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Special Issue
Body and Embodiment

UCD School of Philosophy

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SPECIAL ISSUE:
Body and Embodiment

Editors: Anna Nicholson, Luna Dolezal, Sheena Hyland

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In Memory of
Katherine Anne O'Kelly
(1979-2007)

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About *Perspectives*

Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy is a peer-reviewed annual publication, featuring articles, book reviews and interviews encompassing a broad range of current issues in philosophy and its related disciplines. *Perspectives* publishes work from within both the analytic and continental traditions reflecting the diverse interests of students and faculty at University College Dublin.

About this Issue

The inaugural issue of *Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy* is a special edition on the theme of the body and embodiment. This theme was chosen to reflect the work presented at the last two annual conferences organised by postgraduates at Univeristy College Dublin: *Perspectives on the Body and Embodiment* (2007) and *Perspectives on Intercorporeality and Intersubjectivity* (2008).

Since the investigations of phenomenological theorists such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, the themes of embodiment and situatedness have enjoyed increased popularity over a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, literature and women's studies, among others. Recognition that the body is not merely an appendage to the self, but rather is what opens up the possibility of meaningful subjective existence, has radically shifted the classical philosophical understanding of the body.

This special issue of *Perspectives* aims to explore the themes of the body and embodiment in contemporary discourse featuring papers which approach the theme from a range of perspectives: cognitive science, art and performance, psychology, feminism and medical ethics.

The issue opens with an interview with Professor Gail Weiss from George Washington University who discusses her work in the field of the body and embodiment. Professor Weiss was an invited speaker to the *Perspectives on Intercorporeality and Intersubjectivity* conference which was held at UCD in June, 2008. We are pleased to include her reflections on some key themes on the topic of this special issue.

The first paper is a contribution from Dr. Margrit Shildrick, one of the keynote speakers at the *Perspectives on the Body and Embodiment* Conference in 2007. In her article "Contesting Normative Embodiment:

Some Reflections on the Psycho-social Significance of Heart Transplant Surgery", she looks to normative biomedical expections of the body and its consequences in post-transplant identity.

Laura Greene's "'Bodiless Bodies': Perception and Embodiment in Kant and Irigarary" draws on Luce Irigarary's analysis of sexuate difference to highlight the 'masculine logic' underlying Kant's transcendental subject. Sergio Levi approaches the phenomenon of embodiment from a neuropsychological perspective in his contribution "Affective Simulation, Imitation, and the Motor Mirror System", in which he explores the role that our own emotions play in recognising and empathising with the emotions of others. He draws upon recent research in order to differentiate this process of affective simulation from the cognitive process of mirroring the actions of others, suggesting that the two similar mechanisms give rise to very different phenomena.

In her paper "Understanding the Body's Critique: Repeating to Repair", Karin Nisenbaum offers an original analysis of the embodied compulsion to repeat, looking at the body as a site where normative structures come into view. She draws on the work of Freud and Ricoeur and offers a conception of 'Erotic Life' as a means to configure embodied life more humanely. Through Walter Benjamin's studies on temporality and political structures, her investigation is widened to consider political bodies. And finally, artist and theorist Nathaniel Stern, gives an interesting analysis of what he terms the 'implicit body' in his paper "Implicit Bodies through Explicit Action". Like a mobius strip, the body, Stern argues, feeds back between affection and reflection. Stern offers compelling examples from contemporary digital art where the body acts as a site for emergence and inter-action. This issue closes with a selection of book reviews written by University College Dublin postgraduates, showcasing a broader selection of philosophical themes.

It is with great pleasure that we present these papers in this inaugural issue of *Perspectives*. Many thanks to our contributors, editorial board, designer and all others whose support and encouragement have been invaluable.

Anna Nicholson
Luna Dolezal
Sheena Hyland

Editors
Dublin 2008

Interview with Professor Gail Weiss

(George Washington University, USA)

You have published extensively on the philosophy of the body and embodiment. Why are you drawn to this field?

I was first introduced to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* as a senior philosophy major in a semester long course, and even though I found the text very difficult at the time, his arguments against mind-body dualism and his own understanding of the body-subject immediately resonated with me. I had already read Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* with deep interest earlier that year and Merleau-Ponty's emphasis upon the primacy of embodied experience poignantly revealed the shortcomings of Sartre's Cartesian distinction between being-for-itself (être-pour-soi) and being-in-itself (être-en-soi), particularly his association of the body with the immanence of being-in-itself . A few years later, I read Iris Young's classic essay, "Throwing Like a Girl," and her critique of Merleau-Ponty's allegedly gender-neutral account of embodiment also struck home. While I agreed with Young's argument that Merleau-Ponty ignored the significance of gender differences in bodily experience, and that these latter are primarily due to differences in how boys and girls are taught to view their bodies and bodily capabilities, I also thought (and still think) that Merleau-Ponty's work provides the best starting point for theorizing the centrality of the body in all aspects of human experience.

In your work you address the body as it is marked by gender, social class and race. Why do you think the matter of bodily difference important for philosophy?

There are really many answers to this question but I will focus on one in particular, namely, that the work that has been done in the last couple of decades on bodily difference has been some of the most exciting work to read and discuss in our discipline today. Whole fields including feminist theory, critical race theory, and more recently, disability studies take bodily difference as a primary subject of investigation and taking bodily difference seriously has not only opened up provocative new ways of thinking about ethics and politics but has also posed challenges for psychoanalysis and phenomenology that have significantly re-shaped both methodologies. Acknowledging the significance of bodily differences is important for

philosophy because it leads to the rejection of narrow understandings of what philosophy is and what philosophers should be doing. To take bodily difference seriously means to reject "armchair" philosophizing and to take a self-reflexive stance towards how one's own embodied experience has helped to shape the understandings of truth, knowledge, beauty, and goodness that philosophers hold dear. Of course, this need not mean rejecting these notions altogether, but it does involve taking them off their lofty pedestal to examine which bodies are seen as having the most privileged access to these "eternal" values.

Phenomenology and feminist theory are major influences on your research on the body. What do you think the role of feminist philosophy is in the project of phenomenological philosophy in general?

For me, feminist philosophy and phenomenology go hand in hand. Both affirm the primacy of lived experience (and the central role of the body in particular) and both seek to uncover the hidden presuppositions that underlie our taken-for-granted notions of that experience with the ultimate aim of offering a more accurate and more comprehensive description of that experience. However, this doesn't mean that all feminist theorists should be phenomenologists or that all phenomenologists should be feminist theorists. If I'm doing feminist logic, for instance, it is not as obvious how this project can or should be phenomenological (though I must confess I think a case can still be made for the latter!). On the other hand, it is harder to think of phenomenological investigations that would not be significantly improved by the insights offered by a feminist perspective precisely because the latter often reveals the crucial "blind spots" in what had hitherto been presented as a thorough investigation. Feminist philosophy, then, offers an invaluable means of testing the rigor of phenomenological insights, keeping us honest in our claims to be offering a comprehensive description of a given phenomenon by forcing us to question continuously who and what might be excluded by the analysis we are providing.

Much of your work combines the insights of social constructivism with phenomenology. Are these theoretical approaches to the body compatible?

My short answer is "absolutely." There is a surprisingly pervasive misunderstanding about phenomenology that circulates among many poststructuralist continental thinkers and that is articulated by Pierre

Bourdieu in *The Logic of Practice*. The claim is that phenomenology is a subjectivist philosophy, primarily concerned with the Husserlian project of providing an eidetic (essential) description of consciousness. Hence, the story goes, phenomenology is an ahistorical, apolitical, solipsistic approach that has nothing important to say regarding contemporary social and political issues. If one accepts this view, then there definitely seems to be a tension between social constructionism and phenomenology. Yet, this is a totally false dichotomy. Phenomenology, as Husserl first articulated it, is committed to describing (some aspect of) lived experience as accurately, comprehensively, and rigorously as possible without appealing to prejudices or presuppositions about that experience. Insofar as our understandings of the world, of others, and of ourselves both effect and are affected by our ongoing social interactions, it would be remiss of any phenomenology worthy of the name to ignore this constitutive aspect of lived experience. Indeed, if one artificially isolated a phenomenon from its social and political context, denying the influence of the latter, one would get a distorted view of the phenomenon as it actually presents itself in everyday life.

I notice that you have written about bodily ambiguity and anonymity. Why do you think these themes are important in investigations of the body?

Both Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty have been strong influences on my work on bodily ambiguity as well as, in Merleau-Ponty's case, anonymity. By embracing ambiguity, both Merleau-Ponty and Beauvoir are able to move decisively away from an either/or dualistic ontology and affirm the way in which human experience is always a "both/and." While Beauvoir focuses on the ethical and the gendered implications of the ambiguity of human existence, arguing that we must embrace our transcendence *and* our immanence and refuse to see one sex as more transcendent or immanent than the other, Merleau-Ponty develops a new ontology of the flesh that traces the ambiguities that both separate and unite bodies (human and nonhuman) with other bodies. For both of these authors, to say that human existence is ambiguous is to say that it always has more than one possible meaning, and both see the multiplicity of meaning as a positive phenomenon that gives richness to our experience. Not only do I share their view that ambiguity is a lived intercorporeal experience but I also understand anonymity to one of the ways in which that ambiguity is lived on a daily basis. In his *Phenomenology of the Social World*, Alfred Schutz provides a wonderful description of the anonymity of social existence, and reveals that this is

not a negative or deficient experience but indispensable for navigating the myriad interactions we sustain with other people throughout our lives. My own dissertation advisor, Maurice Natanson (a former student of Schutz) wrote a wonderful book on anonymity that further elaborated the anonymous aspects of both subjectivity and social life. So, I was exposed to the themes of ambiguity and anonymity fairly early in my own philosophical life and yet I feel like I have only just begun to plumb the insights they have to offer. The body seems to me to be the most exciting place to see how they play out and make possible different types of exchanges between different types of bodies.

In your book *Body Images* you write about an 'embodied ethics' which arises out of intercorporeal relations. How do you think a prescriptive ethics can arise from the body and its relations to other bodies?

Frankly, I don't think a prescriptive ethics can arise anywhere else. Why would two disembodied minds have need of an ethics? It is precisely because ethical subjects are always embodied subjects and because unethical actions harm people's bodies (e.g. murders are crimes against bodies and not crimes against minds!), that we cannot afford to neglect the central role played by what I call "bodily imperatives," namely, the ethical demands that issue from one body to another whether these demands take negative forms such as "do not harm me" or more positive (but nonetheless related) demands such as "care for me."

You have recently written about conjoined twins, a topic which Margrit Shildrick has also explored at length. What philosophical insights can be gained from considering the unusual case of conjoined twins?

Conjoined twins, I argue, reveal in the most visible way the intimate intercorporeal connections that sustain, as well as cause inevitable tensions within, human existence. What I find especially noteworthy is the way in which conjoined twins challenge the dominant logic of "one body one identity" that is so taken for granted in everyday life. The widespread acceptance of and praise for separation surgeries on conjoined twins even when the surgeries often lead to death or a severely compromised existence for one or both twins, reveals how strongly we are committed to this dominant logic. The fact that adult conjoined twins are not consulted as "expert witnesses" on the quality of a conjoined life shows that there is an "epistemology of ignorance" operating, that is, a refusal to avail ourselves

of knowledgeable resources, that has had deleterious effects not only on conjoined twins and their families but also on our society as a whole.

Merleau-Ponty is championed as the philosopher of embodiment of the twentieth-century (Richard Shusterman calls him the "patron saint of the body" in *Body Consciousness*), but Merleau-Ponty's philosophy has come under much criticism. Briefly, what do you think is the most important contribution Merleau-Ponty's work has made to Western philosophy, and what do you think are the most important omissions in his phenomenological portrayal of the body?

These are certainly debatable issues but I would have to say that Merleau-Ponty's most important contribution to Western philosophy is his ability to move beyond traditional ontological and metaphysical dualisms by offering us a phenomenologically compelling account of embodiment as always integrating mind and body, self and other, nature and culture, an account that continues to profoundly engage and influence a whole new generation of continental thinkers both within and outside of philosophy. Indeed, his work is still inspiring exciting new interdisciplinary research 100 years after his birth. The most important omissions in his work are, I believe, the ones that have been so ably identified by feminist and critical race theorists such as Judith Butler, Iris Young, and Frantz Fanon, namely, his failing to acknowledge, much less describe, the profound ways in which one's bodily existence can be severely diminished in meaning and value when one is perceived as being of the "wrong" (inferior) sex, the "wrong" (inferior) gender, and/or the "wrong" (inferior) race. He is actually better on class and disability issues than on race, sex, or gender, however one of the positive results of this omission is that he has left the rest of us a lot of interesting work to do! I believe that doing it actually supports rather than works against Merleau-Ponty's own project insofar as we end up with a better understanding of how our bodies and identities are intersubjectively constituted and never just ours alone.

In the recent conference of the *Society for European Philosophy* which was held at University College Dublin, a panel was formed to address the question of the future of phenomenology. In your view what is the future for phenomenology and how do investigations of the body fit in to that?

I hope it is clear from my previous responses that I think phenomenology has a

very promising future. I am reminded of Merleau-Ponty's famous lines from the end of his essay, "Eye and Mind" where he maintains that each painter starts at the beginning insofar as every painting, in resolving one problem such as the problem of perspective, creates new challenges that the painting sets out to resolve, and thus no painting will ever "complete" painting once and for all. I feel that this is an excellent description of phenomenology as a methodology. The best phenomenologists reveal the inexhaustibility of the lifeworld, pointing the way toward the phenomenologies yet to come. In Husserlian language, each new phenomenological account should open up new horizons to interrogate and/or old horizons to examine afresh. Since the body is implicated in all phenomenological descriptions insofar as we cannot help but participate as embodied agents in the world we are describing, it cannot function as an unquestioned presupposition but must remain perpetually in question. This means that we must never rest content with a fixed understanding of what bodies mean or which bodies matter (to borrow from Judith Butler), but must continually be cognizant of the remarkable diversity of bodies, and how much we have to learn from embodied experiences that differ radically from our own.

Questions by Luna Dolezal and Sheena Hyland

Contesting Normative Embodiment: Some Reflections on the Psycho-social Significance of Heart Transplant Surgery

Margrit Shildrick

Abstract

What constitutes the normative body is always and everywhere open to challenge and disruption, particularly in the era of postmodernity when contemporary forms of technological practice intervene directly in our bodies. I shall focus on heart transplantation where, following the graft, the recipient's sense of self as a bounded and unique individual is necessarily disturbed, and it is clear that an outcome favourable to extended life expectancy cannot be read through clinical measures alone. My speculative suggestion is that there are many other factors in play that might be most usefully interrogated through a variety of theoretical resources relating to the strand of cultural analysis that interrogates and rejects the modernist self-other paradigm. For the purposes of this paper, however, I shall largely restrict my comments to the phenomenology of embodiment as proposed by Merleau-Ponty.

Keywords: heart transplant; embodiment; body; Merleau-Ponty; biomedicine

What constitutes the normative body is always and everywhere open to challenge, but it is perhaps in the era of postmodernity that the notion is most under threat of disruption. In his book, *Bodies in Technologies,* the phenomenologist Don Ihde makes the following claim:

> We are our bodies – but in that very basic notion one also discovers that our bodies have an amazing plasticity and polymorphism that is often brought out precisely in our relations with technologies. We are bodies in technologies. (2002: 137)

And what I shall address in this paper are some of the issues arising from a very contemporary form of technological practice that intervenes directly in our bodies.

The context of my theoretical approach lies in a current collaborative research project involving both empirical and theoretical elements that is exploring the significance of organ transplantation, and more particularly the question of why many recipients of heart transplants, which have been initially successful both clinically and physiologically, subsequently develop unexpected complications and may die 'prematurely'.[1] In the project, in which I'm one member of a team of five researchers, the empirical element consists of interviewing and videoing around thirty differential recipients over a three-year period to assess not simply their physiological well-being – which is already the focus of intense and ongoing scrutiny – but more importantly their psychic responses to the dramatic changes that are effected on their bodies.[2] The speculative assumption is that the two elements are irreducibly linked. What is already apparent from existing research and scattered anecdotal evidence is that the ability of recipients to sustain and in-corporate donated organs over time is at least correlative with their negotiation of questions of self-identity, bodily integrity and corporeal hybridity. Given that following transplant the recipient's sense of self as a bounded and unique individual is necessarily disrupted, it is becoming increasingly clear that an outcome favourable to extended life expectancy cannot be read through clinical measures alone. My suggestion, which at this stage remains speculative, is that there are many other factors in play which might be usefully approached through a variety of theoretical resources relating to that strand of cultural analysis that interrogates and rejects the modernist self-other paradigm. Each will be investigated in the wider context of the project, but for the purposes of this paper, I shall largely restrict my comments to the phenomenology of embodiment as proposed by Merleau-Ponty.

My own starting point a few years ago, when I had been asked to speak on a symposium panel in Canada addressing the significance of the corporeal cut, is indicative of what is at stake. I approached the issue through my existing research on the ontological and psycho-social significance of conjoined twinning and the susceptibility of that condition to bio-medical intervention, and was surprised to find myself in a highly productive conversation with another panellist, a cardiologist, who is the clinical director of a major North American heart transplant unit. I say surprised because the cardiologist in question had given an entirely positivist presentation of the apparently unproblematic benefits of heart transplantation as opposed to other forms of therapy for end-stage heart failure, and had expressed frustration only insofar as there are not enough donor organs available. It all appeared to be a matter of supply and demand. Yet when I asked her over

coffee what kept her awake at night, she replied without hesitation: "I worry about their identities". The current project – provisionally named *PITH: The Phenomenology of Incorporating a Transplanted Heart* – emerged directly from that conversation and comprises input from the cardiologist, a medical sociologist who directs the ethnographic study, a psychologist, a social work academic, and myself, as a philosophically trained theorist.

What had immediately sprung to mind in listening to my now colleague talking about heart transplant was that issues of intercorporeality were just as relevant to her concerns as they were to my own previous research in the area of conjoined twinning. That work concerned the contestation of the Western imaginary's investment in notions of bounded individuality, where I'm defining the imaginary in Catharine Waldby's terms as "the deployment of, and unacknowledged reliance on, culturally intelligible fantasies and mythologies within the terms of what claims to be a system of pure logic" (2000: 137). And what is notable is that Waldby catches precisely the contradictions that underlie the whole enterprise of biosurgery, especially insofar as it is dedicated to producing normative bodies.

As I understand it, the extra-ordinary embodiment of conjoined twins raises the acute question of whether such human forms should be treated as one or two autonomous persons. This highly modernist concern has superseded an earlier historical anxiety about the location of the soul, and of course the whole point of contemporary separation surgery is to override hybridity and to establish separate personhood. In short, it is clear to see that the existence of conjoined twins deeply contests the normative status of the split between self and other, but might it not be equally disruptive, and indeed productive, to start as it were from the opposite position of a pre-existing split that is then troubled by the process of in-corporation? My proposition is that the cutting apart of concorporate bodies is paralleled in its theoretical implications by the stitching together of previously separate body parts. In both instances the verb "to cleave" – which has the double meaning of "to divide by force" and "to closely unite" - would be highly appropriate. One can imagine Derrida seizing on the richness of that indication of *différance*, for it is undoubtedly that sense of hybridity, of in-betweeness, that is at stake whichever morphology provides the substantive base. Both corporeal conjunction and organ transplantation speak to a sense of "the body which is not one", to use Irigaray's phrase (1985), and that very notion has been the motivating force equally of recent feminist theory that insists on the fluidity and intercorporeality of all embodied being, and of the earlier strand of phenomenology that stresses self-becoming as a matter of living-in-the-world-with-others.[3] In place of the rigid and normatively

framed sovereign self for whom the body is a possession that gives rise to property rights and questions of alienability, the phenomenological self is inseparable from, and indeed only exists in virtue of, her others. Her parameters are provisional and to an extent fuzzy, for as Donna Haraway notes: "even the most reliable Western individuated bodies…neither stop nor start at the skin" (1989: 18).

My focus here is on the strand of phenomenology developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty whose deployment of certain major concepts in relation to the body is highly relevant to the current project. The most important factor is the phenomenological insistence that the self is always embodied – indeed that embodiment is the continuing condition of being a self at all. This contrasts strongly with the mainstream and broadly Cartesian Western tradition in which mind and body are separated, and the self is deemed to have an independent existence that is unchanged by even violent transformations to the body, so that if someone were to lose a leg, say, she would still be the same person with the same core identity. For phenomenologists, however, the self necessarily changes as the body changes, and just as importantly that embodied self is in a mutually constructive relationship with both other selves and the material environment. The self-other distinction can never be assumed. As Merleau-Ponty (1968) understands it, every one of us is embedded in the "flesh" of the world, that is, in a living web of dynamic connections that constantly shapes and reshapes who we are. And despite the strength of the quasi-Cartesian split between mind and body, most of us do on an everyday basis acknowledge the significance of our embodiedness, as is evidenced in the operation of whole industries like cosmetic surgery or dieting which rely on an appeal to our sense that an altered body will in fact result in a new 'me'. Paradoxically, however, biomedicine in general, and surgery in particular, rely on the notion that the body can be remoulded either without consequences to the embodied subject, or at least in the case of some aesthetic procedures, with only controlled consequences. In operations like both the separation of conjoined twins and gender reassignment surgery, the incursion of the knife intends to cut apart or cut away, in the putative interests of 'uncovering' the underlying true self. In transplant surgery, by contrast, the whole point is to replace some intrinsic part of the bodily interior with living organs or tissue taken from the body of another, but with a similar aim: that of the continuance of the existing and unchanged self. If the question with regard to the excision of body parts is how far can the process go before it radically diminishes embodied selfhood, then the pertinent concern in the context of transplantation is the very opposite: to what degree is the self altered, or become hybrid, as a

consequence of the assimilation of 'alien' body parts?

Although it is perhaps not widely known, many organ recipients have multiple transplants and the most 'heroic' procedure of a heart graft not infrequently involves a combined heart-lung transplant. In addition, as a result of the body's response to transplantation and to the exacting drug regimes that follow the initial operation, some patients may require at later points kidney and/or liver grafts, effectively replacing a whole set of major organs with non-self material. In the context of the ongoing project into the significance of heart transplants, I have personally observed, for example, a recipient of four different organ grafts – who had also suffered amputation of some digits due to kidney failure – expressing a desire for a second kidney transplant. Clearly, the will to live on is extraordinarily persistent, but who is the 'I' who makes the demand for continuing surgical intervention? In such circumstances, only the most committed Cartesian could fail to ask what has become of the embodied subject. That both additive and reductive surgical processes are surely acts of self-creation is, however, strongly denied. In the biomedical and public narrative alike, separation surgery and gender reassignment procedures, for instance, are deemed to liberate an essential self from a contingently anomalous form, while organ transplantation is understood to give renewed life to an existing self threatened with imminent death by the failure of specific bodily components. It seems to be the case that although our everyday understanding of ourselves is broadly phenomenological - we do live through our bodies and not just in them - it is only because of an underlying retreat to the notion that the body consists of a conglomeration of individual and/or replaceable parts that such surgery becomes acceptable. Indeed, the metaphor of the body as some kind of machine that is either in good working order or malfunctioning is particularly clearly deployed in the context of biomedical interventions that may be essentially violent in nature. Whether that takes the form of drug regimes, radiotherapy, the setting of bones, or cutting the flesh, the clinical care of the body frequently entails what in other circumstances would constitute the legal category of battery, and yet we implicitly contract and explicitly consent to such assault in the provisional and convenient artifice that our corporeality has no bearing on our selves.

Now this may sound entirely at odds with the phenomenological account of the embodied subject, but as Arthur Kleinman (1988) and Drew Leder (1990) have indicated, even when we do have an integrated everyday understanding of the relation between mind and body, the onset of bodily breakdown or disease is likely to precipitate a newfound awareness of the body, *not* as an intrinsic element of the self, but as an alien other threatening

to the self. At such a moment, the machine model that treats the body as any other utility allows for a range of reparative interventions that may include both the corporeal cut and the incorporation of spare parts. Many transplant recipients do explicitly refer to their operations as though they were repair jobs of no more consequence than replacing the clutch in a car. And there is growing anecdotal evidence to support the observation that patients who adopt a machine model approach display both faster clinical recovery rates and, initially at least, less psychic disturbance following transplant. It is, however, little surprise that complications should arise subsequently, for where the spare parts rhetoric would appear to refer to inanimate interchangeable objects, the reality of transplant surgery is that what is cut from one body and grafted into another is a *living* organ. And although I'd want to say that from a phenomenological point of view all changes to corporeality are significant to the self – including things like acquiring an artificial prosthesis such as the LVAD (left ventricular assist device) that some subsequent recipients use prior to transplantation - the incorporation of a living body part that has been an element of *an other* is substantially more likely to provoke anxiety. In heart transplantation, the organ by necessity comes from what is a called a 'living cadaver'[4] - a term that refers to a fully non-sentient, brain-stem dead yet still organically functioning body, and it is precisely at this point, where the parameters of life and death are to a degree uncertain, that the vital organs of heart, lungs, kidney and liver can be optimally 'harvested' for transplant.

Most current literature surrounding the transplant procedure tends towards a bioethical slant that poses the question of what is biomedically permissible, or to a psychological analysis that seeks to understand the hopes and fears of each recipient almost as though the body itself were self-contained. In contrast, the more phenomenological analysis I use takes seriously the current thinking about the nature of the embodied self. Aside from the obvious fact that for the majority of potential transplant patients what matters initially is the preservation of life in the face of imminent and certain death, it still makes sense to ask what it means for a recipient to assent to a procedure that at the most fundamental and symbolic level disrupts the integrity of the 'I'. At the North American centre where the PITH project is situated, all potential recipients are provided with an extensive manual that outlines in more or less detail the practical social arrangements and adjustments that patients must negotiate, the rigour of the post-operative regime for recovery that will continue throughout life and the clinical context and biomedical explanation of the operation itself. All patients have a compulsory psychiatric consultion, but they

are nowhere alerted to, nor encouraged to reflect on, the half-hidden anxieties and fears that many of them falteringly express with respect to the incorporation of what is essentially an alien organ. All will be told again and again that they will have to take immuno-suppressant drugs for life in order to circumvent rejection, but neither the reality of incorporating the DNA of the other, which will always remain clinically alien, nor the much-reported experience of psychic alterity, is explained. When I discussed the issues with the chief clinic nurse of the transplant unit, she confirmed that recipients are encouraged to think of the transplant organs as their own from the start, and commented that she had never thought about the persistent DNA aspects herself. From a bioethical point of view, this evasion on the part of transplant professionals at least raises serious questions, as Koenig and Hogle (1995) note, for the notion of informed consent which must supposedly encompass an acceptance of all significant side effects. As a non-physician, the clinic nurse was nevertheless often the first person to whom patients turned with their doubts and anxieties, and she provided me with some rich anecdotal insights into the way in which individual recipients negotiated their transformed and essentially hybrid states.

Not surprisingly, post-transplant patients most usually ask for what they consider relevant details such as age, sex, ethnicity and so on of their donors, but staff are bound by confidentiality to strictly limit the amount of identifying information that can be given on either side of the transplant relationship. Apart from the usual protocols governing confidentiality, there are very good reasons specific to transplant for imposing this impersonalisation on the process. As many previous studies have recorded, recipients frequently seek out their donors, or vice versa, (or in the case of cadaveric donation, their families), to claim a kind of kinship (Sharp 1995, Younger et al 1996, Potts 1998). The encounter – if it occurs – may be disturbing for all sorts of reasons and might even amount to a form of harassment. What is clear is that many recipients – in defiance of the objectified machine model - both experience and seek to realise a psychic bond with the other, or their proxies, whom they now feel to be part of themselves. Even in the absence of actual identifying information, the normative divisions between self and other are elided in a highly personalised way. Moreover, as the clinic nurse told me, recovering recipients may characteristically claim to be ‘not feeling like themselves’, or to experience themselves as alien and unable to relate to family and friends, who are in turn said to have difficulties with recognition. Several previous studies report similar findings, and although immuno-suppressant drugs are known to cause changes in personality, the empirical evidence

speaks to how recipients themselves may explicitly attribute their feelings of strangeness to having taken on elements of the personality and habits of the donor. A substantial number report unanticipated feelings and emotions, unexplained changes in dietary preferences, and even new attitudes and values.[5] It might be thought that such accounts should be consigned only to *The National Enquirer* or *Sunday Sport*, or the countless horror and science fiction movies and stories that have exploited such notions, but before we dismiss them too hastily as mere fantasy, we should consider briefly both the status of the biomedical imaginary and the tenets of phenomenology.

My first point is that to call something a fantasy tends to imply that it stands in opposition to some truth, or at least a superior state of things as they really are, but as postconventional thought makes clear, that is far too simplistic. The context in which such donor-recipient accounts circulate and gain credibility is one in which the normative expectations of biomedicine are themselves discursive constructions that serve to facilitate a shared understanding of a putatively secure and well-ordered world. Where medical science may make claim to pure objectivity, it is nonetheless irrevocably part of a wider culture that makes sense of bodies through an array of representations, metaphors and displacements that shape the very language in which knowledge is expressed, thus introducing a tension and ambiguity into the apparently certain. The resulting imaginary derives its impetus, as Catherine Waldby puts it, "from the fictitious, the connotive and from desire" (2000: 137), and I would suggest that the very concept of heart transplant, with its promise of extraordinary corporeal control and the overcoming of death, places that procedure at the centre of the fantasmatic. Right from the start ambiguity is apparent, for although it is supposedly death that gives rise to the possibility of life in another, the donor heart is always alive at a cellular level, and as the recent breakthrough of so-called beating heart transplant (Randerson 2000: 12) shows even more clearly, it is not certain where the boundaries lie. In consequence, both the concept of the living cadaver and the notion of organs as simply spare mechanical parts are difficult to encompass. The transplant organ, moreover, is already what sociologists call a boundary object in which the relative restraint of clinical discourse meets with popular representations. The process does not simply celebrate an heroic triumph over nature – which is characteristic of the way in which the first heart transplants were greeted – but also highlights certain anxieties about what constitutes life or death, and about the integrity of embodiment. The point, then, is not whether the accounts of transferred personality have any truth value, but that they feed into an existent structure in which the apparent objectivity and impartiality of the biomedical system

is already shot through with – indeed relies on – fantasy.

My second caution relates more clearly to phenomenology and to its claim that the body and the mind are inseparable, and mutually constructive. It is a claim, as I outlined above, that runs entirely counter to the Cartesian machine model of the body which would otherwise give credibility to the notion of corporeal spare parts that could be transferred without loss to either the donating or recipient 'I'. Amongst the professionals involved in transplant procedures such a mechanistic view clearly serves the purpose both of reducing their own potential doubts about the procedure and of bypassing any ontological anxiety that patients might feel. If the body to be cut open is treated as an object, then metaphors of restoration and repair can take on a utilitarian slant that may well generate fears of pain, disability and even death, but are unlikely to directly engage with psychic unease or distress. In the unit where the PITH project is located, it appears that the initial recovery of patients who enter into the procedure of transplant with a machine model of the body in mind is significantly less compromised than for those who see it as an intervention into their selves. It might be expected, then, that the Cartesian model would be a major factor in professional–client interactions to the extent of shutting out alternatives, but surprisingly that is far from the case. Although on the one hand patients are tacitly discouraged from exploring the difficult questions regarding bodily integrity and self-identity, a silencing that implies that such concerns are not an issue, on the other, the privileged metaphor for the donor organ itself is "the gift of life".[6] The phrase is widely used throughout the whole system in North America: it heads up public campaigns to encourage people to sign donor cards; it is emblazoned on hospital vehicles including those that actually transport the organs; it is the slogan of the biennial Transplant Games; and it is constantly on show within transplant clinics and their literature.

Contrary to the pragmatic imposition of a spare parts approach, what the relentless gift of life rhetoric stresses is a fundamental *connection* in which the donor has given some part of his or her *living* body to sustain the life of another. Not surprisingly, the recipient may feel some guilt that the acquisition of an organ that will likely prolong her own life relies on the death and evisceration of another. In cadaveric procedures where the donor is not organically dead and the transplant procedure may run the risk of being read as a form of cannibalisation, the stress on the organ's status as a *gift* may have an equally pragmatic function in relieving that tension. At the same time other complexities emerge in that the designation signals both a phenomenological connection between individuals, and opens up the question of what is at stake in the sense of embodiment, when

organs themselves are interchanged. Whatever the intentions, the gift of life discourse inevitably highlights many paradoxes, as for example, in the quasi-cadaver being treated on the one hand as a disposable source of transferable spare parts, and yet on the other being given the status of an altruistic subject, at least by proxy. Equally confusing is the question of who owns a transplanted heart. Does the act of cutting the organ from its originary body and grafting it elsewhere mean that it no longer belongs to the donor but has become an inalienable part of the recipient? The issue is not easily resolved and it is noticeable that patients may clearly slip between the two possibilities of ownership, referring to both his/her and to my heart. Even on the simplest reading, the gift of life is double-edged, and while patients may be expected to finally view the organ as their own, they are also implicitly reminded of its provenance. Despite the strict requirement of confidentiality preventing identification of individual donors, recipients are encouraged to anonymously write a letter to the donor family, and – in the jurisdiction where my own research is situated – to attend an annual cathedral service that brings together families on both sides of the transfer. In other words, the recipient is scarcely allowed to forget that the transplant organ is not simply a circulating spare part. Moreover, as I already indicated, the underlying reality is that the DNA of transplanted material remains unchanged in its new location to the extent that the receiving body perceives it throughout life as non-self material that should be ejected. Although very high doses of immuno-suppressant drugs serve to damp down that biological reaction, it remains the case that the 'new' organ will never be less than alien, whilst at the same time providing the *sine qua non* of the self that attempts to reject it.

For biomedical professionals too, the ambiguity of the gift of life rhetoric may both shelter and provoke their own anxieties. Although one leading transplant cardiologist told me that the phrase is useful in prompting more treatment-compliant behaviour in 'grateful' post-op patients – and there is no reason to doubt that outcome – it is unlikely that the effects of the phrase stop there. Transplant teams themselves are invested not only in the utility and altruism of the gift, but also in the implied transfer of what constitutes the extra-organic aspects of life. And that, I'd suggest, is why my colleague lies awake thinking about her patients' identities. Moreover, if we are to take our own phenomenological understanding of everyday embodiment seriously, then we must allow that a change in morphology inevitably will signal a change in self identity. We are used to thinking about the effects of visible differences – like the loss of a limb or the scarring of a face - but as Drew Leder (1999) suggests, isn't the viscous interiority of the body

just as important? And given that in other areas of biomedical concern, the contemporary deployment of a phenomenological framework has recently begun to engage with the notion of 'body memory' – as, for example, a way of rethinking the apparently lost subjectivity of Alzheimer's patients – then what are we to make of transplant recipients' stories of transformed affect?

One of the most sustained reflections on the personal significance of having a heart transplant comes in the essay *L'Intrus* (the intruder) by the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy who underwent the procedure in the early 90s. Nancy is explicit that his account cannot "disentangle the organic, the symbolic, and the imaginary" (2002: 3), and he opens with a highly Derridean deliberation on the in-coming of the stranger whom we suppose to be a metaphor for the grafted heart: "Once he has arrived, if he remains foreign…his coming will not cease; nor will it cease being in some respects an intrusion" (2000: 1-2).[7] Right away, however, it becomes apparent that for Nancy, his *own* heart – once it had become a presence to him precisely through its impending failure – is the originary stranger. Nancy is not a phenomenologist as such, but his account here is entirely in line with the move that Leder (1990) tracks from what he terms the 'absent presence' that constitutes our awareness of the body in health to a sense of betrayal almost as corporeal breakdown forces itself on our attention. As the body 'sickens', the previous unity of the embodied subject is split apart, such that the self/other relation is exposed as an internal condition. Nancy's heart, he says, becomes "an elsewhere 'in' me" (2000: 6). Interestingly, after the transplant, as his immune system attempts to reject the substitute organ, Nancy refuses "the gift of life" metaphor, with its intimations of self-other solidarity and connection. Instead, the meaning of *l'intrus* is rapidly multiplied and comes to figure equally his original heart, the graft, the various viruses and bacteria that inhabit any body, the workings of the immune system and the effects of the drugs that suppress it, the eruption of a cancerous tumour, and above all death itself. All of these are self-estranging, or more properly they expose the hybridity of all forms of embodiment. As Nancy concludes: "The *intrus* is none other than me, my self" (13), a multiple, excessive, and always transformatory state of becoming. His reflection moves much further than the alien experiences reported by other recipients, but it figures a life-long troubling of any normative account of embodied selfhood.

The question that remains is whether a phenomenological perspective brings anything positive to our understanding of the transplant experience, particularly if, as I've indicated, those who adhere to the machine model of

the body seem better suited to the rigours of recovery. The long term effects of the quasi-Cartesian approach are, however, less promising for, as heart transplant professionals have consistently indicated, recipients inclined to think in terms of an exchange of spare parts may initially flourish but frequently deteriorate both physically and psychically after a couple of years, with up to 30% of the total showing signs of depression. We have yet to ascertain in detail how recipients experience their conditions of being, and what explanations they give themselves, but I would provisionally suggest that a more adequate approach to lessening the dis-ease that many experience - both in their narratives and in their silences - could come from a rethinking of the phenomenological nexus as it relates to the nature of embodiment. Instead of covering over the anxieties that arise around the issue of hybrid bodies and hybrid identities, those concerns should surely be anticipated and acknowledged. In Western societies that, regardless of the Cartesian legacy, have an intimation of the necessary embodiment of self, and at the same time privilege identity as both unique and enduring over time, the responsibility is to reset the significance of taking in the organs of another. Where transplant recipients may conceptualise the necessary disturbance of self-other separation and distinction as at least an alien intrusion and at worst as figuring transference of identity, a phenomenological approach stresses that identity is always intercorporeal. If we acknowledge the normative body as an element of the modernist imaginary, then it is not that post-transplant identity should be restored to the impossible illusion of unity, as even some phenomenologists would argue, but that embodiment should be understood as always in a process of restructuring. The psycho-social message that might usefully be translated for recipients is that far from being a phenomenon unique to transplantation, the encounter with and incorporation of otherness within is the very condition – as Nancy indicates – of every embodied self.

Notes

1 Average life expectancy one year after a successful transplant is around 10-12 years.

2 The other project members are Dr Heather Ross, Professor Patricia McKeever, Dr Susan Abby and Dr Jennifer Poole.

3 See in particular Grosz (1994), Shildrick (1997) and Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1968). Luce Irigaray (1985, 1993) was one of the first to bring the strands of phenomenology and feminism together.

4 The term is now being replaced by the supposedly more anodyne term ‘deceased donor’.

5 See for example, Sharp (1995), Claire Sylvia (1997), Potts (1998) and Inspector *et al* (2004).

6 Lock notes that for donor families, donation may imply 'living on' and therefore the rhetoric of "the gift of life is effective in that it permits people to restore a modicum of order to their lives" (2004: 145).

7 In other papers I am developing the idea of reading the in-coming of the other through Derrida's notion of the host and hospitality. See Shildrick (2008) for an initial sketch.

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'Bodiless Bodies': Perception and Embodiment in Kant and Irigaray

Laura K Green

Abstract

This paper begins with a brief analysis of Immanuel Kant's account of perception in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and analyses Luce Irigaray's critique of Kant in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, in order that we may better understand the position Irigaray adopts with regards to the notion of embodied 'perception' – a key theme in her recent text *To Be Two*. Part II examines Irigaray's argument in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, with particular reference to themes of 'dwelling', 'embodiment' and 'space-time'. By denying the body representation within discourse, Irigaray argues that the Kantian transcendental subject conceals sexuate difference and buries the 'feminine'. Hence perception is not conceived as an ethical relationship between two embodied subjects, but as one of knowledge between a transcendental subject and an 'object'. This enterprise is intended to lend clarity to Irigaray's vision of embodied subjectivity and alterity in her later works.

Keywords: perception; transcendental; space-time; dwelling; sexuate difference.

The 'Copernican Revolution': Kant's 'Transcendental Aesthetic'

I. The Subject of Knowledge

In "The Transcendental Aesthetic" chapter of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes 'empirical' intuitions – those which are given to us by means of the senses – from 'pure' intuitions: "I call representations *pure*, in the transcendental meaning of the word, wherein nothing is met with that belongs to sensation" (Kant 1993: 48).[1] These 'pure' intuitions are *a priori* in that they provide a frame in which the senses or sensory experience is placed. The empiricists—and Descartes—were wrong, Kant argued, as they failed to see that intellectual structure is contained within experience, or that this intellectual structure has an *a priori* component.[2] These 'pure' intuitions, uncontaminated by the senses, are *space* and *time*. Both space and time are necessary representations that are the foundation

of our intuitions. "Time is the formal condition *a priori* of all appearances whatsoever. Space, as the pure form of external intuition, is limited as a condition *a priori* to external appearances alone" (ibid.: 56).

Without time, experience of any kind would not be possible. If time is an internal condition of objective experience, then space is its external counterpart. Together, they give *form* to the manifold of sense data (the field of un-synthesised presentations). Time and space provide the frame through which perception proceeds. They are the 'pure' modes of *a priori* knowledge, discoverable by isolating sensibility and "separating from it all that is annexed to it by the concepts of the understanding, so that nothing be left but empirical intuition" (ibid.: 49). Time and space are the two pure forms of sensible intuition: "principles of knowledge *a priori*" (ibid.).

At the end of the chapter, Kant remarks that "all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearances;" and that "the things we intuit are not in themselves the same as our representations of them in intuition" (ibid.: 61). He thus concludes that:

> [A]ppearances, cannot exist in themselves, but only in us. What may be the nature of objects considered as things in themselves and without reference to the receptivity of our sensibility is quite unknown...We know nothing more than our own mode of perceiving them. (ibid.)

In other words, what I intuit about the object is not necessarily how the object is in 'reality'—it is a *representation* only. What I receive through sensuous intuition are mere appearances. Remove the subject, and time and space are lost. For neither are "in themselves *things*", and cannot be said to 'exist' outside of the mind (ibid.: 356). Kant spends a large part of the *Critique* working towards his famous conclusion that "the objects of experience then are not things in themselves, but are given only in experience, and have no existence apart from and independently of experience" (ibid.). Such is Kant's doctrine of 'transcendental idealism'.[3] The 'thing in itself'—how the object exists outside of our sensory experience—is quite unknown to us. The appearances of the object that we intuit in space and time, both of which are "determinations of the sensibility", means that they "are not things in themselves, but are mere representations, which, if not given in us—in perception, are non-existent" (ibid.: 357).

As intuitions are already subtended by space and time—which are not things 'in themselves'—then it follows that we can only have knowledge of 'appearances' of the object, but not of the object itself. While this may seem to assimilate Kant's views to that of the 'veil of perception'

of Descartes and the empiricists, I shall briefly expand on an important difference, one which also avoids the problems caused by the traditional opposition of 'truth' and 'appearance'. Whilst we can have no *knowledge* of appearances, not all of our knowledge is drawn from them. *Phenomena* are "appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories" (ibid.: 211). Phenomena are appearances that are conditioned by both space and time, and the *categories*. For Kant noted that experience already contains *concepts*, without which our intuitions would be meaningless. Certain concepts, furthermore, are presupposed *in* experience. Kant calls these fundamental concepts 'categories'. These are *a priori* concepts of the understanding that prescribe the basic 'forms' of judgement. An example of the category 'substance', for instance, is "that which is able to exist independently, and which supports the properties which depend upon it" (Scruton 1982: 27). To use Roger Scruton's example of the concept 'chair', I must already have in me some general understanding of *substance*; that is to say, the notion of substance must exist in me *a priori* if I am to interpret 'chair-ness' in the required manner. The same would apply to the other categories, such as causality. Kant went on to explain that sensuous intuition is without intellectual structure and hence cannot contain these concepts. The 'subjective deduction' is Kant's move towards positing the cognitive faculties as primary. Although all judgements require a synthesis of the faculties of sensibility and understanding, the latter boasts some dominance over the former, because although intuition is crucial—and cognition is *intuitive* —objective conceptualisation would not be possible first of all without the 'pure' intuitions of space and time, and second without the *a priori* concepts of the understanding. This is not to say, however, that the empirical world is "arbitrary" in any way (Battersby 1998: 62). Our understanding of the world relies on a synthesis of the 'manifold' of yet-to-be-synthesised presentations, the imagination and the faculty of the understanding. This process is, furthermore, crucial in the construction of the 'self': "it is only via this act of imaginative synthesis that it becomes possible to say 'I' and to distinguish self from not-self. The ego could not know itself as self unless it simultaneously constructed a world—the phenomenal world—that is other than self" (ibid.).

The 'otherness' of the empirical world as an apparently necessary element in the construction of the Kantian subject is a matter of concern for Irigaray. In *Speculum*, she provides a characteristically psychoanalytical critique of the Kantian schema, which portrays nature/the empirical world as comparable to the body of the mother. The function of 'nature', she contends, is largely instrumental: "Anything conceded to nature is

immediately and imperiously taken back and will be found useful only insofar as it ensures more rigorous dominion over her" (Irigaray 1985: 204). Kant's transcendental schema, then, will be used in order to "negate an intrinsic quality of the sensible world, and this irremediably… Diversity of feeling is set aside in order to build up the concept of the object, and the immediacy of *the relationship to the mother* is sacrificed" (ibid). Underlying Irigaray's critique is the idea of the masculine 'imaginary': the term in Lacanian psychoanalysis that refers to the unified ideal image that the subject 'projects' of himself and which is complicit in the development of the ego.[4] The 'sacrifice' of the body of the mother (the empirical world) in favour of the transcendental 'object' (which I shall return to) —and a radical form of epistemology—forecloses the empirical world and compromises the place of the body (which becomes split between 'subject' and 'object'). Kant's transcendental subject is a manifestation of the 'specular economy of the same': a reflection of the masculine imaginary. A mirror, Irigaray asserts, "speculates every perception and conception of the world, *with the exception of itself*, whose reflection would only be a factor of time" (ibid.: 205). Irigaray continues: "It is crucial that we never know the transcendental object as such lest we recognise it and reject the almost matrical effectiveness it has in veiling our perception of all phenomena and structuring their (re)appearance" (ibid.: 204).

It is the 'transcendental object' in Kant's vision that both 'veils' phenomena (as the non-self *of* the self), but also permits our understanding *of* phenomena: it "allows the conceptual *window* to be put in place in which nothing is seen *per* se but whose frame enables the rest to be intuited" (ibid.: 204). The transcendental object is the intelligible correlate to receptivity, or sensible experience. Kant asserts that we can attribute "the whole connection and extent of our possible perceptions" to the transcendental object; it is "given and exists in itself prior to all experience. But the appearances, corresponding to it, are not given as things in themselves, but in experience alone" (Kant 1993: 357).

In the first *Critique*, there are times at which the transcendental object undergoes a metamorphosis into the transcendental "subject" (Caygill 1995: 401). If the transcendental object is a function of the requirement that appearances must have an object which is non-empirical (Kant 1993: 128), then it also offers "the unity in the thought of a manifold in general" (ibid: 210), regardless of how it is intuited. This 'unity' is made the property of the transcendental 'subject': the 'I think' which is the "vehicle of all concepts in general" (ibid.: 259). There is an apparent 'slippage' from object to subject, and vice-versa. Indeed, Kant operates with three notions

of the self, which I shall expand upon briefly.

Firstly, there is the formal 'I think', representing the transcendental unity of apperception; the correlate of all judgements applying to objects. Second, there is the 'I' of the "internal sense" (ibid.: 259), corresponding in some form to Descartes' *I*: the human soul that is "immortal by its very nature" (Cottingham 1993: 158). Finally, and as I shall discuss below, the third notion is that of the empirical self. But unlike Descartes' *res cogitans*, the transcendental self—or that which corresponds to the first 'self'—cannot be *known*, it is not transparent. What it does however is to "provide a ground for the fleeting impressions of the phenomenal world", and as such plays a unificatory role, as I noted above (Battersby 1998: 63). The transcendental subject simultaneously constructs itself as well as the phenomenal world (and in this respect is *relational*).[5] As its correlate, the transcendental object is the thing-in-itself that we must assume to lay beneath our perceptions of objects via the senses. Quite literally, the transcendental object is the not-self: equally as unknowable, but necessary all the same. A moot point is the fact that other people—as well as our own bodies—are akin to something like the transcendental object: the 'otherness' that makes the self possible. The self is constructed *against* otherness (Battersby 1998: 99). The point, however, is that this 'object' is impossible to truly *know* (it remains an 'idea' only); hence all perception (of the body and of the other) is 'veiled'.

Before I move on to look at further consequences of the 'Copernican turn'—namely to the supposed 'split' between the transcendental subject and the empirical world—I should like to look briefly at what Irigaray says in *Speculum* about Kant's vision of space and time.[6] She remarks:

> However grounded in the senses the intuition may be, it is nonetheless framed a priori by space and time. Space and time… are to be viewed as forms of the outer sense or of the internal sense that organise and thereby subsume a diversity that is ridiculous in its confusion of feeling, whether it comes from an outside world peopled with objects… or from an inner world under the control of changes that can henceforth be analysed in function of time. (Irigaray 1985: 205)

Irigaray's contention is that the maternal-feminine acts as an *a priori* condition of the space-time of the masculine subject, a sort of *a priori-a priori* (indeed, to exist at all we first had to have been born). This is a theme that she continues in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, which I shall come to

discuss. When she begs the question "but which time?" (ibid.), however, what she alludes to is the conceptualisation of the transcendental subject in terms of the reflection of the *masculine* subject, as I mentioned above, and *his* "space-time" (Whitford 1991: 155). Kant's system is an unconscious reflection of the topography of his own subjectivity, designed to veil our perception of the empirical world, the body, and most importantly for Irigaray, sexuate difference.

In the next section I shall briefly expound some further problems with Kant's theory of perception, specifically in relation to the transcendental/empirical dichotomy.

II. The Transcendental and the Empirical

It has been the charge of feminist philosophers that Kant's 'Copernican revolution' also helped to widen the symbolic 'gap' between the empirical (natural) world, and the transcendental 'world' that has pervaded Western tradition since the time of the Greeks. [7] It is at this point that we must take note of Irigaray's use of Heidegger. As Joanna Hodge remarks, "In *Speculum* she takes up and develops the contrast between the empirical and the transcendental and Heidegger's own distinction between the ontic and the ontological. It is this intersection of themes that makes way for her insistence on a sensible transcendental" (Burke et al. 1994: 203). Section II of this paper shall deal with the connection between perception, space-time and the 'sensible transcendental'. In this section, I shall deal more broadly with the themes of 'transcendental' and 'empirical' in Kant and Irigaray.

Kant makes it clear in the Preface to the first *Critique* what he means by the term 'transcendental': "I apply the term transcendental to all knowledge which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of object... A system of such concepts would be called *Transcendental Philosophy*" (Kant 1993: 43). Hence the 'transcendental' is not so much the opposite of the empirical as the 'condition' *of* it (inasmuch as it acts as a prerequisite *of* experience). The *a priori* intuitions of time and space etcetera, *ground* our experience of the empirical world, without which our 'experience' would amount to nothing more than a jumble of incomprehensible sense data. This 'discovery' of an *a priori*—on Claire Colebrook's interpretation of Irigaray—closes the gap between the transcendental subject and the (maternal) origin (or empirical/sensible world): "By not acknowledging the gap, break, loss or distance from the sensible, the subject is always able to include and comprehend the origin as its own: "between empirical and transcendental *a suspense will still remain*

inviolate, will escape prospection, then, now, and in the future" (Colebrook 1999: 144).[8] Colebrook goes on to note that it is this very *closure* of the gap between the transcendental and the sensible that constitutes 'metaphysics' itself, at least in Irigaray's view. Metaphysics "is the thought of a symmetry between the ideal and its material other. The idea of representation is also the constitution of the masculine subject. Kantian closure is, then, a form of subjectivism in which sensible being is reconciled, included within, or comprehended by, the 'supersensible' (meaning, the concept, ideality)" (Colebrook 1999: 145). Sexuate difference is precluded in this act of 'closure'; hence the empirical world appears as a reflection of the transcendental subject, it acts as his *mirror*. This 'concealment' of (or refusal to recognise) the 'origin' must be viewed in psychoanalytical terms. As Margaret Whitford remarks, "in the male imaginary, the ec-stasy (*ek-stase*, *hors-de-soi*) of existence, corresponds to the projection of erection, male narcissism extrapolated to the transcendental" (Whitford 1991: 151). This desire to be in control of the empirical world, to order and categorise it, Irigaray links with castration anxiety. As Whitford continues, "whatever the subject cannot dominate, or overlook and perceive from his transcendental elevation, threatens the subject with castration" (ibid). The subject is perpetually projecting himself outside himself, towards the transcendental object = X (in Kantian terms), or the 'no-thing' (Heidegger). That which escapes his grasp and control is a perpetual threat.

If the motives driving Kantian idealism are encoded or revealed by philosophical discourse, then "when Irigaray 'interprets' philosophy, what she finds is the shape of the male body and the rhythms of male sexuality" (ibid.: 150). Hence the imagery in *Speculum* is vividly sexual: the masculine subject seeks "elevation", "penetration", "erection" (Irigaray 1985: 133). The 'feminine' is symbolised as inert matter, the ground on which the transcendental subject builds his edifice. Further to this, the subject will also establish a dwelling place, one that—in Heideggerian terms—becomes the impenetrable "house of language" (Whitford 1991: 156).[9]

III. The Transcendental Unity of Apperception and the Body

Before moving on to part II, I should briefly like to say something about the place of the body in the Kantian schema, as it relates to the transcendental unity of apperception. If, as I noted above, the unacknowledged 'gap' between the transcendental and the empirical results in the concealment of the relationship with the maternal origin, then the body as materiality—as

sexuate —also lacks symbolic representation within discourse. Indeed, this is something of a two-way problem. Kant's account of perception leaves no room for the body, only an awkward 'slippage' between the psychological 'inner' and the 'outer' of the empirical self. As Christine Battersby remarks, "Kant needs a body in order to be a self; but the body he needs is neither self nor not-self… Introspection has no spatial co-ordinates: nothing 'inner' is spatializable; everything 'outer' is in space and is also other than me" (Battersby 1998: 70). Hence there appears to be a paradox (a priori?) at the heart of Kant's account.[10] My body appears as *essentially* other than me, as I experience it as I experience other objects in the empirical world. The body is in space, yet its 'internal' aspect is denied representation, as it is not 'spatializable'. It is this duplicitous attitude towards the body and embodiment (and perception) that Irigaray regards as both symptomatic of the morphology of the masculine 'imaginary' and as contributing to the 'concealment'—or denial of—sexuate difference.

To expand on this point, it is useful to recap on Kant's notion of 'apperception'. In the *Critique*, he remarks that "It is by means of the transcendental unity of apperception that all the manifold given in an intuition is united into a concept of an object" (Kant 1993: 103). In brief, Kant distinguishes 'apperception' from empirical consciousness (experience), the former being the requirement for (or prerequisite of) all acts of judgement that the self-sameness of the 'I think' be discoverable across all syntheses of the manifold of experience (Burnham 2004: 1). This 'unity' that persists through time—the transcendental 'subject'—relies on 'inert matter' to ground it. Not only does this pose a problem in relation to the body, but for Irigaray, this 'inert matter' is the maternal-feminine, the 'body' of the mother: "This sameness is the maternal-feminine which has been assimilated before any perception of difference. The red blood, the lymph, for every body, every discourse, every creation, every making of a world" (Irigaray 2004: 84). The maternal-feminine acts as a kind of *a priori-a priori*. The ramifications of this are as follows: firstly, the 'feminine' is always negated by the transcendence of the masculine subject and will remain trapped in bodily 'immanence' (as Simone de Beauvoir might put it), hence Irigaray's assertion that "any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by 'the masculine'" (Irigaray 1985: 133). Secondly, this accounts for the masculine subject's inability to *perceive* his sexuate other *as other*. In not allowing a place for the body in his schema, and glossing over the gap between the transcendental and empirical, Kant created a "chasm" or "abyss" in which he feared to fall (Battersby 1998: 71). Sexuate difference remained something that eluded his gaze and for

which his transcendental philosophy could not account.

The 'Bodiless Body': Space-Time, Perception and Embodiment in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*

I have thus far provided an exegesis of Irigaray's critique of Kant's account of perception. Broadly speaking, her analysis is underscored by psychoanalysis and the notion that the philosophical subject is at the mercy of his own repressed relationship with the maternal-feminine, and also his fear of castration, hence his desire to order and control. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray expands on several key themes from *Speculum*, but with a distinctly Heideggerian angle. I shall deal with these themes as they occur within the text.

In *Ethics*, Irigaray links 'sameness'—or the "love of Same"—the lack of perception of sexuate difference with the denigration of the role of the body since the time of the Greeks (Irigaray 2004: 83). Man has forgotten, she says, the role that the body played in the Homeric epic and the lessons taught through the affirmation and love of the body. The "metaphysical edifice" of philosophy has rendered the body an unrecognisable quantity, valueless in a system that affords it no real 'place' (Irigaray 2004: 85). She remarks: "Love of sameness becomes that which permits the erection of space-time or space-times, as well as the constitution of a customarily autarchic dialogue-monologue with God" (ibid.).

Here are two themes that continue to concern Irigaray in her later text *To Be Two*: the relationship between the masculine subject-philosopher and his god/Other, and the parallel issue of the aforementioned subject's transformation of his 'love of sameness' into a "system of symbolic and mercantile exchanges", in which the body—and by extension, nature—are forgotten (ibid.). This is a system that is concerned with the production of objects—material or linguistic—as opposed to with what renews and gives *life*. It is a system that threatens the "great cosmic rhythms" with death, as it cherishes not what is cyclical, but what is *produced* (hence this kind of "love", she says, is "teleological") (ibid.). "Love of the same", Irigaray says, "is difficult to establish among women because what women provide is not symbolised as a manufactured object" (ibid.: 89). Woman's status as bearer and giver of life, as womb-matter, has rendered her a "horizontality, ground for male erection" (ibid.: 92); indeed, a ground for the construction of the 'metaphysical edifice' that swallows up the maternal-feminine and buries it "deep in the earth" (ibid.: 90). Woman, then, does not 'inhabit,' but resides in a permanent ec-stasy (i.e. is outside herself), a sort of

jouissance (or *en plus*) that makes her Being indescribable under the terms of masculine logic.[11] What is pertinent here is Irigaray's appropriation of the Heideggerian notion of the 'dwelling-place'. With the body devalued, or else forgotten entirely, 'embodiment' takes a different guise. As Irigaray notes, "to inhabit is the fundamental trait of man's being" (ibid.: 119). However, she goes on:

> *To perceive* – is this the usual dimension of the feminine? Of women, who, it seems, remain in perception without need of name or concept. To remain within perception means staying out in the open, always attuned to the outside, to the world. (ibid.)

This re-worked idea of perception is something that Irigaray continues in *Two Be Two*, which shall be discussed briefly in the concluding section. Perception in this sense occurs "out in the open", in the world, and would accede to the other *as* (an embodied) other, without artificial 'boundaries', without closing off the world or "closing off the self" (ibid.). In other words, perception pertains to an encounter with the other—with the world—and not to a manufactured object, be it material, linguistic, or indeed the objects of Kant's *a priori* construction.[12] 'Woman' dwells on the threshold, somewhere between her own usurped space-time and an artificial masculine edifice.

Perception for the philosopher-subject amounts to the construction of a 'dwelling place', for which, as I noted above, the building material is the maternal-feminine. Irigaray argues that it is woman's own space-time that has been used—and subsequently of which she is deprived—in this enterprise. This 'dwelling', furthermore, comes complete with boundaries that separate the subject from both the other and the world. This is revealed when language acts as a net, that "secures [the 'subject'] without his realising it: the net of a language which he believes he controls but which controls him, imprisons him in a bodiless body, in a fleshless other, in laws whose cause, source, and physical, living reason he has lost" (Irigaray 2004: 113). In Heidegger's words, "*language* remains the master of man" (Heidegger 2004: 348).[13] And as Whitford remarks, "the house of language in which man dwells to protect himself from his original dereliction can become a prison for both sexes" (Whitford 1991: 157). Man has imprisoned himself inside, whilst woman will remain outside in the cold. Both sexes are alienated, in some sense, from their 'natural' (pre-cultural?) relationship with the body and the world.[14] Man's attempt to master language, to shape it for his own purposes, "drives his essential being into alienation"

(Heidegger 2004: 348).

If "building and dwelling reveal hatred and destructiveness", and lead to the alienation of man's "essential being", then this diagnosis points to an 'illness' which began at the start of the modern age (at the beginning of 'modern' philosophy), with Descartes and Kant (Whitford 1991: 157). Moreover, it is this pathological relationship with the other and the world that is reflected in the relationship between the subject and his body. In today's world, sexuality and technology mirror one another in that they are both vigorously mechanistic:

> The body is torn between the different speeds of perception that situate it… the body has always functioned according to differences in the speed of perception. But before there was always something global or earthly or elemental to hold it together. (Irigaray 2004: 121)

There is an intrinsic link between the body and perception in the sense that perception always involves the "active contribution of the perceiving individual" (Stone 2006: 199). Alison Stone notes that, for Irigaray, "Perception reflects the individual's 'freedom'. That in the individual which freely shapes their perceptions is their rhythm…Rhythms, for [Irigaray], are free because they unfold spontaneously. But this spontaneous unfolding of human rhythms is only possible, she maintains, against a backdrop of 'the cosmic rhythms' in which… sensibility participates" (ibid.).[15] Irigaray says that "Man has built himself a world that is largely uninhabitable" (Irigaray 2004: 121). Perception—*true* perception (as discussed in *To Be Two*) —is made impossible in a system that shuts the subject off from the world, and "forgets or shuns the *flesh*" (ibid.: 120). This is a system that has signified death for the "great cosmic rhythms" and hence perception is somehow out of synch with the body to which it should belong; the body that, in our era, "is cut into parts like a mechanical body" (ibid.). There is nothing organic, "earthly or elemental" to cement it to the world (ibid.). Instead, the body is treated as a mere vessel for the philosopher-subject's journey into the transcendental: a solitary and lamentable sepulchre.

Conclusion: Two Be *Two*?

The 'Copernican Revolution' is that which placed the philosopher-subject at the centre of a new matrix of possibility. Instead of seeing nature as primary, and investigating how our cognitive capacities could interpret it,

Kant posited our cognitive capacities as primary and then tried to deduce the *a priori* limits of nature. This role reversal—in Irigaray's opinion—elevated the subject to a place 'above' the world of nature and objects, as a kind of overseer. In *Speculum*, Irigaray chides what she sees as this arrogant claim to 'sovereignty'. By centring himself *outside* himself—"man's ex-stasis within the transcendental subject"—he has cut "himself off from the bedrock, from his empirical relationship with the matrix that he claims to survey" (Irigaray 1985: 134). Furthermore, if the 'split' between the transcendental and empirical remains unacknowledged, then so too does sexuate difference. The 'dwelling-place' that the subject constructs—his impenetrable 'house of language' —protects him from the threat of castration as well as housing him "as [he] was once housed in the womb" (Whitford 1991: 158). From this vantage point, he may be able to see everything, yet he can *perceive* nothing.

Irigaray asks: is survival the best we can hope for? Or is there the prospect of a better future for humanity? This better future is only possible if man relinquishes his hold over the maternal-feminine, and woman's space-time. Only if he gives up this dependence will it be possible to construct a new 'space-time' for sexuate difference. If there is to be *flesh*, Irigaray urges, "an autonomous breath must infuse the body" (Irigaray 2004: 122). The possibility of a reinvigorated ethical relationship with the sexuate other and the role that perception plays in this relationship, is a central theme in *To Be Two*. The breath and breathing, is also pivotal to this vision of alterity. Irigaray takes much inspiration from Eastern philosophies and the way that meditation and breathing (and hence the body) are inseparable from the philosophy itself. In *Being Two, How Many Eyes Have We?* she writes that "the breath, as vital or spiritual matter of a human being, corresponds to this third ground from which we can appear as humans and relate between us" (Irigaray 2000a: 20). This "third ground" —a 'sensible transcendental'?—is possible *only* if woman is to find her on space-time, her own *place*. Indeed, perception is the key to this transformation. Perception provides a way out of this 'prison': "Perception should not become a means of appropriating the other, of abstracting the body, but should be cultivated for itself, without being reduced to a passivity or to an activity of the senses". (Irigaray 2000: 43)

Notes

1 The term 'aesthetic' has its roots in the Greek 'aisthētikos' meaning 'perception', but the term was often used in German to refer to the critique of taste. A footnote in this particular version of *The Critique of Pure Reason* states that the term was taken up by Kant as referring to "the science of laws of sensibility" (Kant 1993: 49). Kant wanted to discover the *a priori* laws behind the empirical sources that evoked judgements of 'taste', for example, hence the 'transcendental aesthetic'.

2 According to Descartes, external objects "are the unobservable but inferred causes of our perceptions" (Wilkerson 1976: 182). Kant calls this account of the relationship between the mind and external objects 'transcendental realism', as it opposes his own doctrine of 'transcendental idealism', by which the mind has "immediate sense experience of external objects" (Ward, 2006: 82).

3 Some commentators (See Allison 1983: 25-28; Wilkerson 1976: 180-190) talk of three 'interpretations' of Kant's idealism: "positive", "negative" and "formal". It is beyond the limits of this project to engage in a full discussion of Irigaray's position with regards to this particular debate, but it is in my view that she supports, broadly speaking, the "positive interpretation". In Wilkerson's words, this view prescribes that "Kant is a 'noumenalist' in the sense that he distinguishes between two sets of objects, non-spatial and non-temporal noumena and spatio-temporal phenomena; and that he is a 'phenomenalist' in the sense that he reduces objects of experience or phenomena to collections of perceptions" (Wilkerson 1976: 184). It is with this 'two world' interpretation in mind that I approach Irigaray's critique.

4 As discussed by Jacques Lacan in 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I function', in *Écrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton, 2004).

5 Hence it is not, like Descartes' *res cogitans*, "solipsistic", but wholly dependent on an 'other' for its self-awareness (see Battersby 1998: 68).

6 Irigaray's argument may not seem so contentious if we consider that the 'essence' of the Copernican Revolution was to "make the phenomenal world dependant upon our own cognitive apparatus, since it is only in this way that we can guarantee a priori knowledge of objects" (Wilkerson 1976: 186).

7 Whitford, for example, maintains that, since Kant, there has been "a rigorous split or exclusion of the sensible, of experience, of the empirical or psychological' from the transcendental" (1991: 216n). Whether the split is as 'rigorous' as this is wholly debateable. Indeed, it is rather more possible that there has been a 'glossing over' of the split. Also, the symbolic 'gap' is tricky to define in traditional metaphysical terms, this would amount to a realm beyond our 'natural world'. For Kant, transcendental knowledge relates not to the objects of our experience, but rather that which makes our experience possible. Thus the transcendental is concerned with "the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori" (Kant 1993: 43).

8 Colebrook quotes from Irigaray 1985: 145. Italics Irigaray's.

9 As far as I can tell, it is Whitford that uses this phrase and not Irigaray herself. It does, however, help to reflect Irigaray's appropriation of Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling', as well as his contention that "language is the master of man" (Heidegger 2004: 348), which both imprisons him yet protects him from his "original dereliction" (Whitford 1991: 157).

10 The title of Irigaray's critique in *Speculum* is 'Paradox A Priori'. The first epigraph alludes to this very problem of "internal sense" versus "outer space" (Irigaray 1985: 203, from Kant's Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics).

11 Ellen Mortensen, for example, remarks that the morphology of the female body defies "traditional notions of unity, sameness, and solidarity and speak[s] instead to the principle of multiplicity, difference and fluidity" (Burke et al. 1994: 219).

12 Phenomena, for example, are synthesised/'manufactured' by the sensibility and the understanding.

13 From Heidegger's essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (Heidegger 2004: 347-363).

14 Alison Stone (2006), for example, argues that Irigaray posits a kind of "ontological realism", in which "the natural…is at least two: male and female" (Irigaray 1996: 37. Italics Irigaray's.) Culture as we know it is viewed by Irigaray as a kind of 'alienation', perpetuated by the myth of the universal: the one, as opposed to the two (this topic is discussed at length in *I Love to You*).

15 Stone quotes from Irigaray 2000b: 42.

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Affective Simulation, Imitation, and the Motor Mirror System

Sergio Levi

Abstract

In the first part of this paper I draw a comparison between the phenomenon of affective simulation and the process of mirroring believed to involve the motor system. By analyzing both the similarities and the differences I set out to explain what the motor mirror system might be for. The idea that motor mirroring is simply a species of embodied simulation was mainstream when the mirror neurons seemed to be too limited in scope to underpin imitation. By the end of the paper I come to suggest that learning and genuine cases of transfer of skill provide better candidates for the main function of the motor mirror system.

Keywords: action understanding; behavior parsing; imitation; mirroring; passive simulation

I. Introduction

How might we come to acquire knowledge of the emotional states of others? While most interpersonal judgements are based on explicit descriptions or cognitive elaborations of some objective states of affairs, all such elaborations must be complemented by first person experiences if they are to yield genuine understanding – or so I will argue in this paper. In order to start seeing why one's emotions need be operative in the recognition of the emotional states of others, we need to turn to the phenomenon of *affective simulation*.[1]

A widely-held account of affective simulation posits a two-step process in the brain whereby an individual is caused – through emotional contagion – to entertain, and then experience, the emotions of another individual. Thus, according to Adolphs (2002: 171): "viewing facial expressions of emotion triggers an emotional response in the perceiver that mirrors the emotion shown in the stimulus […]. And representing this emotional response in somatosensory cortices in turn provides information about the emotion." The mechanisms underlying the phenomenon of affective simulation are now believed to depend in part on the operation of mirror neurons of the sort identified in the ventral pre-motor cortex of monkeys

and humans some twelve years ago (Rizzolatti et al. 1996) – except for the fact that the affective mirror neurons are hypothesized to populate the emotion brain areas.

The apparent similarity between simulation and mirroring mechanisms has led many people to treat the resulting phenomena as identical. Thus, according to Damasio (2003: 115-6):

> The presumed mechanism for producing this sort of feeling [the feeling of empathy] is a variety of what I have called the 'as-if-body-loop' mechanism. It involves an internal brain simulation that consists of a rapid modification of ongoing body maps. This is achieved when certain brain regions, such as the prefrontal/pre-motor cortices, directly signal the body-sensing brain regions. The existence […] of comparable types of neurons has been established recently. [They are located] in the frontal cortex of monkeys and humans, and are known as 'mirror neurons'.

A number of discrepancies, however, need also be recognized between mirroring and simulation, discrepancies that attain to major differences between the functions and properties of the motor system on the one hand and the functions and properties of the affective system on the other. It is still possible that the basic mechanisms underlying affective simulation will prove to be fairly akin to the mirror neurons found in the pre-motor cortex of monkeys and humans; there may even be a specialized mirror system for every emotion-induction brain area (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2007). On the other hand, the resulting phenomenon of affective simulation is utterly different, as I will argue, from the phenomenon of mirroring resulting from the workings of the motor mirror system.

In the first part of this paper (section 2) I introduce the notion of an affective simulation as a passive form of sympathy, in order to distinguish it from the process of mirroring believed to involve the motor system (section 3). Although action and emotion are deeply intertwined, simulation and mirroring involve different mechanisms and are underpinned by different brain circuits, as Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2006) convincingly argue. The comparison between mirroring and simulation mechanisms (section 4) is nonetheless revealing, and it is clear that their full efficiency partly depends on how well they complement each other. By the end of the paper (section 5) I defend the view that imitation may be a better candidate than action understanding for providing a major function of the motor mirror system.

II. Affective simulation

The phenomenon of affective simulation can be understood as the result of two distinct processes. The first one consists of a form of response priming in which a familiar stimulus (a given emotional display) activates in the observer an emotional copying response, and the second one amounts to the normal emotional process leading to feeling, that is, the mental image representing the observer's body maps as interfered upon by the target's emotions.[2]

While the notion of emotional contagion implies that we cannot fail to experience at least some of the emotions of our kin, a sensible observer can endeavor to experience the emotions of more people by imagining to be affected by what happens to them. The point could be couched in terms of the Humean distinction between sympathy as an instinctual, automatic endowment, and the notion of sympathizing as an active attitude arising from the need to fully realize the principles of humanity.[3] Whatever one may think about the moral significance and real force of the latter, it is thanks to the former that our brain can partly reproduce the emotions of others with a view to understanding them, for it is only these partial reproductions that enable us to experience what it feels like to entertain those emotions.

It should be clear that on this reading the notion of simulation properly applies to sub-personal processes over which we have no direct or volitional control. This notion of an affective, passive simulation should be neatly distinguished, therefore, from the notion of simulation that is sometimes used to refer to the various interpretive procedures whereby humans are said to mind-read or understand each other.[4]

One reason for employing the notion of an impersonal simulation in this context is that it helps us realize that the relevant features of the emotions being recognized need not be actively or intentionally copied by the observer; her affective system will do it on her behalf. Simulating (in this fairly technical sense) is always done by some mechanism that we may or may not consciously use for whatever purpose we might be pursuing. For example, a flight simulator is a mechanism designed to replicate for a would-be pilot the experience of flying an aircraft as closely and realistically as possible. The simulator is not supposed to act, pretend or fake anything, but to respond in some regular ways to the various actions of the pilot.

This notion of passive simulation is most fit, I believe, to describe a number of human skills. For example, a simultaneous interpreter that modulates her voice to give you exactly the sense of the rhetorical values of the source sentences is not really acting (much the less pretending to act) but passively simulating the speaker's illocutionary acts by reproducing

– somehow mechanically – the conventional tones indicating whether a given sentence is a question, a command, a joke, or a hypothesis.[5]

III. The motor mirror system

The mirror neurons were discovered about ten years ago by Giacomo Rizzolatti and colleagues (Rizzolatti et al. 1996, Gallese et al. 1996) in the ventral pre-motor cortex (area F5) of macaque monkeys, and were later identified with some variations in humans (Rizzolatti et al. 2001, Umiltà et al. 2001). Area F5 is characterized by visuo-motor neurons which do not represent elementary movements (or kinetic parameters such as velocity and acceleration) but goal-related actions, also referred to as *motor acts*. Using this property as a classification criterion, the neurons in F5 were initially classified into four distal classes ("Grasping-with-the-hand-and-the-mouth neurons", "Grasping-with-the-hand neurons", "Holding neurons", "Tearing neurons") plus two proximal classes ("Reaching neurons", "Bringing-to-the-mouth-or-to-the-body neurons") (Rizzolatti et al. 1988). The peculiarity of mirror neurons (as opposed to the other, canonical neurons of F5) is that they fire during the execution of transitive actions (such as grasping, holding, bringing something to the mouth or the body)[6] *and* during the observation of other individuals performing the same or similar actions (Rizzolatti et al. 1996). Mirror neurons are so-called because their passive activations seem to reflect (and are defined 'congruent' with) the very actions the subject is observing.[7]

What is the function of the motor mirror neurons? Many proposals have been put forth over the years, from action priming to response facilitation to action understanding. The current consensus is that these neurons (whatever their original function) are likely to play a number of different roles, but the belief that they may explain mind-reading in terms of simulation dates back to Gallese and Goldman (1998) and is still widespread. In their seminal article, Gallese and Goldman argued for a simulationist interpretation of the function of mirror neurons. Their argument depends on the simulationist hypothesis "that a significant portion of mind-reading episodes involves the process of mimicking (or trying to mimic) the mental activity of the target agent" (1998: 497). Such a mimicking seems to involve the generation of pretend mental states that the attributor can utilize off-line to predict (or retrodict) the decisions of the target. The action plans thus generated are not entirely off-line, however. Nor is the ensuing motor activity entirely inhibited, as a number of TMS experiments demonstrate. This fact may render the notion of pretend mental states (and decisions) much less clear

than Gallese and Goldman might be willing to recognize. To see why, a few remarks on the notion of a pretend mental state will be sufficient.

On one hand, pretend states are presented as elements of representation systems that are constitutively off-line – hence their purported inability to cause action. On the other hand, these very pretend states are allowed to cause muscle contractions "not entirely inhibited", and on this ground they are treated on a par with genuine decisions to act and fully operative motor intentions. It should be noted, however, that the motor plans (or "movement intentions") believed to correspond to these passive neural activations – activations that many have acquired the habit of calling 'simulated actions' – are *not* actions, intentions, or something one could sensibly ascribe to an agent. They are at best neural activations typically caused by the sight of actions that are similar to the actions the relevant neurons are supposed to control.

In light of this clarification, I think that construing the notion of congruence in terms of a similarity relation between observed and 'simulated' actions may prove misleadingly circular. The wanted congruence must be between observed actions and some of the actions in the subject's repertoire, but in no way can the activation of a neural pattern be similar to a real action. Rizzolatti and Arbib (1998) must have been alert to the problem when they made the following statement: "We argue that individuals recognize actions made by others because the neural pattern elicited in their premotor areas during action observation is similar to that internally generated to produce that action" (190). This formulation cleverly shuns any talk about the similarity between action observed and action executed and concentrates instead on the neural patterns. It is the neural pattern elicited by the sight of another person's action that is similar to the pattern responsible for the execution of a *similar* action by the subject. So the relevant congruence relation is now between the actions a given cell commands (e.g. "Grasping") and the actions the very same cell can represent (e.g. "Grasping", "Tearing", "Pushing"). But once again, the similarity that both the experimenter and the subject can observe, and on which the congruence relation ultimately rests, is between the action as seen and the action as done – and this points us toward the issue of imitation, as we shall see in section 5.

IV. Simulating and mirroring

According to Vittorio Gallese the motor mirror system is part of a larger system whose function is to enable a direct matching of the emotions and intentions of other people. In a number of studies, Gallese has described

in detail the automatic sub-personal mechanisms whereby an interpreter *has her body maps so modified* that the emotional states of others can be "directly experienced" (Gallese and Goldman 1998, Gallese 2005, 2006). When we take part in some social situation, he writes, "we are not alienated from the actions, emotions and sensations of others"; we are "*attuned*" to them. "By means of *intentional attunement*, 'the other' is much more than a different representational system; it becomes a *person*, like us" (Gallese 2005: 31). On this view, the functional similarity between the mirror system and the various simulation mechanisms is supposed to explain the deep intertwinement between action and emotion. A major problem arises here in connection with the apparent uselessness of a mechanism designed to merely simulate goal-related actions.

For while it is clear that simulating an emotion can help a subject to learn what another is feeling, it is less clear what a 'simulated action' might be instructive of – especially when the action that the subject thus 'simulates' is not executed. A common answer wants us to consider that a number of internal *forwarding models* are activated whenever we act or observe other people acting. As Gallese (2005: 35) puts it:

> When an action is planned, its expected motor consequences are forecast. This means that when we are going to execute a given action we can also predict its consequences […]. Through a process of 'equivalence' […] this information can also be used to predict the consequences of actions performed by others […]. The same functional logic that presides over self-modeling is employed also to model the behavior of others: to perceive an action is equivalent to internally simulating it. This enables the observer to use her/his own resources to penetrate the world of the other by means of a direct, automatic, and unconscious process of motor simulation.

In one fundamental respect, however, the phenomenon of mirroring differs from both emotional contagion and affective simulation. The responses that get copied in the course of empathizing with another person are visceral and muscular responses, and these must be (partly) executed if they are to leave those traces that the subject will be able to experience as feelings. While simulated emotions are partly (if not fully) executed, the actions one merely observes are carefully analyzed by her mirror system, and their motor programs are copied but *not* executed. It should be noted, moreover, that the execution of these copied motor programs

is not volitionally aborted, suppressed, or inhibited – either consciously or not. Due to efficient inhibition mechanisms their execution is not even initiated.

Now according to Jeannerod (2001: S103) simulated actions (that is, passive activations of some mirror neurons) "are in fact actions, except for the fact that they are not executed". His point seems to be that a necessary component of actions is the activation of a neural pattern encoding the relevant motor program, and this is essentially the same in simulated, imagined, and overt actions. By the same token, however, there is some reason to insist that mirrorings are not actions. For example, they are not like cases of emulation in which a given motor program is executed. Mirrorings are episodes (as Gallese tellingly put it) of two or more motor systems *resonating with* one another. A little more explicitly, they are cases where the motor programs executed by one individual get analyzed and copied (but not executed) in the motor system of another individual. An action, I am assuming, essentially involves the execution of a motor program, and an execution which is under the agent's volitional control. Mirrorings, much like simulated emotions in this respect, are not only externally provoked but also constitutively outside the subject's volitional control.

In my view an action may be driven by external forces even to the point of being completely involuntary, both subjectively and objectively speaking. In such cases the agent is said to act unwillingly, but the execution of the relevant motor program is still something she could in principle volitionally interrupt. When a subject entirely loses this capacity to control the movements of her body we are entitled to construe her more like a passive bystander than a genuine agent. Similarly, in emulation it may well be that the model (not the emulator) is responsible for eliciting the emulator's actions. Executing them is still something the emulator can in principle interrupt – whenever she can resist, so to speak, the magnetism of the model. In affective simulation the simulated emotional process (being too strong to be fully inhibited) is partly executed. However, this execution, being something over which the subject has no volitional control, is not an action.[8]

To sum up: in affective simulation an emotional input is centrally signaled to the action system to trigger an emotional response involving the parietal execution of a similar motor program. Although such emotional responses have a function, they have no purpose, they are not actions. In much the same way, the passive activation of a mirror neuron may well have some function, but surely no goal – it can represent (but not be) a goal-directed action. Moreover, empathizing with others (I have been

proposing with Damasio and Spinoza) can be conceived of as being caused to experience their emotions by imagining or pretending to be acted upon by the same causes. From this it would be tempting to conclude that mirroring the actions of others (that is, *pretending* to be executing the same actions) is how our brain endeavors to experience the emotional effects of the actions we observe. My point is that there is no need to concoct the awkward notion of a pretending brain once we conceive of affective simulation as a passive, sub-personal process.

As I said, a flight simulator is not supposed to pretend, but to actually respond to the pilot's maneuverings. In a sense the would-be pilot is not pretending either. All he may need to do (in terms of faking) is acting *as if* he were flying a real aircraft instead of a simulator. Why? Because in order to stay concentrated the pilot may have the need to *believe* that the simulator is a real aircraft.[9] Fortunately, a good simulator's responses contribute more than little to help the belief to stabilize. So what the pilot can do in addition (to get the belief) is to act as if the simulator was a real aircraft. But in order to do so the pilot has no need to pretend to do this or that: what he does he must do for real if the simulator is to respond in ways that enable the pilot to improve his technique. So having no one (except himself) to make believe he is flying a real aircraft, the pilot has no need to pretend *to do* this or that: what he may usefully pretend (with himself) is *to be doing* this or that. In other words, the pilot is not expected to pretend any action, but to execute all of them; what is faked is not the action, but some element in its content – an element derived from the content of the associated belief.

V. Mirroring and imitation

Due to automatic inhibition mechanisms, mirrorings do not result (at least normally) in actual motor mimicry, but might be used, as many insist, to imitate the actions of other individuals. Unfortunately, monkeys – in whose brains the mirror neurons were firstly discovered – have never proved able to learn anything by imitation.[10] According to Richard Byrne, however, convincing evidence of genuine observational learning is provided by the feeding behavior of mountain gorillas and other great apes. One of his favorite examples is the various stages of nettle processing: removing debris, detaching petioles, folding leaf blades, popping through lips. That gorillas can learn such behaviors by imitation is suggested by both their standardization and their flexibility. Standardization: "Although the low-level organization and choice of action is highly variable and idiosyncratic, the overall behavioral programme is highly standardized within the

population […] giving rise to the term 'program-level imitation' for the likely process of acquisition." And flexibility: "Like other complex feeding tasks in great apes, preparing nettles is a hierarchically organized skill, showing considerable flexibility: stages that are occasionally unnecessary are omitted, and sections of the process […] are often repeated iteratively" (Byrne 2003: 532).

In the context of grounding his mechanistic account of imitation as behavior parsing, Richard Byrne has proposed that the mirror system may contribute more than *response facilitation* to that highly valued ability.[11] The crucial function of mirror neurons could be that of fixing the *minimal units* composing the action repertoire of the observer. These fixed elements become relevant in observational learning when the imitator needs to segment the complex behavior of the model in order to reproduce its cardinal aspects (sequence, bimanual coordination, hierarchical structure) that are extracted (on the hypothesis) from statistical regularities in observed repeated action. For this parsing process to operate, however, the movements must be reduced to strings of elements, and this prior segmentation could be the job of the mirror system.

The idea is not that the mirror system itself could be the *parsing device* behind the ability to imitate. Byrne holds that true imitation can only emerge at program level, while action-level copying is just a matter of response facilitation. On this view the mirror system may provide the building blocks that decide whether or not the imitator will be able to copy the overall program. Indeed when the imitator begins to segment observed behaviors into strings of elements, the size and content of the elements is determined by *what motor acts* are already in her motor repertoire, which in turn depends on what types of mirror neurons exist in her brain.

Showing (with some degree of certainty) cases of true imitation among animals is known to be a delicate matter, because there is a panoply of phenomena providing easier explanations, from contagion to social simulation to emulation. So when it comes to establishing whether or not a given behavior is really a case of true imitation, the question is *not* whether the notion of imitation should reduce to copying or allow for creative interpretation (as Jacob and Jeannerod (2005) provocatively asked), but rather to what extent an action must be unfamiliar (to the imitator) to provide evidence of true imitation. Richard Byrne is not alone in considering novelty the prime criterion to distinguish true imitation from other phenomena (like emulation and response facilitation) that merely simulate imitation. Perhaps when the problem is to hypothesize likely functions for mechanisms (such as the mirror system) we know only in

part, the criterion of *novelty* may prove too demanding. It is also ironical that the condition for true imitation should be the execution of unfamiliar (even improbable) actions, while, at the same time, the quasi-stability of animal traditions is regarded as evidence of "the 'conservative' influence of imitation" (Byrne 2003: 531).

As a final consideration, I would like to suggest that if the parsing model is to have any chance to help clarify what the mirror system is for, then we will need to be told something more about (1) how the basic elements (the action units) are identified, and (2) what determines their size (or fineness of grain). For example, the fact that new "essential" elements (such as the ability to use different kinds of pliers) can be acquired with repeated watching seems to suggest that their size may depend on the number of sub-goals that the mirror neurons are capable of picking out from the flux of observed behavior.[12]

Notes

1 The notion of *affective simulation* that this paper proposes as a key to emotion recognition is clearly reminiscent of Spinoza's *imitatio affectuum* (see Damasio (2003) for an introduction). In his *Ethics* (1676) Spinoza offers the following characterization: "If we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have had no affect, to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect" (E3p27). Although Spinoza calls it an imitation of the affects (*imitatio affectuum*) it amounts to a mere effect of a body's mechanism, as the ensuing demonstration makes clear: "If the nature of the external body is like the nature of our body, then the idea of the external body we imagine will involve an affection of our body like the affection of the external body" (E3p27d). Remember that by 'imagining' Spinoza understands something very close to perceiving, that is, to being modified by external things, or caused by them to form bodily images. Because affects are bodily states, any episode of pretending depends ultimately on this passivity of the mind; indeed Spinoza (as Damasio (2003) correctly underlines) seems to maintain that in order to pretend an emotion one needs to get actually affected by that emotion.

2 Responsible for both are the amygdala and orbifrontal cortices, which may generate, *inter alia*, "an emotional response in the subject, via connections to motor structures, hypothalamus, and brainstem nuclei, where components of an emotional response to the facial expression can be activated. This mechanism might contribute to the generation of knowledge about another person's emotional state, via the process of simulation, and would draw on somato-sensory related cortices in the right hemisphere for representing the emotional changes in the perceiver" (Adolphs 2002: 172).

3 David Hume firstly introduced the distinction as a prelude to the more pregnant

difference between restricted and extended forms of sympathy. Hume's (1751) morally biased preference for general over one-to-one benevolence should not obscure the real extension and importance of episodes of automatic, passive sympathy within his philosophical system. "Sympathy, we shall allow, is much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and sympathy with persons remote from us, much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous; but for this very reason, it is necessary for us, in our calm judgments and discourse concerning the characters of men, to neglect all these differences, and render our sentiments more public and social" (Sect. V, part II). For a recent discussion of how this distinction may help explain Hume's multifaceted attitude toward religion and sectarianism see Herdt (1997).

4 In what follows I take no stance on whether mind-reading is more a matter of building theories about others or of simulating their emotions and mental states. Being concerned with (1) whether some mirror neurons may have a role to play in affective simulation and (2) whether the motor mirror system is a mechanism for action understanding or imitation, I will be using the concept of simulation to refer to sub-personal processes of the sort indicated. For a recent criticism of the notion of a sub-personal simulation see Gallagher (2007).

5 In this sense a mechanism can be said to *simulate* the behavior of a real system insofar as it responds to an interacting agent in ways that match (in the relevant respects) the ways the real system would respond. For more on the unintentional features of simultaneous interpretation see Goffman (1981) and Katan (1999).

6 Human mirror neurons are reported to code also intransitive actions such as gestures and speech, but the topic of this paper will be restricted to transitive actions.

7 For a most comprehensive review of the data and the history of the research on the mirror neurons see Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2006, 2007).

8 The comparison with reflexes is instructive. Reflexes are not actions, even though humans are normally in the position to control them, or at least to abort their execution. A distal motor program and the accompanying emotion may be externally generated, but the execution of the former is much easier to control than the execution (or release) of the latter. "Emotions call forth powerful motor programs that mobilize activity in the muscles of the face, the trunk, the limbs, and other parts of the body. […] To eliminate the visible signs of emotion, emotional suppression likely mobilizes 'bracing' and 'braking' actions that attempt to hold these emerging somatic aspects of emotion in check" (Levenson 1994: 278). I maintain that the motor acts suited to activate the motor mirror system of an observer belong to what LeDoux (1994) calls Type II responses, which typically follow type I responses, and whose programs are normally under the agent's volitional control.

9 Although it is not clear that the belief to be flying a real aircraft would play (in this context) any essential *causal* role, I take it for granted that the presence of a similar mental state (whatever its origin) is usually considered critical for many simulation processes to succeed. Here my point is simply to suggest that the

presence of a (self-induced) false belief may also free the would-be pilot from the need to counterfeit the various responses she is learning to command.

10 Visalberghi and Fragaszy (1990) are the Bible on the matter. In the same vein speak Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2006), Jacob and Jeannerod (2005) and many others. But see Zentall (2006) for a more nuanced examination.

11 *Response facilitation* is the mechanism whereby brain records of past responses are primed by the sight of actions of others.

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Understanding the Body's Critique: Repeating to Repair

Karin Nisenbaum

Abstract

In the following paper I look at the body as a site where individual and communal normative structures come into view. Drawing from the work of Sigmund Freud and Paul Ricoeur, and through an analysis of the compulsion to repeat, I offer an understanding of psychoanalysis as a practice whereby we decipher the body's call to configure our individual lives more humanly. This involves the interruption of the compulsion to repeat and the transition from an instinctual and organic development, towards an 'Erotic life.' I also broaden the scope of the analysis and investigate the kinds of communal structures or bonds that the psychoanalytic concept of an 'Erotic drive' calls for. To this end, I introduce Walter Benjamin's studies on the relation between different temporal and political structures.

Keywords: embodiment; transference; compulsion to repeat; erotic drive; messianic temporality.

Introduction

Central to Freudian psychoanalysis is a conception of the body as a site where individual and communal normative structures come into view. The patient's symptoms are the signs of a way of life that is going astray, and the analyst attempts to interpret or decipher the meaning encoded in the patient's body. Although the work of Charles Sanders Peirce will not be central to my analysis, his understanding of the role played by the three basic semiotic elements—the object, sign, and interpretant—in the production of meaning, can help us clarify how we may conceive of the body as a sign. The patient's symptoms become signs for an object, the normative structure, and psychoanalysis becomes an interpretant; it clarifies the meaning of the symptom insofar as it signifies a specific normative structure.[1]

In the following essay, I will contend that the psychoanalytic cure consists in the acquisition of the practical ability to intervene in the structuring of our lives. More specifically, drawing on the work of Paul Ricoeur and

Walter Benjamin, and through an analysis of compulsive behavior, I will argue that psychoanalysis can be understood as a practice whereby we decipher the body's call to configure our individual and communal lives more humanly.

I. Transference as the Repetition of a Normative Framework

At first blush, this may seem an unconventional understanding of psychoanalysis. Anna O, the first patient of psychoanalysis famously called it the 'talking cure.' In its initial stages, the therapeutic technique consisted in the 'cathartic method,' whereby patients attempted to talk their symptoms out. Symptoms were conceived of as disguising and repressing painful memories, and the aim of analysis was to bring these memories to consciousness through hypnosis, recollection, or free-association. Allegedly, this process would purge the symptoms. The understanding of psychoanalysis as a practice whereby we decipher the body's call to configure our individual lives more humanly and our communal lives more justly depends, preliminarily, on grasping the implications of one of the most significant revisions of psychoanalytic technique: Freud's abandonment of the 'cathartic method' and his progressive conception of the aim of psychoanalysis in terms of resolving the transference. In the first part of this essay, drawing from Jonathan Lear's comprehensive philosophical introduction to Freud, I will attempt to arrive at an understanding of transference as a normative framework coming into view, or as "a repetition of an entire orientation to the world" (Lear 2005: 136).[2]

The concept of transference attains its central status in the postscript to the 1905 case study of Dora, where Freud describes transferences as "a special class of mental structures," or as "new editions or facsimiles of the tendencies and fantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the process of the analysis" (Freud 1997: 106–08). They are peculiar in that they "replace some earlier person by the person of the physician" (ibid.). To get a better grasp of what these statements mean, it is necessary to review the minutiae of the case.

Dora, an intelligent eighteen-year old in a Viennese bourgeois family, was brought to Freud by her father after disclosing suicidal tendencies and allegedly inventing an attempted seduction by a family friend, Herr K. Through the analysis, Freud gets Dora's version of the story: her father was having an affair with Frau K, and Dora was indirectly encouraged to receive the amorous attentions of Frau K's husband, Herr K. One day,

while on a walk after a trip to a lake in the Alps, Herr K. propositioned her. Dora responded with a slap, later complaining to her mother and breaking her parents' social world apart. Three months into the treatment, the slap was repeated. This time it was directed at Freud, bringing his cure to a hasty end.

What Dora's slap, one of her symptoms, seems to reveal is that in her "idiosyncratic" world there are a limited set of structures or positions "in terms of which she experiences people and events. She quells her own anxiety, calms herself, by experiencing the world in a familiar pattern" (Lear 2005: 122, 124). For example, in her orientation to the world there tends to be a Herr K position: "there [tends] to be an older male figure who is at once charming, seductive, attentive, manipulative and self-centered—in relationship to whom she organizes her own complicated emotional responses" (ibid.). In "The Dynamics of the Transference," Freud aptly likens this form of patterning the world to a *cliché*:

> Every human being has acquired, by the combined operations of inherent disposition and of external influences in childhood, a special individuality in the exercise of his capacity to love – that is, in the conditions which he sets up for loving, in the impulses he gratifies by it, and in the aims he sets out to achieve in it. This forms a cliché or stereotype in him, so to speak, which perpetually repeats and reproduces itself as life goes on. (Freud 1959: 312)

This is the sense in which transferences are a special class of mental structures.

In the analysis, the patient *repeats* all of his or her normative structures and tendencies, transferring them to the physician and to the analytic situation. In "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through," Freud brings the repetitive aspect of transference into focus: "the patient remembers nothing of what is forgotten and repressed, but *acts* it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it" (Freud 1958: 150). In Dora's case, for example, she "[comes] to experience Freud in Herr K-like ways, and that is why she wants to give him a slap" (Lear 2005: 123). The slap signifies and makes visible a central part of Dora's normative framework.

What is particular to analysis is that these structures or frameworks are subject to question. The patient's idiosyncratic world "[comes] into view *as such*" (Lear 2005: 122). In other words, the ultimate aim of analysis is to "devise a form of interaction in which people can come to recognize their

own activity in creating structures that they have hitherto experienced as an independently existing world" (ibid.). This is precisely what Freud means when he states, in the postscript to the Dora case, that through analysis the transference is constantly being destroyed or resolved. Here, to remember no longer means to bring a painful, repressed memory to consciousness, thereby purging it. It means to repeat our normative framework and to have another highlight our active involvement in its formation, thereby endowing us with the practical ability to intervene and, perhaps, to re-configure our overall forms of evaluation. To remember, here, means to engage in a conversation that has the potential to "change the structure of a human soul" (Lear 2005: 220).

II. Compulsive Repetition, the Conservative Nature of the Instincts, and the Embodiment of Erotic Life

In the previous section I offered an understanding of transference as the structure of a human soul coming into view; the body signifies a particular normative structure. In this section, drawing on Ricoeur's discussion of Eros and Thanatos (love and death) in his seminal study *Freud and Philosophy*, I will propose an interpretation of the normative structure that comes into view in compulsive behavior.

Ricoeur's discussion of Eros and Thanatos is part of a broader attempt to clarify Freud's 1920 essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* In this essay, Freud first introduces the concept of the death instinct, specifically to explain compulsive behavior. As Ricoeur states, "it should be noted that the death instinct was not introduced to account for the factor of destructiveness…but to account for a set of facts which center around the compulsion to repeat" (1970: 281). Yet, the relation between the death instinct and compulsive behavior becomes evident only after a meditation on the limits of the explanatory force of the concept of the pleasure principle.

To refresh our memory, for the first half of his career, Freud conceived of the mind or psychical apparatus as a system set in motion by a production of tension; because tension is experienced as unpleasurable, the mind works to reduce it. The 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle' are the two principles of mental functioning through which the mind works to reduce tension. Following a normal course of development and "under the influence of the ego's instincts for self-preservation" (ibid., 283), the 'pleasure principle' is replaced by the 'reality principle.' The mind's concern is ultimately not only to reduce tension, but to attain satisfaction

by solving the problems initially producing tension.

Yet this understanding of the two principles of mental functioning was problematized by Freud's encounter with instances of compulsive repetition. Specifically, it was problematized by his observation of war neuroses. The symptoms of soldiers coming back from the front after World War I seemed to be qualitatively different from those Freud had observed, for example, in cases of hysteria. Particularly, it seemed impossible to conceptualize their dreams as disguised gratifications of a wish,[3] as the mind functioning under the 'pleasure principle.' Rather, the dreams of soldiers had the particular characteristic of repeatedly bringing them back to traumatic situations,[4] flooding their minds night after night with images of "the same atrocity" (Lear 2005: 154). The difference was great enough that it motivated Freud to make a significant revision in psychoanalytic theory. It led him to think of the compulsion to repeat as an instantiation of something, "more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle" (Ricoeur 1970: 287). It led him to hypothesize an instinct beyond the pleasure principle: the death instinct, Thanatos.

Freud endows the compulsion to repeat with a central role in the psychical apparatus by drawing a parallel between the organism's response to external stimuli and what happens in traumatic dreams. As Ricoeur clarifies, "the reception of external stimuli is conditioned by the erection of a protective shield: 'protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli" (1970: 287).[5] In Freud's account, traumatic dreams serve a similar function. What is accomplished by repeated exposure to real or imagined traumatic situations is a heightened sense of anxiety. And Freud depicts anxiety as "a particular state of expecting danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one" (ibid.., 288). In other words, if a traumatic experience is traumatic to the extent that one is not prepared for it, the state of anxiety created by the dream serves as a protective shield against unknown dangers.[6]

Freud now speculates that the pleasure principle only operates after the more instinctual task of creating a protective shield against external stimuli has been accomplished. The compulsion to repeat is thus prior to the pleasure principle. Yet it still intimates no relation to the death instinct. This relation becomes apparent after marking the specifically "instinctual" nature of the compulsion to repeat, along with Freud's description of the "universal attributes" of instincts (Ricoeur 1970: 289). As Freud suggests, "an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the

pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is…the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life" (Freud 1958: 36).[7]

Freud here stresses the essentially conservative nature of all instincts. Insofar as they are disposed to restore or preserve earlier conditions, the death and life instincts share a solipsistic, autarkic response to the external. The protective instinctual response prevents the organism from creatively incorporating novel conditions. Drawing out the implications of this insight places us in a better position to understand Freud's controversial claim that all organisms die for internal reasons, and that the aim of all organic life is death. Ricoeur elaborates this insight as follows:

> All of life's organic developments are but detours toward death, and the so-called conservative instincts are but the organism's attempts to defend its own fashion of dying, its particular path to death…Consider the migrations of certain fish and birds returning to the former localities of the species …does not all this attest to the conservative nature of life, to life's inherent compulsion towards repetition? (Ricoeur 1970: 290)

From this it becomes clear that the compulsion to repeat relates to the death instinct in the form of embodiment. It is the sign or symptom of a body struggling against life, yet clearly against a different conception of life, one that does not develop *organically* but as an accomplishment. In contrast to Thanatos or the death instinct, we may call this conception of life 'Erotic life.'

How is this form of life embodied? Which signs or symptoms manifest it? If the compulsion to repeat embodies a life lived and structured by the conservative death instinct, how is an 'Erotic life' embodied, and if an instinct does not activate it, what does? In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud introduces, in opposition to the death instinct, and as a more encompassing force than the sexual instincts, the concept of the Erotic drive.

It is important to note, first, the shift from the notion of *instinct* to that of *drive.* This shift immediately places the discussion of the death instinct, compulsive behavior, Eros, and its own form of embodiment, in the context of a renewed meditation on what sets the human apart from the animal. If the animal instinct for reproduction is "innate, naturally selected, issues in a characteristic activity, and aims at a certain outcome" (Lear 2005: 71), what Freud's studies on fetishism and homosexuality bring to light is that human sexuality is "essentially imaginative" (ibid.,: 73). The significance of this claim is discerned if one thinks of sexuality more broadly as a

teleological activity. In other words, when human beings ask themselves the question: 'In view of what aim and through which activities should I structure my life?' The responses that they formulate, while seeming to be natural, are in fact imaginative. If all the instincts, including the death and life instincts, share the universal attribute of conservatism, Freud's conceptual shift from the notion of instinct to that of drive sets apart the dimension of futurity for human life. If animal life is repetitive because self-contained, human life, Erotic life, is innovative because responsive. This is its form of embodiment.

It remains to explain what enables the replacement of both the life and death instincts by the Erotic drive. The following passage from Ricoeur's study of Freud proves to be useful in this respect. It is worth citing at some length:

> If the living substance goes to death by an inner movement, what fights against death is not something internal to life, but the conjunction of two mortal substances…the desire of the other is directly implied in the emergence of Eros; it is always with another that the living substance fights against death, against its own death, whereas when it acts separately it pursues death through the circuitous paths of adaptation to the natural and cultural environment. Freud does not look for the drive for life in some will to live inscribed in each living substance: in the living substance by itself he finds only death. (Ricoeur 1970: 291)

In other words, Erotic, human life becomes possible only by engaging with and being receptive to the external. Not by erecting a 'protective shield,' but by acknowledging another mortal substance, another human life structuring his or her activities in view of specific aims, and within a limited period of time.

III. Resolving the Transference: Interrupting the Compulsion to Repeat and the Transition that Dignifies a Human Life

Let me summarize the points made thus far. Freud ultimately came to understand the aim of psychoanalysis in terms of resolving the transference. As I maintained in the first section of this essay, to resolve the transference means to repeat one's evaluative framework and through a particular kind

of conversation, namely analysis, to gain the practical ability to intervene in the way that one structures one's world and one's place in it. In the second section I contended that what the compulsion to repeat embodies or signifies is a solipsistic life: one structured conservatively, defensively and inertly following its pre-given path. Through the concept of Erotic life, I also began to suggest that what could interrupt the compulsion to repeat would be a more human life; a life that is inventive and future-oriented because it is structured around the acknowledgment of others.

This reading of Freud places the great critic of religion in the vicinity of the two thinkers who fathered the "phenomenology of religion"[8]: Emmanuel Lévinas and Jean-Luc Marion. For if the cure for the compulsion to repeat consists in a life beginning to be structured responsively, rather than by doggedly pursuing its pre-determined course, this places the terms of the discussion in line with the transition that, for Lévinas and Marion, dignifies a human life: the transition whereby one ceases to think of oneself as an *I* and begins to think of oneself as *interloqué*.[9] This transition is one whereby one ceases to think of oneself as in "autistic autarchy" (Marion 1998: 200), as depending for one's sense and purpose on nothing other than oneself, and whereby one begins to think of oneself as an "auditor" (ibid., 204), as taking on a shape in response to familial, social and historical debts. In Marion's words, a human I, is "an I that one does not designate but which says, *hineni,* 'Here I am'" (ibid., 72). It is in this sense that psychoanalysis can be understood as a practice whereby we decipher the body's call to configure our individual lives more humanly.

IV. The Political Body and the Compulsion to Repeat: Walter Benjamin on Sovereign and Messianic Temporality

In the final section of this essay, drawing on Walter Benjamin's studies of the ways that different temporal and political structures interrelate, I will broaden the scope of the analysis, focusing on the kind of communal structures or bonds that the concept of the Erotic drive calls for.

By stating that the compulsion to repeat is conservative, and that Erotic life is future-oriented, I draw attention to the different temporalities that these two forms of life embody. The conservative temporal structure of the death instinct, embodied in the compulsion to repeat, closely matches the conception of time and succession that, for Benjamin, is inherent to sovereign states and to capitalist modes of production and consumption. This is the time-form of the "continuum" (Benjamin 1999: 253) where

"one Now-point follows another, uniformly, in linear succession" (Hamacher 2005: 49).[10] It is the counterpart to the modern idea of progress, the automatic, "equally uniform, steady and inexorable striving towards a pre-given ideal of political life" (Hamacher 2005: 47). Benjamin calls this time-form "petrified unrest,"[11] aptly capturing the sense that, while the modern understanding of progress entails movement, because it is tied to a set *telos* or end, it entails no real change.

The relation between this time-form and the overall structure of a sovereign state is not difficult to grasp, yet it is worth elucidating. Benjamin's most significant discussion of this relation is his 1921 essay, the "Critique of Violence." This essay is primarily a critique of the kind of violence, he calls it "mythic violence" (Benjamin 1978: 294), which serves either to further or to preserve the ends and means of a sovereign state and its institutions. Mythic violence is 'law preserving' when it is the handmaid of positive law, that is when it serves to preserve what are taken to be, within a given political body, legal means to attain specific ends. It is 'law making' when it is the handmaid of natural law, that is when it serves to attain ends that a political body considers being just. The relation between the time-form of progress and the structure of a sovereign state is perhaps most evident in the 'law making' function of violence, in the domain of natural law. For, as Benjamin states "[natural law] perceives in the use of violent means to just ends no greater problem than a man sees in his 'right' to move his body in the direction of a desired goal" (Benjamin 1978: 271). If inherent to the modern conception of progress is the idea that movement is steady, uniformly linear, and in view of pre-given aims, this movement is paralleled by the sovereign states' warranted attempts to further its own just ends.[12] Again, what Benjamin highlights in the concept of 'mythic violence,' in its relation to sovereign states and to the time-form of the continuum, is the degree of self-containment. The paradigmatic symbol for this containment is the border: "fortifications are, we might say, the very emblem of...what Benjamin called mythic violence" (Santner 2005: 108).

The relation between the conservative temporal structure of the compulsion to repeat and the conception of time and succession inherent to capitalist modes of production and consumption is perhaps more opaque. For, the rate and scale of change introduced by technological progress in the nineteenth century seems anything but conservative. In Marx's celebrated words:

> Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into thin air. (Marx 1985, 224)

Yet, the unrest that is characteristic of modern times masks the fact that, at least initially, what fueled it was the modern faith in progress in history and through human intervention. In view of this, "sovereign temporalization mutates into the temporalization proper to the rhythms of commodity production and consumption" (Santner 2005: 76). Even the constant innovation that fashion demands does not prove to be truly forward-looking, for in Benjamin's view, innovation is only genuine when it is necessary, that is, when it is responding to a missed opportunity from the past.

This brings us to the conception of time that, for Benjamin, could interrupt the compulsion to repeat, and to the political structures or kinds of communal bonds that would result from it. What characterizes this time-form is a complex relation between past, present and future. This relation is aptly captured by the terms "messianic time" (Benjamin 1999: 255), 'historical time,' or 'calendar time.' This time-form is messianic because the forward-movement from the present to the future is called for by a desire to redeem the past: either to cash in the possibilities (for universal human flourishing, for peace, for example) missed in the past, by fulfilling them in the future, or to make amends for an oppressed past. It is in this sense that we can understand Benjamin's claim that "the past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption" (Benjamin 1999: 245). This time-form is historical, not because it follows the modern conception of history as a continuum and as progressive, but rather because it is characterized by historical awareness. Finally, a calendar, rather than a clock, serves as a better tool to measure it, because while following repeating structures, calendars are unique in that they are punctured by days of remembrance and include empty spaces where we can inscribe new commemorative dates.

V. Conclusion

Benjamin never explicitly delineated the political structures or kinds of communal bonds that would correspond to this 'messianic' temporality. His enterprise was critical: it was to diagnose in positivism and in the philosophy of progress, common traits of vulgar Marxism, conservative historicism and social-democratic evolutionism,[13] a dangerous tendency to turn idealism into ideology. In the first three sections of this paper I offered an understanding of psychoanalysis as a practice whereby we decipher the body's call to configure our individual lives more humanly. In view of the points made in these three sections, Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," completed in the spring of 1940, not long after the short-lived Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed and not long after Hitler's invasion of Poland, can be understood as an attempt to decipher the call of a political body to interrupt its compulsion to repeat; not to inertly follow its own death instinct, but by structuring its communal life with the desire for universal redemption, to substitute it by the Erotic drive. This reading of Benjamin places him in Freud's vicinity, sharing with him the notion that a body, individual or communal, can fail to attain its humanity by following its tendency to repeat itself.

Notes

1 See Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Vol. 2*. Edited by The Peirce Edition Project. (Bloomington, IN, 1998), p. 492: "A Sign is a Cognizable that, on the one hand, is so determined (i.e. specialized, *bestimm*) by something *other than itself*, called its Object […], while, on the other hand, it so determines some actual or potential Mind, the determination whereof I term the Interpretant created by the Sign, that the Interpreting Mind is therein determined mediately by the Object."

2 See also Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, *Vol. 12*. trans. James Strachey. (London, 1958), p. 150-151.

3 See Jonathan Lear, *Freud* (New York and London, 2005), p.154.

4 See Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy* (New Haven and London, 1970), p.285.

5 An elucidating correspondence can be found between this conception of 'bound energy' and Kant's account of transcendental synthesis.

6 Ricoeur provides a helpful analysis of how Freud distinguishes anxiety from fright and fear. See Freud and Philosophy, p. 288.

7 Cited in: Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy p.289.

8 For the clearest elaboration of this term, see Dominique Janicaud, *Phenomenology*

and the Theological Turn, trans. Bernard G. Prusak. (New York, 2000).

9 An illuminating comparison can be made between Lévinas and Marion's account of this transition, and Jürgen Habermas' account of the transition from a selective cognitive and instrumental rationality to a more comprehensive communicative rationality. Habermas frames his account of this transition through a critical analysis of the Modern concept of self-preservation. See Jürgen Habermas *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy. (Boston, 1984), p. 390-391.

10 It is interesting to note that Benjamin had originally planned a thesis on the concept of history in Kant. See Werner Hamacher, "Now: Walter Benjamin on Historical Time," in *Walter Benjamin and History*. Edited by Andrew Benjamin. (London and New York, 2005), p.49.

11 See Eric Santner. On Creaturely Life. (Chicago, 2005), p.81.

12 See Santner, *On Creaturely Life* p.67: "The repetition of juridical precedent is, in other words, in a quite literal sense *the compulsion to repeat*. It is precisely this dimension of repetition compulsion that defines, for Benjamin, the sphere of 'mythic violence.'"

13 See Philippe Simay, "Tradition as Injunction: Benjamin and the Critique of Historicisms," in *Walter Benjamin and History*. Edited by Andrew Benjamin. (London and New York, 2005), p.137.

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Implicit Bodies Through Explicit Action[1]

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Abstract

This paper contends that the body is performed. A body can "act" as a site of emergence, a boundary project, and an incipience. While Rebecca Schneider's "explicit body" in feminist performance art performatively unfolds (Latin: explicare) and explicates, the implicit body concordantly enfolds (Latin: implicare) and implies. Inter-action is both constitutive of, and always already involved in, the flesh. Like an animated Möbius strip, the body feeds back between affection and reflection. The last section of this paper attempts to think through interactive digital art as a proscenium for, and framer of, the implicit body.

Keywords: art; digital; embodiment; interactive; relationality

I. Introduction

Brian Massumi, in his *Parables for the Virtual*, implores us to put "movement, sensation, and qualities of experience" back into our understandings of embodiment, without "contradicting the very real insights of poststructuralist cultural theory" (2002: 4). "Our entire vocabulary," he says, "has derived from theories of signification that are still wedded to structure even across irreconcilable differences" (ibid.: 27). He doesn't wish to undo the important work of cultural studies' linguistic model for understanding race, gender, class or other forms of identification, but is looking for "a semiotics willing to engage with continuity" (ibid). Following Gilles Deleuze, who followed Bergson, Massumi points out, "When a body is in motion, it does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation...In motion, a body is in an immediate, unfolding relation to its own…potential to vary" (ibid.: 4-5). In contradistinction to 'known' structures, Massumi avers that "the body is in a state of invention" (ibid.: 103). It is "an accumulation of relative perspectives and the passages between them…retaining and combining past movements," continuously "infolded" *with* "coding and codification"

(ibid.: 57, 98, 83).

Massumi's book is, overall, a philosopher's plea; he asks us to re-member[2] how the experience of the body is constructed not only through Saussure's linguistics or Lacan's Symbolic Order, for example, but also through its passage. "It *moves*. It *feels*. In fact, it does both at the same time. It moves as it feels, and it feels itself moving. Can we think a body without this: an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation, whereby each immediately summons the other?" (ibid.: 1). Massumi beckons us towards an embodiment that includes a moving, thinking, feeling body, which is more than its inscriptions and significations, and not assumed to be understood. Like the artists examined in this paper, Massumi plays with "*affirmative* methods," "productivism" and "inventiveness" in his writing, to disrupt, and add insight to, the dominant discourse surrounding embodiment in the humanities (ibid.: 12-13). As Katherine Hayles asserts, "One contemporary belief likely to stupefy future generations is the postmodern orthodoxy that the body is primarily, if not entirely, a linguistic and discursive construction" (Hayles 1999: 192). Massumi instead attempts to work with the body as a continuously unfolding and infolding (and material) event.

This paper is less a focus on new vocabularies for movement (Massumi's continuity), and more so a thinking-through of this *infolding of* the movement. More specifically, it asks: How might the body's continuity, and its potential disruption, be attendant, provoked and contextualized in contemporary art?

Following this introduction, Section II goes on to define the body-image, the body-schema, and their relationship to each other as concepts that parallel Massumi's structure/continuity distinction, and which help to set up the critical art framework I propose. Section III, "the body as performed," goes on to use contemporary theory from performance and cultural studies to elucidate on performance as a metaphor for both embodiment and interactivity. Section IV, "from the Explicit to the Implicit," ties the last two sections together, illustrating how performance art has historically been used to provoke questions about the body-image, and suggesting digital art be used to interrogate the body-schema. Section V, "encountering performance," proposes 'the implicit body as performance,' deployed in order to think art as embodied relation. And finally, Section VI, "Working with Work," uses this framework to unpack and critique a few samples of exemplary interactive art in the field.

II. The body-image, the body-schema, and topology

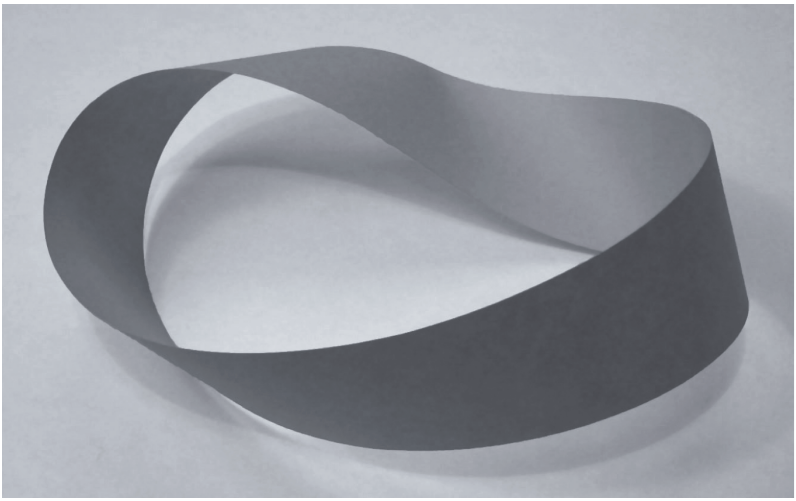
One useful distinction for understanding Massumi's discontinuous versus continuous dichotomy in embodiment is that of phenomenologist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's body-image and body-schema. Mark Hansen defines them:

> Whereas the body image characterizes and is generated from a primarily visual [or *observational*] apprehension of the body as an external object, the body schema emerges from what, with autopoietic theory, [Merleau-Ponty calls] the *operational* perspective of the embodied organism. (Hansen 2006: 38-39, my emphasis)

Embodiment— "the process through which bodies are produced" (ibid.: 79)—and exteriority, what he calls "technicity"[3]—are transductions: "neither one is the cause of the other" (ibid.: 79). Here, active and processual embodiment can be understood as the body-schema, whereas its exterior apprehension is the co-original body-image. Along with Shaun Gallagher and Jonathon Cole, who assert that the body-schema is "a system of motor and postural functions that operate below the level of self-referential intentionality" (Gallagher et al. 1995), Hansen says that it is "a *prepersonal* sensory being-with" (Hansen 2006: 21). In other words, the body-schema includes nonconscious, sensorimotor perceptions and actions. Further, it is "a flexible, plastic, systemic form of distributed agency encompassing what takes place within the boundaries of the body proper (the skin) as well as the entirety of the spatiality of embodied motility" (ibid.: 38). Hansen suggests that it is the entire "scope of body environment coupling" (ibid.: 20).

Massumi, Hayles, Hansen, Gallagher and Cole, along with others such as Jose Gil, Gilles Deleuze and Allain Millon, have an understanding of embodiment as "relational," but "not … relative" (Massumi 2002, 280), topological, but not plottable, emergent and incipient. Like an animated Möbius strip, the body is: 'in and around.'

A Möbius strip is a topological figure that can be produced by twisting a strip of paper and looping and attaching its ends. It is thus a one-sided surface with only one boundary component which is available in three dimensions. This means that it lives in both 2- and 3-D space at the same time; it is greater than the sum of its parts.



Möbius strip, photo by David Benbennick (GNU Free Documentation license)

Massumi defines topology as "the science of self-varying deformation" (2002: 134), and asserts that whether Euclidian (as is the Möbius strip) or not (the case for most), topological figures "generate a surplus-effect… due to a transitional excess of movement" (2002, 185). He explains that a topological figure such as the Möbius strip is a "dynamic form [that] is neither accurate nor fully visualizable. It is operatively vague… a qualitative space of variation referenced only to its own movement…" (ibid.: 183). He asserts that topology "is not empirical, if empirical investigation is meant as progressing from description to prediction. It has no predictive value. Incapable of directly referencing anything other than its own variations, it is more analogical than descriptive" (ibid.: 135).

If topology is analogical, as Massumi avers, then like the analog, it is itself:

> *process*… a continuous, variable impulse or momentum that can cross from one qualitatively different medium into another. Like electricity into sound waves. Or heat into pain. Or light waves into vision. Or vision into imagination. Or noise in the ear into music in the heart. *Or outside coming in*. (ibid.: 135)

Both Massumi and cultural theorist Elizabeth Grosz (Grosz, 1994) conceptualize "the body" as one such analogical and topological figure,

"a membrane open to the outside.... in between dimensions" (Fernandez 2007: 83). Here, the body-image and -schema inter-act and as Hayles avers, "outside becomes inside becomes inside becomes outside" (Hayles 1999: 195-196). Massumi's "topological figure in the flesh" (2002: 183), like Grosz's and Hayles' understandings of embodiment, is described precisely through its "expandable and pliable nature" (Richardson 2003: 231). We are always of the relation, asked to engage with "new ways of understanding how our spatial topologies and bodily boundaries are continually reinvented" through movement and interaction (ibid.: 231). Massumi calls for and provokes new ways of articulating and exploring this movement, this continuity, with greater (or at least equal) concentration on the body-schema—which he argues has been largely ignored by cultural studies—along with its relationship to the more structural, though inseparable, body-image.

This paper parallels Massumi's ongoing call, but for critical art. He might say that we have a discourse (or several discourses) centered around the body-image, but the body-schema is lacking discussion. My assertion is that while we have critical production models and visual vocabularies for making art that challenges the body-image, we need to also find ways of engaging and interrogating the body-schema.

III. The Body as per-formed

A key metaphor that this paper appropriates for the process of embodiment proposed in the preceding pages is that of 'performance.' Richard Schechner is largely credited with opening up this figure of thought, using a combination of anthropology, cultural theory, postmodern reflection, and his practice as a theatre director. Performance, he says, "is a very inclusive notion of action; theatre is only one node on a continuum that reaches from ritualization in animal behavior (including humans) through performances in everyday life – greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, and so on – to rites, ceremonies and performances [as] large-scale theatrical events" (Schechner 1977: 1). Since the inception of Performance Studies, performance has been labelled (and this is by no means an exhaustive list) "processual" (Zarilli 1986a), transportative (Schechner 1985: 126), transformative (ibid), and an "activating force or energy" (Drewal and Drewal cited in Zarilli 1986b). It is a "liminal space" (Schechner 2002: 24), in-"between modalities" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett cited in ibid.: 3), that is not "reducible to terms independent of its formation"(Kapferer cited in Zarilli 1986b).

In a study of digital art inter-actions, Nicole Ridgway builds on these anthropological foundations, but uses the "philosophical tradition[s] of… relation and emergence" (Ridgway forthcoming) to bring new light to performance. She likens performance to Massumi's "virtuality," and says that it is not, in fact, "'in' the between, but 'of' the relation" (ibid).

In her own paper on interactivity, Katherine Hayles similarly turns to emergence and relationality as the origins of both body-image and -schema, which she calls "the body" and "embodiment," respectively. She is worth quoting at length:

> [T]o avoid the Cartesian mind-body split in my recent book *How We Became Posthuman* … I made a distinction between the body and embodiment. The body, I suggested, is an abstract concept that is always culturally constructed.… At the other end of the spectrum lie our experiences of embodiment. While these experiences are also culturally constructed, they are not entirely so, for they emerge from the complex interactions between conscious mind and the physiological structures that are the result of millennia of biological evolution…I tried to stay on the holistic path by insisting that the body and embodiment are always dynamically interacting with one another. But having made the analytical distinction between the body and embodiment, I could not escape the dualistic thinking that clung to me regardless of my efforts to avoid it….Rather than beginning dualistically with body and embodiment, I [now] propose instead to focus on the idea of relation and posit it as the dynamic flux from which both the body and embodiment emerge. (2002, 297-298).

Here, relationality and interaction produce the bodies that interact and relate, both linguistically and materially.

> Seeing entities emerging from specific kinds of interaction allows them to come into view not as static objects precoded and prevalued, but rather as the visible results of the dynamic on-goingness of the flux – which in itself can be neither good nor bad because it precedes these evaluations, serving as the source of every-thing that populates my perceived world, including the body and experiences of embodiment. (ibid.)

Ridgway's aforementioned study allows us to name per-formance as precisely this activity-centred flux. She juxtaposes the Deleuzean notion of *pre*formism—"the already preformed" (Grosz, 1999, p. 25 cited in Ridgway), "*completely given*" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 98 cited in ibid), "rather than produced" (Grosz, 1999, p. 25 cited in ibid)—with *per*formance—"a taking place, something in process and, by definition, unfinished." Performance, she says, "inaugurates not enacts…Interaction is not a meeting of two extant essences, but a movement and unfolding of the [relation] that is always supplementary and incomplete" (ibid).

It should be noted that Ridgway's performance metaphor—used for understanding interaction in her paper and embodiment in this one—is not the same as that found in the performance of identity put forward by cultural theorist Judith Butler in the early nineties. Butler uses the word performance as a combination of a metaphor for "on stage," such as in Goffman's classic *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1959), and as a reference to the "performative," performances (or texts) that make an ontological change.[4]

Butler suggests that gender is a ceaseless and cyclical narrative, a "tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions" (Butler 1999: 140). She attests that we perform gender, both culturally and personally, both for the social order and to better understand ourselves within it. There's no doubt that this is an extremely important understanding of the recursive body-image construction, which led to many breakthroughs in the liberal arts, as well as fine arts.

In Ridgway's model of performance, however (just as with Hayles' relationality), performance does not sit *between*, for example, me and my desire to be something or someone; it is not a means to an end (even if that end is an unreachable fantasy, as Butler avers) and perhaps most importantly, it is not based in any kind of conceptual construction. It is, rather, the *relation of* flesh and world (and word); it is the folding that has no end, and whose means are a loop between potentialization and actualization; it is an emergence through physical inter-action, virtual and per-formed. While Butler's text occasionally mentions material form as problematic within her discourse-based renderings of gender, she never addresses this directly, instead concentrating on *performative construction*. Contrapuntally, Ridgway's *performance* should be understood as *constitution*.

A body in space can 'act' as a site of emergence, a boundary project, and an incipience. And the philosophical definition of processual performance put forward here, when coupled with embodiment and the body-schema in this paper, foreshadows and amplifies what is at stake in interactive artistic

encounters.

IV. From the Explicit to the Implicit

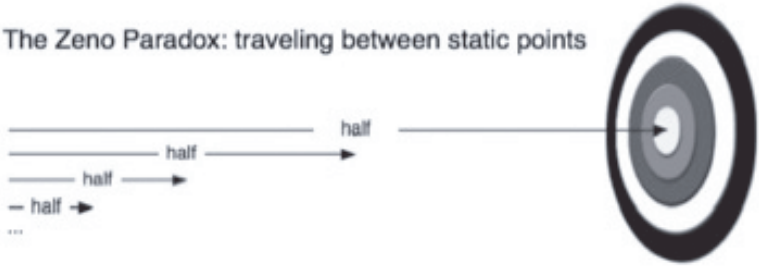
Schechner avows, "The relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral" (Schechner 2002: 1), and it is in this space that he and I are in sync. We are both less "concerned with *stasis* than with *dynamis*" (Turner cited in Schechner 1985: xii) and "committed… to interference" (ibid.: xi). The end of the last century saw a multitude, for example, of feminist performance art that attempted to question structures such as those Judith Butler writes about in her aforementioned texts.

The "explicit body" is a term coined by Rebecca Schneider, one of Schechner's long-time colleagues, to describe such work; it speaks to a "mass of orifices and appendages, details and tactile surfaces…[that] in representation is foremost a site of social markings, physical parts and gestural signatures of gender, race, class, age, sexuality—all of which bear ghosts of historical meaning, markings delineating social hierarchies of privilege and deprivilege" (Schneider 1997: 2).

The explicit body in performance "explicate[s] bodies in social relation" (ibid). Through an "explosive literality," and with an eye towards the Latin root *explicare* (or, *to unfold*), the explicit body is used to "peel back layers of signification," to "expose not an originary, true, or redemptive body, but the sedimented layers of signification themselves" (ibid.: 1-3).

Schneider's explicit body in performance "renders the symbolic [as] literal" in order to "pose a threat… [to] implicit structures of comprehensibility" (ibid). It is a body which is scarred by a history larger than the body's wearer - we are peeling away to reveal what is already there, but unbeknownst to us.

In the work of performance and visual artist Karen Finely, for example, the explicit body intervenes in the spectacle of engenderment. In one piece, she challenges Freud's theory of penis envy, and that women have children as a replacement for the phallus, by literally "strapping on," and wielding, an infant across the stage. Here the explicit body literalizes the legislative frontier, that aspect of power, which both authorises and invalidates representations and gestures to that which is un-representable.



Zeno Paradox illustration

Massumi's reading of the Zeno paradox (taken from Henri Bergson, who follows Aristotle) might illuminate Schneider's contention further. Zeno's infamous arrow flies through the air, but never reaches any target. The paradox says that in order for an arrow to reach the bull's eye, it must first get halfway there, it must also get halfway to that halfway mark, and halfway to that. And so on, inevitably making an infinite number of markers that the arrow must pass through, thus making it impossible to get to its goal.

Of course, says Massumi, movement does not work this way. To map out all the possibilities through which the arrow must travel in order to reach its goal is to see the arrow as only going between many points of stasis, rather than as in motion. It only 'is' when it 'isn't doing.' Accordingly, now imagine many arrows' paths across 3-dimensional space: post-event, completely mapped-out points of stasis turned into a uniform grid of mediated, understood, unmoving, and ultimately limited possibilities. This, Massumi tells us, is how we have unfortunately come to view the subject, and the body, through contemporary theories of construction.

I'm arguing that artists like Finley use the explicit body to put such gridpoints in quotes; they performatively literalize, ironize, and call into question the sacred signifieds of "race," "gender," "woman," "child," or "phallus," depending on the explication. Actually, to borrow a phrase from Walter Benjamin, they are "quoting without quotation marks" (Benjamin cited in Benjamin 1997: 48). According to Andrew Benjamin's reading of his notes on the subject:

> In its most general sense, to quote means to restate what has already been stated. Any citation, therefore, must also re-site [with an "s"]…what could be described as a re-situation…What is given is given again. This re-

> giving is neither a simple iteration nor a repetition of the Same.... The re-giving therefore needs to be thought of as an iterative reworking…. The process of reworking re-presents the given in such a way that other possibilities… already inscribed within [what is given are]…able to be revealed…The absence and presence of quotation marks… indicates the presence of different moments of historical time—chronological time…The absence of quotation marks signals the disruption of context (Benjamin 1997: 50-53).

Explicit bodies in performance put Zeno's stop-points in crisis. They re-cite and re-situate our structured inscriptions, asking us to look at what is both inside and outside of the quote, its history or continuity as well as its disruption, all the while bringing "ontological and temporal considerations to bear" (ibid.: 53).

Within the framework of the performance art, body art and Happenings movements that Schneider writes about, this notion of the explicit body is extremely productive. The encountered performance 'unfolds' and reveals to us our stories, preconceptions and, perhaps most importantly to Schneider, social boundaries.

In a previous collaborative paper, Nicole Ridgway and I argued that under the conditions of digitality, and the work that comes, directly or indirectly, with those conditions, there is potential for a shift in subject/object and performer/audience hierarchies, and thus a shift in how we might perceive or read such explicit inscriptions. We proposed that the 'flesh' can perhaps be thought of as more of a palimpsest, where we inscribe and scratch away, and enfold, alongside our continuous unfolding, in order to not uncover or discover our bodies, but to emerge as bodies (both legible and illegible), as not-yet-bodies, bodies in process—implied bodies, in relation and drawn out. Where the root of explicit is *to unfold*, to imply is *to enfold*. And, the relationship between them is neither dichotomous nor dialectical.[5]

For Massumi, "passage precedes position" and process has ontological priority in that it constitutes the field of emergence (2002: 8). Again following Deleuze, he calls it ontogenetic (ibid.: 206). As did our predecessors, Ridgway and I pondered this continuum as not a binary between emergence and positioning, between regulatory operations and becomings, or between implicit and explicit. It's a both/and, a co-telling—in, of, and by the flesh.

Here, my contention is that where explicit body quotations surround Zeno's positions and put them in crisis, implicit body quotations do the

same to the movements between, to their passage and their emergence. They re-cite our body-world couplings at large, and can more fundamentally incorporate and/or re-situate, specific relations, examples being "flesh-space," "social-anatomies" or "body-language," depending on the *implication*. To imply in Latin is not only to infold, but also to involve and entwine, and in this case, to re-work or per-form.

V. Encountering performance

The implicit body phrase in my usage is specific to art encounters as used to frame discrete bodily foldings with "sensible concepts,"[6] interrelated transformations and co-emergences that invite us into our own potential to vary. Where the 'Explicit body *in* Performance' uses the stage to put aspects of the objectified body-image in quotes, the 'Implicit body *as* Performance' *rigs* quotation marks around the emergent body-schema *and* its contrapuntal relation to something *else*. My ongoing study will almost entirely lie in the domain of interactive art spaces, attempting to think through such technological art as a proscenium for, and framer of, "embodiment plus X" —X being a variable or variables (an artist text, the gallery space, other bodies) feeding back between the artwork and its participant. This formula is not meant to say that embodiment and X are either separate to begin with, or that they are 'added together' per se; it is a heuristic device to show implicit body art as able to contextualize and highlight our bodily performances of/with/in, for example "space" or "networks" or "text."

Hansen also directly gives power to digital art; his 'body in code'—"the technical mediation of the body schema" (Hansen 2006: 20) —substantially ties exteriority and the evolution of the human (and embodiment) to technology. He says that a "*technically triggered experience*,*"* can "stage…the excess of the body schema over the body image to increase [the participant's] agency as an embodied being" (ibid.: 19-20). He looks at the "mixed reality" movement within interactive art to argue that inviting action and enactment, rather than producing illusion and simulacrum, creates more immersive spaces (ibid.: preface and introduction).

As a producing artist myself, I am not necessarily interested in work or environments that are more illusory or more immersive, but that, rather, explicitly ask us to move in ways we normally would not, implicitly pushing into the realms of performativity and affect, interfering with, and putting into crisis, distinct bodily relations. I produce awkward interfaces that ask us to chase or stutter or build or write with our bodies, and hope to unpack other -up art works that intervene in our incorporating practices,

situations-as-events that beg questions of how we relate, and what that implies. These kinds of invitational performances are "exploiting the margin of indetermination" (ibid.: 30). According to VR-guru Char Davies, they "temporarily deautomate habitual perception and facilitate a 'seeing freshly'" (Davies in Hansen 2006: 11). Says interactive artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, "the real motivation… is the modification of existing behavior… [to] create a situation where… the participants relate in new, 'alien' ways" (2000).

It could perhaps be argued that all successful art interrogates our understandings of the world in such a way, but the Implicit Manifesto here is to intentionally open up interactive environments and more general performance encounters to new criteria and critique. Within this framework, artists are seen as creating works and interfaces that co-emerge with their viewer-participants in and around the interval; these pieces are a driving of, and attention to, the movement in the spaces between. By setting the stage, interactive artists-as-directors create productive tensions between the performed and the pre-formed, shifting our experiences of 'body.' At stake are potential strategies for intervention in our understandings of enfleshment, art that situates a continuous embodiment in relation to specific concepts and ideas.

VI. Working with Work

It must be duly noted that since this paper is focused on the primacy of action and experience, page-bound but demonstrative studies of art work are no small task. The provided cross-section of printed images are quite literally a series of snapshots (i.e. Zeno stop-points), and the process of writing out how participants are moving and interacting in these photos are simultaneously turning incorporation into inscription. Web addresses to online video documentation are provided for each piece, but even then, those who choose to view the artworks (assuming they are still online when you read this) will not be experiencing them with their bodies, in space and in relation.

For these reasons, the ideal implicit art case study concentrates on four key areas of evaluation: artistic inquiry and intent; art work description; movement and interaction; and relationality. Respectively, these would attempt to show what kinds of questions the artists were exploring in production; how each installation works both technically and sensually; what viewers see and experience through their active engagement with the piece; and the complex relationships that are accented as emergent through

this embodied dialogue. There are, of course, grey areas between each of these regions of assessment. But this approach—which gives equal weight not only to intent and content, but also to the interaction (per-formance) itself and to the feedback loop between all three—is precisely the strength of my thesis and framework. Below are three samples of work that would benefit, and benefit from, just such an implicit art reading.[7]

The aforementioned Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is a Canadian-Mexican artist who develops large-scale, public, interactive installations that, in his own words, attempt to "transform urban spaces and create connective environments" (Lozano-Hemmer 2003). According to his web site, "Using robotics, projections, sound, internet and cell-phone links, sensors and other devices, his installations aim to provide 'temporary antimonuments for alien agency'" (Lozano-Hemmer 2006). Here, 'temporary' refers to the ephemeral nature of his technological and performative installations; 'anitmonument' because, while their scale is certainly monumental, the installations *are* an event, rather than acting to commemorate one; and 'alien agency' as a phrase should read to mean that although participants are responsible for and aware of their actions, the ways they move are foreign: the experience they have in each piece is an intervention in movement, the sensorimotor body, the body-schema.

Dubbing his ongoing series of work 'Relational Architectures,' Lozano-Hemmer claims to "focus on the new temporal relationships that emerge from the artificial situation…[of] 'relationship-specific' art" (Sullivan & Lozano-Hemmer 2002). He describes his work thusly:

> Relational architecture transforms the master narratives of a specific building by adding and subtracting audiovisual elements to affect it, effect it and re-contextualize it. Relational buildings have audience-activated hyperlinks to predetermined spatiotemporal settings that may include other buildings, other political or aesthetic contexts, other histories, or other physics…But apart from special effects, beyond plasticity, the real motivation behind relational architecture is the modification of existing behaviour: the artist creates a situation where the building, the urban context and the participants relate in new, 'alien' ways.[8] The piece can be considered successful if the artist's intervention actively modifies the point of dynamic equilibrium between the public's actions and the building's reactions, and vice versa. There can be a variety of causal, chaotic, telepresent,

> predetermined, or emergent behaviours programmed into the piece and the uncertainty of the outcome is one of the main motivations for doing such a piece. (Lozano-Hemmer, 2001)

Body Movies, Lozano-Hemmer's award-winning piece circa 2001 projects an archive of thousands of images, one by one, each taken on the streets of cities all over the world, onto large buildings. These are shown using powerful, robotically controlled data projectors located around a square. From the centre of the square, huge floodlights wash out these images; they can only be seen, therefore, when passers-by block out the whiteness with their shadows, revealing the projected photographs underneath. Said shadows range in size from two to twenty-five meters, depending on a visitor's distance from the light, and they are tracked in real-time with Lozano-Hemmer's custom software; if the participants on the 'live' square align their shadows to reveal all the bodies in the image beneath, the program triggers the next image in the sequence (Lozano-Hemmer 2001).

With *Body Movies*, participants' interrelated interactions—all of which they may or may not consciously be aware of—are a performative experience of stories and space. At the outset, "everyone has a sophisticated vocabulary of expression using his or her own shadow" so it is unnecessary "to explain how to participate" (Sullivan & Lozano-Hemmer 2002). But the sheer scale of the shadows takes into account a large field between the lights and building, begging for players to make 2-dimensional movies out of, and projected onto, 3-dimensional space. They become active agents whose bodies might span several stories high, or remain close to their actual size, depending on where they move. And the revelation of other bodies in the images found beneath their shadows—a play on presence that Lozano-Hemmer ironically calls 'tele-absence'—adds another layer of interaction to the experience. Viewers can reveal all, part or parts of the artist's photographs from around the world, and try to tell a story by playing around the image's contents and/or triggering the next in the sequence.

As seen in the provided images, this encourages would-be static viewers who are embodying per-formance objects to run back and forth between buildings and lights, shifting their sizes in relation to each other, the architecture, and the photographs they're revealing. They taunt or eat or 'uplift' one another; they bicycle on the streets of the international cities in the photographs, use umbrellas to protect their inhabitants from the rain, and create multi-armed beasts that grow and shrink as they scale building

Body Movies by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, 2001
http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/bm-hk.mov

walls or invade foreign lands. They can (physically and literally) align themselves with strangers and friends alike, in this time and space, or in someone else's. Here, stories and memories are made through movement, an embodied continuity and relation between presence and absence, rather than one or the other as binary choices.

Body Movies invites us, says Lozano-Hemmer, to "study the distance between people and re-presentation in public space." The "people on the square…embody different representational narratives," creating "a collective experience that nonetheless allows discreet individual participation" (Lozano-Hemmer 2001). Portraits are revealed by shadows in a nonverbal interaction, a literal embodiment of other, a relation between people and site, a small gesture at huge scale, a playing with inside and outside, a question that poses space as representational, material and perceptual, through movement.

Body Movies severs time from movement and space from location; it enables viewers to draw out that part of an event that cannot be reduced to the limited image we see on screen. Lozano-Hemmer's work gives "discourse to the body…the body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself…it is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought.…Not that the body thinks, but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought (ibid.)."[9]

We are not, in *Body Movies,* witnessing or partaking in memory content (or the politics of memory), but rather, engaging in a mediation of the between of perception, action and content: it both exceeds and forms the preconditions for body and world. It "ensures our openness to the preindividual, the preperceptual, the new, and with it, the very future-directedness of the constitutively incomplete present" (Hansen 2004: 268). Like Leibniz's incompossible worlds, there "are innumerable variations of the future virtually present in the moment we now inhabit" and make (Rodowick 2001: 228). Massumi says that in a space such as Lozano-Hemmer's, "energetic impulses…take place in every level of the body…[through] proprioceptive receptors in our muscles and our joints" (Cruz & Massumi 2003). Our emergent action is performed and felt "in the flesh," and we have the "conversion of the materiality of the body into an event, it is a relay between its corporeal and incorporeal dimensions. This is not yet a subject" (Massumi 2002: 14).

Like space itself, bodiliness is accented as "susceptible to folding, division and reshaping…open to continual negotiation" (Kirby 1993). Participants shrink and grow, speak through a present absence and shift

stories and meaning through movement in the environment. This accented shift, a bodily unfolding and enfolding, turns the context of architecture into a situational, sensible concept: 'flesh-space.'

Front (2000) is a wearable and interactive sculpture by artists Ralph Borland (South Africa), Jessica Findley and Margot Jacobs (both USA), collectively known as The Millefiore Effect. This being the only concrete collaboration between all three, it is harder to construct a narrative around their approach than with Lozano-Hemmer, but each has gone on to use art, design and technology as means for provocation, investigation and/or innovation, respectively.

Ralph Borland, for example, develops and writes about "projects that address social issues through creative means, and [that]…look at the politics of technology"; taking cues from activist groups and under the blanket term 'provocative technology,' Borland investigates "tools and technologies that combine the attributes of art and design to make objects" that "may have an immediate function to perform, but that also serve as pointers" to specific "social conditions" (Borland 2007). Jessica Findley's other work ranges from collective, interactive experiences that "transform the everyday public landscape and make people giddy or baffled" to, for example, "a serenade for plants"; she's interested in "the idea first," then follows through to the emergence of a story and artwork with her materials and public interaction (Debatty & Findley 2007). Jacobs' subsequent work is focused on the "playful, emotional incorporation of technology in everyday life," and she "holds a deep interest in developing innovative design methods and experimental prototypes for social interventions in public space" (Jacobs 2006). She's co-founder of the California-based Keep Company, a green (i.e. sustainable) shoe and clothing outfit. The team as a whole worked to create a wearable piece that was seemingly integrated with its participants' bodies; players were then encouraged to perform publicly, and the dynamics of their interaction were meant to elicit "behavior we see in few other contexts" (The Millefiore Effect 2002).

Front is "a pair of sound-activated, inflatable ceremonial conflict-suits" (Borland 2000). It is, according to Findley, "an endless game of vocal battle between two people who wear suits, equipped with fans, [activated to] inflate when they yell" (Debatty & Findley 2007). Adorned by gallery-going participants in a ring, the volume of each wearer's screams inflates their own 'aggressive' parts of the suit—pointy horns, boxing gloves or wings—whilst their 'opponent' sprouts protective, but ultimately constrictive, forms around their more vulnerable flesh.

In the accompanying, and mostly humorous, video documentation

(The Millefiore Effect 2002), the team explains that they began with the question, "How would it feel to express your emotional state through large changes in the shape of your body?" They "looked for inspiration from animals which could transform their own bodies," and "used the volume of their voices" as a "crude metaphor for emotional state" (ibid.).

http://www.millefiore.info/

Once suited up and told to begin, the power of each participant's yells or cries in their face- (or perhaps body-) off has a physical affect on both them and the other. Aside from the verbal and visceral taunting, pointing and physical jabs that may come from any given screaming and growling person towards his or her subjected, and perhaps weakened, listener, this interaction quite literally amplifies and inflates the potential power hierarchies that emerge from any given relationship. As is demonstrated in the image above, we see not only aggressive and defensive positions coming out of any given duel, but also shock in the eyes of the duelers, as they recognize that their own bodies—both natural and prosthetic—and voices and feelings continuously feed back into their, and their opponent's, tangible forms and emotional states. Although mostly playful—you can hear laughter all through the video documentation—this is also a serious investigation of how action, perception and the body itself all co-materialize from a network of interacting agents, rather than one affective source.

The tensions between how each participant affects the other, in sign and material, body-image and body-schema, stasis and continuity, accent the body as—if we take Massumi's definition—virtual. Unforeseen dynamics between suit, opponent, audience, voice, body language, perception, action and reaction become precisely that "reality-generating potential" that emerges from the virtual cusp between possibility and actuality (Massumi 2002: 123). We make and are made from the operational perspective, including our immediate environment and all other acting participants and

resonating objects within its space. Both armor and disarming, protection and provocation (Borland 2002), these suits and their integral howling matches literalize, concretize, intervene in, and make physical our potential anger, bodily networks and both visible and invisible interactions between them: 'social-anatomies.'

Finally and broadly, my art—just as my writing—seeks to interrogate the relationships between the body and other emergent categories, including but not limited to language or self or vision or time. I try to accent and challenge that which is often presupposed in contemporary culture, in order to foster greater dialogue around these complex systems and their relationships to affect and meaning-making. I hope to encourage my audience to investigate the entwined layers of performance and preformism.

My sample work in this paper, *enter:hektor*, is a more literal performance space—viewers enter a large interactive corridor between black and red velvet curtains—where my goal was to frame text and activity as entwined. Inspired by JL Austen's theory of "performative speech acts," participants use an abstracted, real-time projection of their bodies to chase after *hektor's* animated texts, which, when triggered by their outline, are played as spoken word through speakers in the space. They must literally move, bend, extend and stretch to capture *hektor's* continuously mobile phrases, and hear what he and they will say, together.[10] As viewer-participants learn how to perform this space, they move in new ways. Whether they are trying to 'speak,' or doing their best to avoid it, *hektor* forces them to go between the same exaggerated gestures and jerky expressions that he does. I've watched some viewers crawl into a ball and lash out at his words with their arms, others dance and play on the fringes in an attempt to speak quickly and all at once, while still others get up close to the screen and squirm around words, so as not to speak.

Here, my audience is not interrogating what words mean, or how to behave like them as they would in an explicit art work that challenges the body-image. They are rather—and literally—moving between the words, per-forming an emergent world of meaning-making with their body-schema. The space asks viewers to 'leave behind' their everyday performance of self, and attempts to accent each step and movement as a rich, performative gesture: 'body-language.'

These are just three examples of the implicit body as performance within implicit art, and a calling attention to the relations they put in quotes. For me, it's more than a theoretical framework; it's also a critical mode of discussion and production, an artist statement and model of critique. My ongoing research continues to unpack existing work, and what we see or

enter: hektor by Nathaniel Stern, 2000 (updated 2005)
http://nathanielstern.com/2000/enter-hektor/2/

experience in it, in order to foster the next generation of artists in producing new projects that push at the moving, recursive and topological boundaries of flesh and world.

The implications are wide open.

Notes

1 This paper greatly builds on a concept I first introduced with Nicole Ridgway, in a collaborative Chapter entitled "The Implicit Body," for the forthcoming *Cybercultures and New Media* book put out by Rodopi Press. A few short paragraphs are borrowed and edited from said paper.

2 I break down this word as re-member to stress its origins: to embody again.

3 According to Hansen, technicity can be "understood in its broadest sense as a relation to exteriority, as exteriorization" (Hansen 2006: ix).

4 Proffered in JL Austen's posthumously published lectures from 1955 at Harvard, the basic premise is that performative utterances, or "speech acts" are spoken or written words that actually 'do something,' rather than simply describing an event. They perform some kind of action. The most classic example of such an event is a wedding: with the spoken words, "I do," the speaker is transformed from a single person into a spouse. Words literally change his or her ontological state of being. Other easily understood performative possibilities include a declaration of war, to command or forbid, or to 'ask' something of someone, as an act itself. (In his lectures, Austen breaks these down further, into several categorical types, depending on their implementation and on what they accomplish.) More recently, performativity as a concept has been appropriated (and thus redefined) by various disciplines over the last several decades, leading performance studies scholar Richard Schechner to declare it "A Hard Term to Pin Down" (Schechner 2002: 110), and to dedicate an entire chapter in his book, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, to its definition, history and use. He says that as a noun, a performative – which is no longer necessarily spoken – "does something"; as an adjective – such as what Peggy Phelan calls performative writing – the modifier "inflects… performance" in some way that may change or modify the thing itself; and as a broad term, performativity covers "a whole panoply of possibilities opened up by a world in which differences between media and live events, originals and digital or biological clones, performing onstage and in ordinary life are collapsing. Increasingly, social, political, economic, personal, and artistic realities take on the qualities of performance." (ibid.)

5 See footnote 1.

6 See Massumi's chapter "The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason: Stelarc," in *Parables for the Virtual*, for a wonderful reading of his suspensions as, Massumi's term, "sensible concepts." These are the "physical experience of ideas" that manifest as "performance" (Massumi 2002: 89-90).

7 For the purposes of this publication, these case studies have been edited down

from their original, longer versions.

8 Lozano-Hemmer explains that when he uses the word alien, he means something "that's foreign, that's non-contextual, that comes from a disparate plane of experience. Many times I use the word 'alien' to replace the word 'new' as an acknowledgement of the impossibility of originality. When I work in a public space, I don't try to address the 'essential' qualities of the site, as site-specific installations do; rather, I emphasize artificial connections that may emerge from people interacting with alien memories" (Sullivan & Lozano-Hemmer 2002)

9 Here, I borrow from what Deleuze calls the "time-image": severing the connections between situations and actions so that we experience "direct images of time." What Deleuze finds in the time-image is a shift from "the Kantian subject to the decentred subject of postmodernity" (Toole 1993: 227-246). In Mark B.N. Hansen's New Philosophy for New Media, he builds on Deleuze's time-image with his "digital image," which correlates affectivity with a shift from the body as a locus of perception to the body as affective source. Such images enable a subject to experience the "present as a thickness comprised of protentions and retentions," and a past not lived by themselves. Here, time is always a reserve, shot through with unanticipated lines of action, potentialities. This time is always "outside the image," in the interval, and we "must … allow the now of perception to be contaminated with affection; we must identify that threshold with which perception of the flux of an object affects itself and thus generates a supplementary perception, a perception of the flux itself, time consciousness."

10 Also see Stern, Nathaniel. 2000 / 2005. enter: hektor. http://nathanielstern.com/works/interactive/enter-hektor.html.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Reshaping Reason: Toward a New Philosophy
By John McCumber
Indiana University Press, 2005, pp. ix + 263. ISBN 0-253-34503-0.

There is much noise being made in philosophy faculties around the world about the state of philosophy and its direction. Indeed, to a large extent this concern is justified as the all-pervading monster of the natural sciences, its teeth sharpened with the apparent successes of its methods, devours up funds once preened for the lofty heights of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. It seems philosophers are increasingly being forced to defend their art on utilitarian grounds in order to garner the respect, and access the coffers, of their respective institutions. Much of philosophical debate is considered abstruse, whereby the uninitiated need to battle with terminologies just to understand the most basic of points. That said, philosophy is serious stuff, and there should be resistance to any 'dumbing–down' simply for the sake of the inverted intellectual snobberies so prevalent in the Anglophone sphere.

Nevertheless, apart from the now ubiquitous compendia of philosopher trivia and the endless introductory commentaries, there would appear to be very little in the way of popular philosophy which is not tainted with the gush of the New-Age/Self-Help movement. There is, in fact, a large hole in the commercial market for serious but popular philosophical writings. John McCumber's *Reshaping Reason* is an attempt to fill this gap

The full title of this work of 279 pages is *Reshaping Reason: Toward a New Philosophy*, and in it McCumber focuses on trying to establish a positive, revisionist view of reason and then practically applying it to various aspects of our personal, social, and political lives. Apart from the obvious concerns within the Human Sciences about the growing domination of their Natural cousins, he claims that "The events of September 11 had abruptly moved philosophy from the peripheries of the cultural landscape to its exact center, for the suicide attack on the technological symbol of America was ultimately an attack on critical thought itself" (p. ix). Academia needs to respond in times of such crises and appeal to humankind's rational side. However, philosophy has lost this ability, and as a result, "philosophy is under threat and philosophers must explain themselves to non-philosophers or it will die out" (p. 4).

McCumber's extensive knowledge of the canons of both so-called Continental and Analytic traditions has allowed him to present diverse

strands of philosophical argument in simplified form. He uses this knowledge to argue that reason, as hitherto construed, is a shambles. We are, for McCumber, no closer to a definitive answer than when Western philosophy first flourished in ancient Hellas. To be sure, McCumber's background in German philosophy has given him a belief in the power of reason to re-establish order and consensus within philosophy. However, the similarities with the absolutist architechtonics of the *Aufklärer* end here. The goal of *Reshaping Reason* is, no less, to rethink "epistemology, ontology, and ethics" and it will, according to McCumber's preface, be useful to "critical theorists, feminists, queer theorists, and race theorists" and also "therapists and educators of all sorts" (p. xv).

There are three main parts to McCumber's argument and the fourth chapter applies the findings of the previous three to our social and political spheres. In the first chapter, McCumber claims an aporia has developed which is undermining the explicatory goals of philosophy. By explaining the "…underlying agreement between the two sides of the aporia" he hopes to render it as "dubious" (p. 5). The first side is what he terms the domain of the "Fantasy Islanders" (p. 5). The inhabitants of Fantasy Island are said to be cut off from their original goal of searching for that Archimedean point: a point where an unchangeable universal realm of atemporal speculation could finally ground an apodictic philosophical system. Sadly, the years have not been good to the Islanders and all they are left with are the uncomfortable memories of the goals they once pursued (p. 6-7). Truth chasing has lost its bling. Nevertheless, the Islanders continue to search and tangle themselves in ever more obscure philosophical knots, removing themselves ever farther from everyday discourse.

On the other side of the aporia lie the "Subversive Strugglers". Their struggle is described as being a struggle to distance themselves from the Fantasy Islanders. The struggle itself has become their *raison d'être* (p. 6-8). Dissatisfied with the progress of the absolute-truth-chasers they give up the search for any truths, whatsoever. The Strugglers merely revel in the struggle and in doing so remove themselves from any rigorous argument, finding respite only in the opaque depths of their idiosyncratic quarrelling. He adds that it would be easy to view these distinctions as of those between the Analytic and Continental streams, however, "They are tendencies that wrestle within each of us" (p. 8). The problem, and the underlying agreement of the two sides, is their dogmatic take of what the nature of philosophy is. They are "…opposed on the issue of whether unaided argument can yield important truths about anything" (p. 10). The Islanders, of course, are convinced of their Platonic task to ground truth absolutely and, in contrast,

the Strugglers believe this to be impossible. This is the common agreement but as McCumber goes on to ask, "…who gave philosophy the job of establishing truths?" (p. 10). McCumber describes the search for eternal, ergo atemporal, truths as being a disaster for philosophy. Thinking, and by implication philosophy, cannot occur in a vacuum; even the most immediate of decisions requires deliberation, and so truth giving is a judgment which one makes and does not simply execute. McCumber argues that we need to replace the Kantian mind with a temporalized one, "one whose every single component and function has come to be and will pass away, and which has evolved rational tools to cope with the fact. The principles by which those tools operate constitute what I call 'temporal reason'" (p. xi). So, rather than searching for atemporal truths we can assert things of the present as being true of the present:

> The crux of the argument is that traditional philosophical thinking—ie, the philosophical use of various forms of inference—is conducted in the present tense. Its goal and medium is the true assertion (sentence, belief or proposition). True assertions, however, require the simultaneous availability—the "copresence"—of the assertions themselves and whatever it is that makes them true. (p. xii)

We conduct argument in the present tense, and, in lieu of the availability of 'copresence,' we cannot assert eternal truths of the here and now. McCumber spends very little time with this discussion and instead move quickly on with his thesis. The pillorying of truth-tracking as being related to atemporality ignores the great wealth of discussion in the Analytic world on the nature of truth and the relation of the objects [abstract/concrete] to the truth which is being asserted of them. McCumber's argument focuses in on the subjective positing of truth. By avoiding a confrontation with realist or metatphysical realist arguments, arguments which would simply deny the level of subjectivity which McCumber assumes, McCumber risks simplifying truth to a question of Idealist semantics, rather than a true struggle between Idealist philosophies and those who maintain truth is both epistemological *and* metaphysical.

McCumber then turns to address the contortions of the Strugglers. He claims that there are two options for philosophy, either "…to articulate goals for philosophical thought that do not reduce to truth, or to reconceptualize truth itself in more temporal terms" (p. 23). The latter, according to McCumber, is Hegel's and Heidegger's course. That said, he believes them

to be "wrong," nevertheless, he continues, they do have important lessons for those who wish to take the former path. For McCumber, we do have *some* notions of truth and of epistemological surety. When Continental philosophers try to "go beyond" sentence structure, they presuppose the structure they want to abolish (p. 33). McCumber does, however, agree with the Continentals that narrative plays an essential role in our epistemological make-up.

Temporalized reason, McCumber reminds us, is reason which actively incorporates a concocted past in order for us to understand the present, and thus move into the future. The past is read as a story; depending on the present conditions, the story will have different parameters, but we nevertheless construct a story in order to understand ourselves. As a story, thus subject to change ("change is continuous" [p. 45]), the story can only be said to be true as far as it relates to the sphere of my consciousness and within the scope of the situating terms and tropes of the language in which it is necessarily framed. Therewith, McCumber escapes the relativist trap, as he argues that language and the constraints it places on us rebuke the notion of a solipsistic agent, as they are external to the mind which uses them.

In chapter two McCumber discusses the notions of narrative and demarcation as he terms them. As he claims:

> The argument is that the tools of narrative and demarcation… are necessary to a philosophy which seeks self knowledge while remaining faithful to the fact that we are all, in all respects, in time… since, the ways we inhabit time include narrative and demarcation, philosophy itself must not merely study these families of gestures but appropriate them and use them as its tools. (p. 89)

These are, in Kantian terms, McCumber's Categories of the Understanding; categories which make the world reasonable, but are also necessary to us, as it is we who formulate them thus. We learn how to use them by looking to others to see how they are used; as McCumber claims, "…we can learn worthwhile things about thought by looking at how we can thoughtfully join in and belong to a human community" (p. 74). Our narrative is just one among many and they are all part of one big narrative, our perspective on the big narrative does not require a Panopticon but, citing Rawls, the view from eternity is not the view of a transcendent, "rather it is a certain form of thought and feeling that rational persons can adopt within the world" (p. 21). McCumber goes on to stress the existential

importance of this narrative framing, "…adopting a history and opening up to the future are skills that go even beyond the very broad domain of community formation and adherence in general. They are the main ways in which we inhabit time" (p. 78).

In chapter 3 McCumber decries another tendency of philosophy, in this case the tendency of seeking only one ontology to explain all that is. He identifies seven ontologies which have been used in philosophy; each one has mistakenly claimed to be a panacea for all epistemology and metaphysics. The predominant form, as he sees it, is 'ousia' ontology, which he apportions originally to Aristotle; ousia being an ontology where form and matter are essentially linked and that those forms *can* have rigid, atemporal essences. This rigidity, if we compare it with his version of "temporalized reason", as he terms it, cannot function within the world if the world is construed as a rationally constructed and transient narrative. The problem for these ontologies, as he sees it, is that: 1) There is a variety of ontologies in the West; 2) There is no theoretical way to decide among them; and 3) Such decisions get made (p. 126).

Situations change, things change, words change, extensions broaden and intensions acquiesce; these are the realities of McCumber's world and thus any rigid definition of ontology is problematic. As he points out throughout the chapter, some ontologies force us to apply them and others we rather capriciously apportion to objects. Each situation always demands a different response; each situation, in essence, is unique and transient. He continues, "For to clarify and carry forward a situation is not only to locate ourselves within it, but to change that situation itself; it is to construct our situation" (p. 160).

In the final chapter McCumber seeks to apply his new thesis and tools to the personal, social, and political spheres. He first of all attacks the notion of an absolutely atomic self-determining agent. In a radical move, he tries to circumvent classic Libertarian positions by arguing for a freedom which does not "…require us to be aware of all the conditions of our acts, and which does not conceive freedom as a kind of domination" (p. 182). As we can never be aware of all our conditions, it would be fallacious to build an ethics upon such an absolutist ontology. As a base for his quite ambitious claims, McCumber refers to an essay from Tor Nørretranders citing some empirical research, which claims that "decisions are actually made about half a second *before* we are aware of making them" (p.182). This is done in order for him to further characterize ethical decisions "… as the mobilization of interior forces around a course of action" (*ibid*). He then continues to 'back this up' with an even more baffling equivocation

of Kant and Freud when he claims that "both Kant and Freud have taught us, our psychic resources, and the ways they organize themselves, are not necessarily conscious" (*ibid*). He does this without any further breakdown of the so-called empirical research or an explanation of the differences between Freud and Kant. Sadly, McCumber simply pushes on and leaves us to accept these three disparate and unexplained sources as the foundation of his argument. Instead, he urges us to move away from the traditional poles of solely individual causation, perhaps *de rigueur* on the Island, and to an emphasis on society as negating any freedom for the individual, no doubt a maxim under the Strugglers. Ethics is after all not just a list of absolute laws, but "…it comprises the general principles by which life should be navigated, and in particular how individuals and communities should make their way through the human world" (*ibid.*).

After questioning the level of agency each individual possesses, he then goes on to position this 'qualified' individual in its social context. If the personal sphere is where the agent appropriates the narrative and demarcating tools of reason in order to understand itself; the social sphere is necessary as it presupposes the personal. No rational being can live in isolation, thus we are invariably constrained by the symbiotic relationships that dyadic (triadic and so on) encounters give to each agent. We learn, and learn how to learn from each other. Consequently, our narratives take on greater meaning in the nexus of the larger process of history as it unremittingly grinds forward, cruelly crushing our pasts, allowing them to dissipate into the shadows and therewith making way for an unknown-known future, dimly heralded into being by the contiguities of a fleeting present. McCumber goes on to argue, "The very structure of government must be reconceived, which means that a new ontology needs to be found for it" (p. 217). His solution is to argue for a greater public sphere and a more active citizenship. The ideal form of government, he argues, is the American Federal system with its famous 'checks and balances'. Whereby, each branch has the power to scupper the other. McCumber offers very little argument as to why exactly he chooses this system as his ideal. He offers no comparisons, nor any substantial data to support his point. This is somewhat disappointing when one considers the time given to his critique of essentialist ontologies.

The American Federal system suffers, as many governmental systems do, under the threat of commercial faction, ochlocracy, demagoguery, and so on. The European Union, for instance, could provide an interesting comparison to the explicitly nationalist, thus partially essentialist, mandates given to the various democratic states and governments in the world. Whilst

his entire thesis has been about anti-essentialism, he claims the American system is "…far more responsive to time itself than any other governmental system the world has known" (p. 231). This is certainly a strong claim, and one that deserves far more considered debate than what McCumber has provided.

This is first and foremost a popular work, and so it must be on those terms that it is to be read and evaluated. As a philosophical text it simply cannot sustain itself. He skips over a number of important problems in far too flippant a manner, often dropping philosophers' names into contexts in which they do not belong simply to invoke some kudos for his point, i.e. "poor Euthyphro" (p.3), "poor Plato" (p. 5), "poor Kant" (p. 4); Hume is said to have been "wrong on causality," Heidegger was "wrong about Hegel" (p. 111), Plato is described as being Socrates' "faithless young friend" (p. 9) and so on. This unfortunate invective can be read throughout the book and certainly compounds the popular nature of the text and the difficulty in giving it an unqualified recommendation to others in the field.

That said, his book is eminently readable as a light introduction to some of the issues surrounding the great chasms that have emerged between various philosophical tastes. He freely admits that no "single issue raised in this text had received any kind of adequate treatment" (p. 232). That is most certainly the case. Nonetheless, no book can ever fully cover any one question, a painful truism in the world of philosophy. McCumber's work provokes debate about the nature and the direction of philosophy itself, and so, in that sense, it is something of a meta-critique of the quietism many philosophers have resigned themselves to in the face of the encroaching metaphysical-absolutism of the scientific world-view.

As *agent-provocateur*, McCumber's text is indeed a worthy effort, and the popular tone opens up such debate to a wider audience, for this he should certainly be lauded. He offers an urbane and enviable knowledge of the subject matter and an argument which sustains itself at least up until the final chapter, where, as with many theses, it flounders on its practical application. This is, nevertheless, an interesting and engaging read, and if one can ignore some of his more egregiously popular indulgences it will, at very least, ask a number of questions of one's position in relation to philosophy, and in which direction philosophy is headed. Questions we should perhaps be paying more attention to.

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Questioning God
By John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley and Michael J. Scanlon
Indiana University Press, 2001. Pp. ix + 372. ISBN 0253339812.
Hbk £52.00 ($90.00).

Questioning God is a collection of essays on the topic of postmodern theology which were originally presented at a conference held at Villanova University in 1999. This publication is the second in a series entitled 'Religion and Postmodernism', the first being *God, the Gift and Postmodernism* (Indiana University Press, 1999) which is also the result of a conference held at Villanova University. As Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion took centre stage for the first instalment in the series, only Derrida remains for the second, accompanied by twelve other scholars. The obvious danger to such an exercise is for Derrida (who says of himself that he passes for an atheist) and his work to be hijacked and trumpeted as an affirmation of orthodox theism. In the introduction to *Questioning God* the editors sound a pre-emptive note of caution regarding this possibility in warning that "one must resist co-opting Derrida's work for religion" (p. 2) while at the same time pointing out that any philosopher who speaks so fervently about gift, forgiveness, hospitality, friendship, justice, faith and the messianic demands theological attention.

What sets this work apart from the majority of other publications on the subject of postmodern theology and prevents it from descending into a sanctimonious hagiography of Derrida's genius is the presence among the contributors of Graham Ward and John Milbank, two of the founding members of the movement known as *radical orthodoxy*. This present work is the first to document supporters of radical orthodoxy critically engaging with proponents of Derridean deconstruction. The centrality of undecidability and suspicion as critical intellectual tools for the deconstructionists is something radical orthodoxy is itself sceptical of, convinced as it is of the core truth claims of Christianity.

Questioning God is split into two sections, one entitled 'Forgiving' and the other 'God'. However, for the purposes of this review it will be beneficial to ignore this quite arbitrary delineation and instead focus on three sets of essay-response couplets, all of which are examples of the friction evident between radical orthodoxy and Derridean deconstruction. The opening essay entitled "To Forgive: the Unforgivable and Imprescriptible" is from the star of the show, Derrida. In it he draws our attention to a book by Vladimir Jankélévitch entitled *L'imprescriptible* (Editions Du Seuil, 1986). Jankélévitch claims that because the Nazis have never repented for the

Shoah they should not be forgiven for their crimes. According to Derrida such a notion of forgiveness is not forgiveness at all, forgiveness only attains its meaning when it forgives the un-forgivable. Derrida believes that the religious semantics of forgiveness are bound to the notion of repentance and are thus better described as an economy of calculation whereby my forgiveness of the other is merely conditional.

A roundtable discussion follows Derrida's paper, though it is not until John Milbank enters the fray that the discussion attains a bit of intellectual 'bite'. Milbank wonders whether the search for an utterly pure instance of forgiveness, purged of its religious and reconciliatory motifs, is in fact a moralistic egoism craving to be hyper-ethical solely for the sake of it. One can almost feel the tension in the room when Milbank charges Derrida with encouraging a kind of masochistic ethics, to which Derrida responds bluntly, "Masochism?" (p. 65). Milbank attempts his own deconstruction of Derrida by asking him why he does not consider the possibility that his own transcendental framework is not simply an interpretative construction. Derrida accepts he is a transcendental thinker of sorts and states that he is more than happy to hold a transcendental view of forgiveness, indeed such a view of forgiveness is entirely necessary for his overarching project of undermining the logic of sacrifice. The exchange between Milbank and Derrida ends on the question of priority. Milbank argues that priority of love must be given to some (e.g. family) ahead of others (e.g. strangers) by alluding to the Thomistic concept of charity. He believes that Derrida's overly moralistic approach to the issue of priority—exemplified in the *Gift of Death* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) when Derrida asks "why should I look after my own cat and not someone else's?" (p. 17)—makes morality impossible. In response Derrida raises the point that Milbank's position is fertile ground for negative discrimination.

The editors were right to place these two contributions at the beginning of the collection as they provide a good insight into both the themes and tone present throughout the rest of the book. In an otherwise illuminating essay Derrida seems to misinterpret Christian forgiveness, especially in relation to its understanding of the economy between forgiveness and repentance. For Christian theology repentance is not simply a matter of God needing a reason to forgive a person, instead repentance can allow a person to interiorize the forgiveness they receive. By forcing a dichotomy between forgiveness and reconciliation, Derrida ignores the Judeo-Christian origins of forgiveness (the Greeks tied forgiveness to political expedience) and hypostatizes it, making it an *aporia* difficult to reconcile with concrete human life. However, his challenge to Milbank on the issue

of discrimination and priority is a powerful one, and one that seriously questions Milbank's implicit assumption that the value of a person is directly proportionate to how closely related one is to them.

The second couplet is again focused on the issue of forgiveness. Its first part comprises John Milbank's essay "Forgiveness and Incarnation". Milbank argues that strictly human (immanentist) forgiveness is impossible and it is only because of the Incarnation that genuine forgiveness becomes a real possibility. Theological forgiveness sees no reason to rent forgiveness and reconciliation apart from one another. In contrast, Milbank claims that any account of purely immanent forgiveness will face five irresolvable *aporias,* which may be summarized as follows: (a) if I forgive a murderer I betray his other victims, and if I simply forget his crime I avoid the question of forgiveness. Secular forgiveness is tantamount to forgetfulness and as such cannot act as a prolegomenon to authentic peace; (b) I cannot forgive on someone else's behalf, nor in fact can I forgive on behalf of my former victimized self. This is an *aporia* concerning the irreversibility of time and the rootedness in history of past crimes. Crucially for Milbank, Augustine's account of the inseparability of time and memory allows the theological worldview to successfully negotiate this *aporia* by leaving the past open to possible re-narration and hence to an inscription by forgiveness on the tombstone of hate, "Time as remembered in its ontological positivity is only real because it participates in the divine infinite eternal memory" (p. 103); (c) the immanentist conception of forgiveness arrogantly values purity of motive above reconciliation. Christian forgiveness is not simply 'economical' because forgiveness restores charity among creatures and is only possible as an immeasurable gift from infinite divine charity.

In what is the one of the most disappointing essays of the entire collection, Mark Dooley spends the first half of his response, "The Catastrophe of Memory: Derrida, Milbank and the (Im)possibility of Forgiveness", providing the reader with a summary of Milbank's own arguments. When he finally offers an original contribution to proceedings he does make two important points. Firstly, he draws attention to the rigid dichotomy Milbank presupposes to exist between theism on the one hand and secularism and nihilism on the other. Secondly, he points out that Milbank's heavy reliance on the Augustinian account of memory is highly contested by deconstruction's critique of presence—memory is a fragmentary composite of signs, traces, archives and museums which are impossible to disentangle from one another and always to some extent incomplete. Yet the essay has difficulty clarifying the distinction between the possibility-impossibility dynamism inherent in Derridean deconstruction: Dooley seems to contradict himself

within the space of three pages; compare "What inspires deconstruction is the hope against hope—the passionate *faith*—that one day the impossible might become possible" with "What worries Derrida about all this is the fact that it (*the Incarnation and Resurrection*) is predicated upon the belief that the impossible can become possible…" (p. 141-43). He also fails to grapple sufficiently with Milbank's thesis of the five aporias of strictly human forgiveness by offering only a half paragraph towards the end of his essay, the content of which conveniently sidesteps Milbank's argument, "… because we cannot rise from context, divine forgiveness is an impossible dream" (p. 144). Surely Milbank could reply to Dooley by asking if theists are doomed to wade through the swamps of 'context', then what angelic wings are in the possession of the deconstructionists who soar above to announce theirs as a more authentic understanding of forgiveness?

Despite the brevity of Dooley's response to Milbank, the exchange between the two is still quite illuminating. However, the complexity of Milbank's essay, by some distance the most difficult piece in an already challenging collection, means that his many interpenetrating arguments tend to obscure each other and thus lessen the overall impact. As for Dooley, it is unfortunate that he did not take more time to critically examine Milbank's appeal to Augustinian memory, a concept on which Milbank is almost totally dependent. He might well have asked why, if time and memory are inseparable for the human being, is it necessary to safeguard the stability and interdependence of both by appeal to divine memory? Could the stability of time and memory not just as easily be a transcendental of human cognition?

The final couplet to be looked at contains what are probably the two most impressive essays of the entire book. Graham Ward opens his essay "Questioning God" with three questions from three different figures concerning the divine: Job, "Why then do you hide your face and regard me as your enemy?"; Augustine, "What then do I love when I love my God?"; and Derrida, "Is this place created by God? Is it part of the play? Or else is it God himself?" (p. 274). Ward points out that Job's and Augustine's questions spring from a prior relationship of faith in God whereas Derrida's question originates from a completely contrasting *Sitz im Leben*. Ward bemoans the fact that for all the investigations undertaken by Frege, Quine, Putnam, and others into semantics and language there has been a paucity of analysis concerning the logical structure of the question. He tells us that every question presupposes a particular conceptual framework, ontology, orientation towards the field of investigation and also a particular understanding of the relationship between the question and some sort of

possible answer. The point is that a questioning of the deistic God of the Enlightenment or questioning God after Heidegger's critique of onto-theology is not the same as Augustine questioning the triune God of love.

Ward takes exception to the Kantian dualism Derrida sets up in his essay "Faith and Knowledge" (*Acts of Religion*: New York and London, 2002), one between dogmatic and moral religions. This dualism helps to sideline the rationality of faith and paves the way for Derrida to claim that faith in historical revelation can only arrive as an "absolute interruption" (Ward, p. 282; Derrida, 'Faith and Knowledge' p. 99), i.e. as something completely divorced from creation and history and thus divorced from reason also. For Augustine revelation begins with creation and therefore has a necessarily rational and immanent dimension to it.

He also accuses Derrida of confusing the God Augustine worships with the God of a static logocentricism. Only a Kantian type God, i.e. God as regulative idea, can be accused of being a transcendental signifier. Augustine's God is not implicated in this metaphysics because to question God is for him to pray. Hence he accuses Derrida's questioning of being closed to the economy of exchange, to the possibility of receiving a revelatory answer and is instead a self-gratifying exercise in questioning for the sake of questioning. Derrida's is a "hermeneutical meontology" (p. 286) as opposed to Augustine's hermeneutical ontology. For such a scholarly and incisive contribution it is unfortunate that Ward ends on a highly polemical note.

The Derridean apologist John. D. Caputo responds with "What Do I Love When I love My God? Deconstruction and Radical Orthodoxy". Caputo is keen to stress that the undecidability inherent in deconstruction is not the nihilistic polar opposite of Augustine's decidability. Undecidability is the condition of possibility of a decision. Its opposite is decidability, a term Derrida first learned of in relation to Gödel's theorem about the undecidability of formal systems. If a decision is decidable in this sense then all that is needed is an algorithm, certainly not human involvement. So the difference between Augustine and Derrida is that Augustine decides on a specific and determinate historical name for the object of his faith, hope and love, and that for Derrida, far from revelling in the vainglorious undecidability of aesthetic questioning, faith, hope and love can always be determined otherwise.

One of the strengths of Caputo's paper is his clear and sincere presentation of the goals which inspire deconstruction. He summarises deconstruction under two movements: (1) *historical association*: we must always remember that we belong to a certain tradition or set of traditions from which we

inherit both limiting and possibilizing horizons; (2) *messianic dissociation*: because of historical association we must beware the constant threat that our tradition may become petrified and sustained by violence. Therefore, we must dissociate ourselves from the determinate names contained in the tradition in order to prevent these names from becoming too limiting and perhaps even vehicles for violence. That is why deconstruction constantly keeps watch for that which is yet to come, for another possible reincarnation of justice and love. It is an eschatology without escathon.

Though one of the highlights of the entire work, Caputo's essay poses as many questions as it answers. Why is it that a tradition must surrender its faith in a determinate figure so that this proper name does not become distorted? Francis Schüssler Fiorenza has argued convincingly in *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York, 1984) on behalf of a type of hermeneutical theology which, via an appropriation of Rawl's 'reflective equilibrium', can act as a corrective to the distortions of a faith while maintaining faith in a determinate revelation. Caputo is convinced that deconstruction is necessary for the renewal of authentic love and justice, yet does not the indeterminacy of deconstruction act as a serious impediment to its hopes of recognizing justice and love, and hence renewing them? If justice and love do not possess sufficient determinate content then they are in danger of being dismissed as 'merely' poetic speculation. Turning to Ward, in his attempt to place Augustine beyond the criticisms of modern and postmodern philosophy of religion, he seems to have unwittingly surrendered intellectual ground to those who claim faith is irrational. The God of the philosophers may not be the God whom Augustine worships but it is the God most readily available to reason—notwithstanding the fact that a complete separation of philosophy from theology is itself the consequence of a kind of (a)theological understanding of reason.

Among the other essays of note in this volume is Richard Kearney's synopsis of his work *The God Who May Be* (Indiana University Press, 2001), an absorbing although ultimately confused attempt to place God between onto-theology and radical eschatology by redefining him as *possest,* or possibility-to-be. Elsewhere Kevin Hart's "Absolute Interrruption" is a well executed piece on the dynamics of faith but one which draws a forgettable response from Derrida.

All in all, *Questioning God* does a good job of just that. It may not maintain a consistently high quality throughout and the work as a whole does suffer a little from some unnecessary complexity and esotericism. But these criticisms do not negate the considerable achievement of providing a platform for a stimulating encounter between radical orthodoxy and

deconstruction. One of the few things that radical orthodoxy and Derridean deconstruction have in common is that neither thinks faith and reason oppose each other, but as *Questioning God* shows, for quite different reasons.

University College Dublin *Thomas Finegan*

The Future for Philosophy
Edited by Brian Leiter.
Oxford Clarendon Press, 2004. Pp. x + 357. ISBN 019920392X.

The first decade of a new century of academic philosophy would seem as good a time as any for a taking-stock of the last century and some cognizant speculation as to how the discipline is likely to develop in the coming years. Brian Leiter, in his editorial comments for his anthology, *The Future for Philosophy,* construes this project in thoroughly metaphilosophical terms and adduces myriad pertinent contexts for philosophy's self-reflection. We are to understand that the self-reflection of philosophy, in terms of its past, present or future, will characteristically have claim to being philosophy in its own right and warrant consideration as having substantive philosophical content independent of more specific sub-disciplines. On the other hand, Leiter notes the intrinsic metaphilosophical character of the self-aware contribution to any philosophical field: in writing within a philosophical community, one takes up a position relative to that discourse, and this must be accompanied by an awareness of the context in which one is writing and what one hopes to contribute to that discourse.

Leiter is therefore equipped with a rationale by which to admit any sort of philosophical work into his anthology on metaphilosophical grounds. If it is explicitly about philosophy, says Leiter, then it is appropriate for inclusion. If it is not explicitly about philosophy, Leiter suggests, all philosophical texts are really about philosophy in some sense anyway and so again, it may be included. On certain readings this insight is sound and ought to license a certain latitude in terms of subject matter in order to allow for richness of thematic content. And in many respects, this is the spirit in which this anthology is collected and towards which it makes a valiant effort. However, on certain points, Leiter's principle for selection of materials is too lenient and the anthology suffers from a resultant dilution in terms of its overall theme.

The editor's introduction is a comprehensive survey of the themes upon which each of the thirteen essays is to touch, and he provides a satisfactory overview of them. It is heavily cited and most informative; it is perhaps the most explicit reflection on the state of philosophy to be found in the volume. It offers views of philosophy in terms of the late collapse of the analytic/continental distinction, the takeover of continental scholarship by analytic philosophy, the renewed historicizing of analytic philosophy and the analysis of style and subject matter in analytic and continental trends. Leiter discusses philosophy's new pluralist paradigm, the mutual

interdependence of practice and theory, the mutual interdependence of philosophy and metaphilosophy, the interdependence of philosophy in history and history of philosophy. He references recent debates on new ways of taxonomizing philosophical disciplines, the institutionalization and the professionalization of philosophy and the perils of overspecialization within philosophy. He also makes mention of popular myths about philosophy and takes these as a portal into issues about philosophy's self-conception, the state of the field, and philosophy's public image. In fact, beside the introduction, a review offering a general summary of themes in the volume runs the risk of redundancy; what is left to this reviewer is an assessment of whether or not Leiter's portrait of how the anthology hangs together is true to fact, or whether, and in what ways, the collection is more diffuse than this.

The first two essays comprise a thematic pairing: they are both reflections on the history of philosophy, and both of them take this opportunity to reflect on the role of the history of philosophy within philosophy itself. The interplay between ways of understanding historical philosophy, and the philosophy discovered therein, we learn, stands to reinvigorate contemporary inquiry. Julia Annas' contribution outlines first a history of the scholarship of ancient philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century and uses this to set out the problematic of the study of ancient philosophy as we receive it. A tension is suggested between studying ancient philosophy *as if* it were contemporary philosophy (which runs the risk of anachronism) and studying it in context as a historical text (which strays all too often into endless philology). Annas suggests that the dialectic between these two tendencies constitutes one of the central impetuses of what was the burgeoning field of ancient philosophy and accounts in some part for the reintroduction of a historical awareness back into the traditionally ahistorical Anglo-American tradition of the twentieth century, an awareness which has only made English-speaking philosophy more articulate.

Don Garrett isn't afraid to explore the several complexities that the consideration of philosophy in a historical context elicits and, in his account of the role, history, and methodology of the study of modern philosophy (philosophy from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries), he identifies distinct, simultaneous studies that must be pursued in any inquiry into the philosophies of the past; these include the history of the history of modern philosophy, the philosophy of the history of modern philosophy, the philosophy of the history of the history of modern philosophy and the history of the philosophy of the history of modern philosophy. Needless to say, this isn't casual reading, and Garrett's obtuse style does not help

matters. But his labours bear intriguing fruits and, in brief, he identifies four objectives discernable within the methodology of the history of philosophy: *contextualisation, interpretation, evaluation* and *application.* According to Garrett, all four ought to be honoured when doing philosophy of history, but in proportions relative to the ultimate purpose of the undertaking. Garrett's essay is a valuable contribution to metaphilosophy, too, because it proffers a systematic methodology for approaching analytic philosophy's emergent history, a history which, as it recedes, will present more and more contextual and interpretative problems.

Leiter's own contribution, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche and Freud," appears first as being somewhat overambitious. Suggesting that these three thinkers are to be considered the paradigm "philosophers of suspicion," who each, in his own way, advocated suspicion of "our conscious understandings and experience," whether in political, ethical or psychological domains (p.74). Leiter argues that recent interpretations have tried to suppress the positive claims of each of these philosophers and have instead subsumed them under a moralizing lens. This view prefers to draw on them in terms of what they can tell us in justificatory argument than to put stock in the veracity of their respective systems.

His goal is to rejuvenate their positive claims, rehabilitating them as "naturalist thinkers" (p. 77), who ought to be taken seriously. To this end, he engages recent Marx scholarship, for instance, seeking to suggest how Marx might not have been misguided, as recent criticism tends to suggest, that the proletariat will at some point inevitably revolt. The strain of synthesizing three diverse thinkers under one scheme begins to show when he gets down to the actual analysis. Where Leiter is faithful to the scholarship of his three writers, his claims are banal and where his claims are more substantive, he crucially misrepresents the tradition to which he is responding. Leiter is also intemperate; in three supposedly benign examples of the Gettier problem he takes colourful swipes at the George W. Bush administration, fundamentalist belief systems, and the phenomenon of theism. While one isn't inclined to impugn his sensibilities, the essay might have stood on its own without such interjections. Nevertheless, Leiter's ambitions here are interesting and pertinent to an era where scientific research increasingly offers challenges to received commonsense notions, and the overall impression of the piece is of a good conclusion which hasn't found the right argument yet, nor the appropriate exponent.

Timothy Williamson, in his article, cautions against the abandonment of the insights of the 'linguistic turn' of the twentieth century, lest the

diminished attention to the sense in which language lays hold of our empirical observations hamper in some respect the linguistically naïve, empirical naturalism of the contemporary period. His analysis of the problem of vagueness and how this supports his critique is technical, nuanced and difficult to dispute. Nevertheless, his essay presages a general move away from explicitly metaphilosophical content within the collection. It is hard to see how this work might not have been more appropriately anthologized in a volume dealing with the philosophy of science, or of language. Williamson attempts to couch the exploration in terms that justify its inclusion and ends the piece with suggestions for how his argument might affect the development of the field. But these observations are not substantially different from the contextualising statements of any piece of philosophy and they don't quite warrant its inclusion here.

This trend continues into the next thematic pairing: that of Jaegwon Kim's and David Chalmers' contributions concerning the philosophy of mind. Both are fine monographs on the state of play in the philosophy of mind, and both identify clearly their respective intentions, and follow through well and with solid, convincing authority. But neither contributes substantively to the metaphilosophical theme of the volume, nor do they justify their being included here. Kim recapitulates on his work in the philosophy of mind and on the standing challenge to reduce consciousness to a lower level theory as the best defense against eliminativism. Interestingly, he revises his own position on the reducibility of consciousness and suggests a fruitful avenue of inquiry that might make use of both scientific and phenomenological accounts. These remarks are not expanded upon enough, however, to satisfy the anthology's charter. Chalmers' construal of the central themes within philosophy of mind in terms of a historical reading of different forms of representationalism all has about it the feel of a worthy article within the philosophy of mind. Unfortunately, it refuses to offer implications outside its field in terms of interdisciplinary avenues, the role of philosophy, or of the future of philosophy broadly conceived.

For similar reasons, we may pass over in brief Nancy Cartwright's history of the notion of causality in the philosophy of science and its emergent heterogeneity in response to careful analysis. We must also neglect Thomas Hurka's elegant account of the history of normative ethics and his critique of ethical foundationalism.

However, the book does contain some excellent metaphilosophical efforts, and it is to these we will now turn. In the nascent field of social epistemology, there are two valuable contributions. Alvin Goldman argues for an interdisciplinary research project united under the banner of 'social

epistemology,' since the disparate efforts at those goals by, variously, social anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists on the one hand, and socially-minded epistemologists on the other, haven't managed to give it a distinctive mandate within the academy. Goldman suggests that the crucial contribution that might be made by philosophical epistemologists to such a field is a *veritistic social epistemology* which makes central a concern with the issues important to philosophical epistemologists, such as *truth* and *justification.* These concepts, says Goldman, all run the risk of being left out of a sociologically-dominated social epistemology, since within sociology notions like 'truth' are considered vacuous, in line with a domain-wide, principled belief-relativism. Goldman's numerous examples, from science as a social activity, to judicial matters, to the question of authority on the internet and in terms of competing experts, produce convincing justification for his project. Also of note is the suggestion that a normative account of social epistemology, like that of Wilfrid Sellars, might become an indispensable aid to such a project. The philosophy of normativity in general is one earmarked here for future growth within philosophy – a topical recognition. In light of this, and the interdisciplinary scope of Goldman's suggestion, the article fits well into the anthology's overarching theme.

Similarly, Philip Kitcher's article tackles the sciences directly and takes the various social critiques of them in the twentieth century as constituting a useful global context in which to found them. His project envisages a more concrete place for the sciences within society, and sees such an arrangement as making explicit the political commitments of science, which, according to thinkers like Feyerabend, are, in the current state of affairs, ignored or concealed to the detriment of the sciences. Kitcher's inquiry takes the shape of asking "what are the ends (goals) of the sciences" (p.210), and finding a heterogenous set of answers to this question, Kitcher proposes a social-contractarian-style reorganization of the sciences, wherein their goals are finding "true answers to those questions that would strike particular groups as significant if they worked out their collective will in an ideal deliberation" (p.228). In his picture, this requires a self-reflective capacity on the part of scientists, so that they may best represent their goals in the inquiry, and an interested engagement on the part of a wider society in the deliberation about which goals ought to be considered more important, since it is not given *a priori* which type of goal we ought to endorse. Kitcher's inclusion is justified by the following: the scope of his proposal (which offers a reconception of philosophy), the synthesis of social philosophy and philosophy of science and the creative use of the social critique of science

to fortify scientific endeavor as a reconceptualized social institution.

Peter Railton's "Towards an Ethics that Inhabits the World" attempts a similar reorientation of ethics in the light of recent philosophy, such as that of Gilbert Harman and John Doris. Railton advises that ethics take seriously the findings of social psychology and graduate to a causal/explanatory model of ethical behaviour, which takes account of the actual nature of human beings before normative questions are addressed. He feels that recent disgruntled noises from within the virtue-ethics tradition suggest that we are seeing the resumption of the old dichotomy between *explanation* and *understanding* in ethics, this time with the sides split between empirical science and normative ethics. Instead, Railton sees an opportunity for the field of ethics to grow from the collapse of that dichotomy, allowing both normative and causal accounts to contribute to an ethical philosophy which has more practical relevance to the world in which people live.

Rae Langton's contribution to the book is an attempt to look at feminism across the split between analytic and continental philosophies during the twentieth century, and she takes into account two varieties of feminism which have tended towards mutual antagonism, both sporting different methodologies and substantial interests. She considers how the notion of "projection" (p.286), used by French philosophers such as Luce Irigaray to analyze the sexual objectification of women in pornography and society at large, might complement the analytic feminist's traditional concern with the analysis of the curtailment of "autonomy" (p.285). In the process, Langton subsumes both approaches under a Kantian framework, which reveals their complementary qualities. Langton's paper can be seen as supplementing Leiter's, in that ultimately she suggests that a healthy suspicion ought to accompany any hermeneutic of sexual politics in society. Furthermore, her transatlantic scope echoes Leiter's own sympathies for looking on the analytic/continental split as being a thing of the past. Langton's contribution, however, is entirely more accomplished, and this makes more evident the metaphilosophical content of the offering.

Finally, Philip Pettit's "Existentialism, Quietism and the Role of Philosophy" finishes the collection with perhaps the most metaphilosophical reflections of all the contributions, attempting to redefine the role of philosophy in the light of its current position, poised between the unrealistically radical demands of existentialist strands of philosophy (which Pettit also takes to include Churchlandian eliminative materialism) and the anti-theoretical stance of the Wittgensteinian quietists. Taking as his context the metaphilosophical frameworks of Edmund Husserl and Wilfrid Sellars, Pettit argues for a conception of philosophy as the reflective

tendency which grows out of commonsense theory-like conceptions and the practice in which those theory-like conceptions are actualized. As Sellars would have it, the Scientific Image of Man grew out of the Manifest Image and then in important senses was forced to challenge it. Pettit sees the existential and quietist tendencies as reactions to this challenge, the quietists siding with the manifest image at the expense of all theory, and the existentialists advocating the abandonment of the commonsense frameworks in favour of the newer, systematic ones. Pettit sees neither of these options as particularly fruitful. In a rather Sellarsian move, he argues for seeing the role of philosophy as being a sort of meditation on this scenario: conciliating these two poles, adjudicating their correctness relative to certain types of inquiry and not to others, and partitioning for philosophy itself the space in which it might do this - in which it might take its place as the Husserlian ideal of mankind's self reflection. As the concluding sentiment in the anthology, this deserves applause.

As what is explicitly a metaphilosophical anthology, *The Future for Philosophy* deviates from its mandate, but is nonetheless a stimulating survey of the state of philosophy, which offers a substantive, pluralistic vision of the possible paths of development it is likely to take in the next half century. Midway through, the book undergoes a marked slump in relevance to the overarching topic of concern, although as standalone works each of these papers can be considered worthy additions to their fields. While failing to quite patch up this disparity, Leiter's editorial defense of this deviation, as outlined earlier, does manage to construe the volume in a latitudinarian, dialectic spirit, and this inclines us to overlook the editorial shortcomings in favour of the broad themes it *does* manage to pick out. Far from indispensable, Leiter's effort presents a heterogeneous range of essays, eclectically gathered, which will be of interest to the generalist and which is bound to offer some novel ideas to the determined reader.

University College Dublin *Fionn Dempsey*

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Fionn Dempsey holds a BA in Philosophy and Classics from University College Dublin, and has recently completed an MA at the School of Philosophy. He has recently submitted his dissertation, which takes a position contrary to Saul Kripke's on the reference of proper names. He also holds a Diploma in Speech and Drama, and his interests range from the philosophy of language to the philosophy of drama. He is currently working in the capacity of Editorial Assistant with the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*. He hopes to pursue research on anti-realism within the philosophy of language, and also has an interest in developing a phenomenological actor-theory.

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David Heywood-Jones is currently examining the philosophy of J. G. Fichte in the hope of detangling some of his historically underrated texts and to place his core arguments in a more modern philosophical context. He hopes to critically set out the basic tenets of Fichte's Jena years, 1793-99, whilst examining possible implications those foundations may have for modern ethical discourse vis-à-vis an absolutist ethics with an immanent ontology. Other projects include an investigation of the links between philosophies in the Third Reich and the effect they had on the work of Edmund Husserl, in particular his *Crisis of European Sciences*. He is

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Sergio Levi studied philosophy in Milan, Geneva and New York, and obtained his PhD degree in philosophy from the University of Milan in 2002 with a thesis on the problem of action. He published a book on Donald Davidson (Soggetti sottintesi, Milan, 2001) and one on Spinoza (Libertà e azione nell'etica di Spinoza, Milan, 2006). He has translated books by A. Clark, J. Fodor, I. Hacking, D. Davidson, D. Dennett, and A. Appiah into Italian. His research interests range from affective neuroscience and religious cognition to applied and normative ethics to the political role of emotions.
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Gail Weiss is Director of the Human Sciences graduate program and Professor of Philosophy at The George Washington University. Her areas of specialization include phenomenology and existentialism, feminist theory, and philosophy of literature. She is the author of *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (Routledge 1999), and co-editor of *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Penn State Press 2006), *Thinking the Limits of the Body* (SUNY 2003) and *Perspectives on Embodiment: The Intersections of Nature and Culture* (Routledge 1999). Her newest monograph, *Refiguring the Ordinary* is forthcoming from Indiana University Press and a new edited volume, *Intertwinings: Interdisciplinary Encounters with Merleau-Ponty*, is forthcoming with SUNY Press. She is currently working on a monograph on Simone de Beauvoir entitled, *Beauvoir's Ambiguities: Philosophy, Literature, and Feminism* and has published numerous journal articles and book chapters on philosophical and feminist issues related to human embodiment.

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