuries and sometimes casualties resulting from the wages of war. Though the clinic has healing intentions, the patient (the target) is forced to bear excruciating witness to their own planned invasion, through the observation of specialized medical images of their body in consultation with the physician.

The body as lexicon

Fig. 16.



And what of the endless charts and questionnaires the patient encounters during one's stay at the hospital? Dr. J.H. Mitchell, in his paper Information Flow in Hospitals presented at The Second International Symposium on Computers in Medicine (1972) - describes computerized medical records as systems of entrenched taxonomies (*Fig*. 14). He states "Any attempt to computerize case records themselves, for diagnostic and other reasons, immediately possess problems of standardization." (Mitchell 1972, p.34) Medical questionnaires and data entry charts, in digital form or hard copy, are developed by technicians and records specialists to encompass all possible patient histories and symptoms that may be of use to the physician. They aim to expeditate and standardize the doctor patient interview and encourage objective fact recording. They are intended to enhance communication between the subject and the scientist, and aid the individual in the difficult task of ascribing codified language to personal interpretations of the self. Although the various categories and selections offered are prolific, even encyclopedic– such standardization of patient information inevitably assumes a norm of possibility and relevance. Thus excluding anyone or any occurrence that deviates from the predetermined possibilities of the medicalized human body. Additionally, rigid design, rooted in columns, compartmentalization and branching subcategories suggest to the viewer that the body can and should be succinctly described within these terms. Here the body is described and represented as a veritable lexicon (*Fig*. 15). The textualized patient adopts the linear and dimensional qualities of a very extensive dictionary. Here, the patient is

either relieved to find their personal discomforts listed as possible within the document, and therefore substantiated – or frustrated and unsure when they are unable to locate the appropriate language to describe their pain in the encyclopedic listing of all pains known and recognized by the medical establishment. If the patient fails to be suitably categorized – diagnosis and treatment become problemitized – even impossible. The subject is thrown into a tail spin of unidentifiable, and therefore non-existent corporeal experience. In Michel Foucault's preface to *The Order of Things*, he describes the case of the aphasiac, which provides insight and understanding into the position of the uncatagorizable patient.

> It appears that certain aphasiacs, when shown various skeins of wool on a table top, are consistently unable to arrange them into any coherent pattern; as though the simple rectangle were unable to serve in their case as a homogeneous and neutral space in which things could be placed so as to display at the same time the continuous order off their identities or differences as well as the semantic field of their denomination. (Michel Foucault 1971. p.Xviii)

Pattern is attempted by the aphasiac time and time again and the individual suffers "becoming more and more disturbed, and teetering finally on the brink of anxiety." (Michel Foucault 1971. p.Xviii) The body not found in the physician's diagnostic encyclopedia is essentially no body at all.

> *To be honest with you, I am growing more and more confused and irate. I have endured, X-rays, biopsies and blood tests. So many imaging procedures that I've lost count. I am booked for another Cat Scan tomorrow – they think that they might have missed something the first time. And still after all this – no one can explain what is happening to me. I am running out of imagination – out of energy. I am getting bogged down, clumsy in my body and clouded with bureaucracy. This person – this malfunctioned machine – infected system – invaded territory – patient 223-6D - this person isn't me. (*Fig*. 16)*

Literature

Aycock, W. and Clarke, B. Eds., 1990. *The Body and the Text: Comparative Essays in Literature and Medicine.* Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press.

Barthes, R., 1985. *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962 – 1980.* Trans. Linda Coverdale. New York: Hill and Wang.

Benjamin, W., 1986. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings.* Edt. Peter Demetz. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. New York: Schocken Books.

Berkow, R. Ed., 1997. *The Merck Manual of Medical Information (Home Edition)* Whitehouse Station: Merk and Co. Inc.

Bainbridge, M. and Salmon P., Rappaport A., Hayes G., Williams J., Teasdale S., 1996. The Problem Oriented Medical Record - just a little more structure to help the world go round? a paper given at *The Primary Health Care Specialist Group of the British Computer Society Annual Conference*, Downing College, Cambridge, UK.

http://www.phcsg.org.uk/conferences/camb96/mikey.html

Brown, P.T.S. and Payne L..C., 1975. *An Introduction to Medical Automation*. London: Pitman Medical Publishing Company Ltd.

Crary, J. and Kwinter S. Eds., 1992. *Incorporations.* New York: Zone Books.

Foucault, M., 1994. *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the Human Sciences.* Trans. Unknown. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M., 1994. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception.* Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Vintage Books.

Gray, C.H., 1995.*The Cyborg Handbook.* New York: Routledge.

Haraway, D.J., 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* New York: Routledge.

Illich, I., 1978. *Limits to Medicine – Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health.* New York: Penguin Books.

Macovski, A., 1983. *Medical Imagining Systems*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Probyn, E., 1992. Theorizing Through the Body *In:* L.Rakow, ed. *Women Making Meaning*. New York: Routledge, p. 83-99.

Rose, J. ed., 1972. *Computers in Medicine: Proceedings of the Second International Symposium held at Blackburn College of Technology and Design.* Dorchester: John Wright & Sons Ltd.

Sontag, S., 1978. *Illness as Metaphor.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,

Stacey, J., 1997. *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer.* New York: Routledge.

Stafford, B.M., 1993. *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine.* Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Stevenson, Dr. I., 1971. *The Diagnostic Interview.* (2nd edition) New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Wall, P.D., 1999. Some Notes on the Future of Pain *In:* Burns B. and Busby C., Sawchuk K. eds. *When Pain Strikes*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. p. 9-23.

Winterson, J., 1992. *Written on the Body.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Vorhaus, Dr. M.G., 1957. *The Changing Patient-Doctor Relationship*. New York: Horizon Press.

Industry Texts

Virginia Effective Documentation Practices (2000) published by the Doctors Insurance Reciprocal Risk Management Department

Web sites

Duke Medical Informatics Research
http://dmi-www.mc.duke.edu/dukemi/research/research.html
eICD.com
http://www.eicd.com/Default.htm
ER Records
http://www.erchoice.com/electronic_medical_records.html
Illustrated Health Encyclopedia
http://www.oso.com/shared/health/adam/ency/article/002341.html
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/medicalschool/
Medical Computing Today (MC Today)
http://www.medicalcomputingtoday.com/index.html
MEDVALET/COHIS :Community Outreach Health Information System
http://www.bu.edu/COHIS/cardvasc/cvd.htm
Patricia Loofbourrow, MD, FAAFP (Doc Trish)
http://www.askdoctrish.com
Revealing Bodies at The Exploratorium 2000
http://www.exploratorium.edu/bodies/index.html
The Visible Human Project
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible_human.html