**THE TRAGEDY OF BEING:
GENEVIÈVE CADIEUX, DONIGAN CUMMING, EVERGON AND
REPRESENTATION OF OTHER BODIES**

By

Jennifer Howes

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In Canadian Art History

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Evergon and Representation of Other Bodies**

Submitted by Jennifer Howes, B.A. Honours (Carleton University)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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Jennifer Howes

Bodies are performative, transparently acting out gender roles designated and coerced by patriarchal structures. In representation and language, heterosexual white men are inscribed as seeing, speaking agents, while homosexual, non-white and feminine others appear in lacking affirmation of masculine privilege. Yet what happens when bodies transgress constitutive signs? This is the subversive model of Sophocles' *Antigone*, a problematization of gender that Geneviève Cadieux, Donigan Cumming and Evergon privilege in photographic representations of the body. This thesis addresses these artists' abject strategies of intervention through psychoanalytic, film, and queer theory, and more broadly linguistics. Employing concepts of masquerade, the impossibility of the phallus is revealed, while the politics of looking is raised through surface modifications of the veil. Furthermore, silent and shifting voices interrupt and dislocate a language that cannot articulate pain, as the sensory shatters stereotype through abjection, offering a possibility of reconciliation through caress.

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*N.B. All images have been generously provided courtesy of the artists: Evergon, Donigan Cumming, and Geneviève Cadieux in co-operation with Galerie René Blouin. **

* Figures 2.4 and 2.5 were acquired through the National Gallery of Canada.

Introduction

Phantasies slip in and through us, shifting with ever-changing consciousness, in momentary becomings and fadings. We produce our realities imposing individual subjectivities upon them, perceiving and rearticulating outward signs within inward contexts. Victims and judges, rejecting and affirming environments, both insider and other, we are moralists enacting a personal ethics. Meaning is always multiple, our position colouring the encounter in a self-fulfilling desire. Material is devoid of corruption. It is inanimate, dead. Choices are made in blood. Consider this work an attempt to impose myself on you, bleeding abjectly into your subjectivity. My project is one of ethics, my desire to see the body resilient and fierce, finding autonomy in the subversive strategies of masquerade and scopic disruption, speech and sensation.

Geneviève Cadieux, Evergon and Donigan Cumming offer photographic representations of the body, bodies that I will stake claims for. No doubt their work describes personal understandings of corporeality, but you and I will know meaning only in our proximity to the artists' bodies, our likeness, our difference, our approximation of one another's subjectivities. I invite you to look between image and text, body and world, locating yourself as embodied subject.

The works of Cadieux, Evergon, and Cumming have been variously written about, sometimes engaging in history, at others, drawing upon theory. Cadieux's bodies have largely been examined in their relationship to surface and voice, within a psychoanalytic and cinematic framework. Inquiries into the nature of queer identities, and a parallel counter-culture mythology, have been prevalent ways to approach Evergon's

production. While Cumming's art has been situated as a critical intervention into the social documentary tradition, suggesting the fiction of fact through contrived poses, and vision's friction with voice. Although a historiography of writings on the artists' work is outside the scope of my thesis, let me now familiarize you with some of the literature that has been engaged with their aesthetics.

Writings on Cadieux have been driven by thematic concerns, most likely due to her small production, tightly interwoven, yet expansive in ideas. As such, literature on the artist is best understood within topical groupings, rather than as a chronological detail. Notions of language, surface and intimacy have been pivotal points of exploration in Cadieux's work. Contributing to two catalogues, Chantal Pontbriand has written of the images in Lacanian terms, as the object of the other's gaze in 1990, and later in 1999, more specifically on the gap of communication in language, the unheard cry for love. Likewise, Jacinto Lageira, Gilles Godmer and Annelie Pohlen have investigated surface markings, positioning bodies as both absent and present, near and far, as photographic skin. While Laurence Louppe and Scott Watson have distanced surface from meaning, moving it outside of the visible.

Turning to Evergon, two of the more significant writings on the artist have been essays for retrospective exhibitions. Martha Hanna wrote the first for the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in 1988. It was intended to accompany an exhibition of work from the artist's beginnings in 1971 to his most recent creations at that time in 1987. Sequentially discussing his production, Hanna spoke of Evergon's transition from private to public symbols of homosexuality in art. In the 1997 exhibition

catalogue for the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, England, Will Stapp continued the time line from Hanna, dealing with the period, 1987-1997. Celebrating the works Evergon produced during his Fellowship there, and before, Stapp attempts to provide context and key features of the series to complement Evergon's own writings on the empowering use of the perverse aesthetic. In a further collection of essays, produced to coincide with his 1995 display at the Ottawa Art Gallery, Jean-François Renaud, Bruce Hugh Russell, Louis Cummins and Alain Framboise variously discuss Evergon's unstable identity, use of fiction and homoerotic desire; the specificity of a queer culture emerging from a homophobic paranoia that has repressed its visibility; and a Duchampian-type claim to a fabricated history and pornography as high art.

Finally, in respect to the last artist of the group, readings of Donigan Cumming have been mixed in nature. The only consistent feature in the analysis is the consideration of the moral implications of Cumming's images. Clara Gutsche has understood his work to be exploitative of his models, while George Bogardi could simultaneously see it as a co-operative effort, a relationship between model and photographer. A later catalogue (1986) produced by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, has its authors Martha Langford and Robert Graham, positioning it within a documentary tradition, necessarily tainted by personal fictions and its use in the designation of social class. In 1993, with the artist's ever increasing expansion into multi-media works and film, Nicole Gingras situated his work as an intersection between voice and vision, in the destabilizing effects of identities that will not be contained. Patrick Roegiers observed in the same catalogue, designed for the Art Gallery of Windsor's exhibition, the intentional display of

horrors of the everyday. Here, his thoughts came close to the artist's own desire of forcing the look upon the human abject which Cumming expressed in the 2000 publication, "Continuity and Rupture."

With no intended disrespect towards these rich monographic writings, the analysis is isolated, deeply invested within a single project. So many possibilities remain for contextual relations. As such, despite the artists' divergent interests and sense of aesthetics, a potent concern at the level of body and identity informs their work on the whole. Each positioning his/her subject as other, they are in opposition to an oppressive phallic vision and language, the authority of such structures that they seek to counter or undermine. Hence, Cadieux's images of the injured body, and violent distortion of the print that comprises its surface as symbol, indicate the offense, simultaneously reinvesting bodies with subjectivity. Evergon's playful homoerotic approach of fantasy, characterizes all identity as performative. And Cumming mockingly mimes the altruistic conventions of social documentary, forcing the presumed authoritative viewer to confront those pushed into abjection. Facing the viewer with the obscenities that an imposed identity of otherness has effected, each artist moves ethics to the fore. Together, they find power in the repetition of gender, in the echo of violence. Through their mimetic chorus, they show identity as reproducible, validating their demands for recognition of subjectivity, for change. As such, this thesis finds a place outside the monographic literature, as a strategic organization of voices, harmonized in the realization of the larger project of identity (re)formation.

It is in this approach of multiplicity, where my research finds its basis. The different concerns informing each artwork have allowed me access to the writing of various disciplines, as well as those from a decidedly interdisciplinary position, and in their intersection, to a lateral way of thinking. In this theoretical piggybacking, new and innovative ideas may emerge between image and text. In a Venturian “more is more” dynamic, the concurrent occupation of multiple ideas within a single representation opens discourse, allowing a greater autonomy for the image. Rather than suggest the photographs to be the contents of theory, I will assert that they overflow it. Talking back, they converse with not only text but with one another. What the artists purport to say exceeds the scope of my discussion. I leave that inquiry for another. Rather, my thesis finds meaning at theoretical points of juncture, be they conscious or inadvertent.

In this round-table discussion, I introduce various speakers. Addressing gender on a most general level, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, and Judith Butler play a pivotal role here in situating gender roles, and in the case of the latter two, ways in which they can be (re)formed or subverted. Conversing with Father Freud who is a ghostly presence throughout, Lacan positions psychoanalytic structures of gender within the symbolic sphere of language. Here, male and female function in relation to an ideal phallic centre, the former appearing to have the phallus, the latter supporting his claim through her lack. Because he understands gender to be rooted in the symbolic, his findings place it as construct, and by implication suggest the possibility of reconstruction. As such, the gap he establishes acknowledges slippage between the body and its cultural codification. Therefore, it functions as both a precedent, and validation, of a feminist discourse that

seeks to undermine biologically determined gender roles. Irigaray takes up this argument, suggesting a need for a language that possesses a feminine *spécificité*. She argues that while language is articulated in masculinist terms, the woman will remain an oppressed object of it, without voice, or means of challenging it. Also concerned with a language conceived in masculine heterosexual terms, Butler seeks to intervene in, rather than supplant its structure. She realizes this strategy in terms of acting or performance in language. Suggesting that speech continually reconstitutes meaning within language, Butler sees context as a means of subverting and reclaiming its dehumanizing daggers. The proud reclamation of the word “queer” by the homosexual community, most clearly exemplifies her approach. It is through these scholars that I will primarily navigate the terrain of the imaged bodies, finding sites of intersection.

But to claim this as the extent of my inquiry is not enough. The inclusion of Evergon within my three-artist survey was far from an arbitrary act. Representations of bodies, motivated by the artist’s queer or homosexual identification, seem fundamental in an inquiry into gender formation. Sexual desire for the other, within a heterosexual context, has the nagging trait of reaffirming conventional gender roles. Thus the introduction of bodies desiring the same is an important mirror to hold up to that model, if only to indicate its false claims to signify the natural order. As such, looking to Mark Simpson, Lee Edelman, Judith Butler, and Leo Bersani, I attempt to examine ways in which the queer/homosexual body intervenes in these normative models. Themes of simultaneous presence and absence emerge, situating the body sometimes marked in the excess of drag or in Evergon’s “power” of sexual perversion, locatable but crossing

uncouth borders, and at others, veiled, blending with the assumed masculine heterosexual body, nowhere and everywhere. When confronted with castration, the queer male is never uneasy, always confident that his sex is intact, not needing the validation of a symbolic heterosexual order.

But this is not the case for the woman, her body necessarily marking her as other. While language and vision remain entrenched in an ancient discourse of the paternal, the woman will be an injured body, only able to function through a façade, a masquerade. Protective veiling must cover what is too masculine, her agency. Cinema provides a rich source of methods for resistance. As such, I draw on the writings of Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane, and Kaja Silverman, in search of parallels between film and photography, how strategies in one inform the other. Vision's complicity in the objectification and commodification of the female body, come to be resolved in terms of Mulvey's deflation of visual pleasures and Doane's protective retention of the body, offering it as no more than surface plane. Likewise, properties of voice are investigated by Silverman, who understands the recognition of voice and body as singular, always to be a suture. As such, the gap affords a place where identities may blur the boundaries of coherent bodies.

A slightly abject notion in its multiplicity and implied possibility of transgression, I employ the insights of Julia Kristeva in this recurrent theme. Structure of any sort is conditionally exclusionary. It places bodies within or without, but never at a Deleuzian position of "both/and". Most certainly a concept that surfaces in any discussion of gender identity, Kristeva's notion of the abject is important to my inquiry into the sensory body. A body that is driven by the desire to remove itself from the enslaving intent of vision

and language, it will deny a masculine injury through its relocation. Seeping through boundaries of gender, it fluidly shifts between same and difference in a binary structure that will not accommodate movement. Thus, injurious acts implicate their assailant in the final blow, for in his violence he has struck something of himself.

Thus culling from a wide array of theories, touching on ideas emerging from the fields of psychoanalysis, feminism, queer/homosexual studies, cinema and more loosely linguistics, I offer an open, subjective, and sometimes, contradictory approach to viewing the representations addressed here. The plurality of sources is intended to indicate not only historical understandings of gender identity, but to conceive of what those identities might yet be. As such, I attempt to allow each image a space of its own, always negotiating its juncture with the literature as a meeting of equals, a place to reconcile past, present and future.

The methodology that I employ in my exploration of the body is largely an extension of the theory that informs it. But the way that I would like you to conceive of my project may at first seem radical, straddling boundaries of the orthodox. Be forewarned that you are my partner. Meaning cannot be made without your presence by my side. Rather than assert my thesis within a categorical approach, I ask you to give yourself over to my fiction, permitting me to return you to classical times. Here we will find a mother, an ally, a place from which contemporary gender identities may begin to be shaken. The gender subversive art of Cadieux, Cumming and Evergon is not an origin, but a legacy, one that periodically seeps through weakened orders of the state, acting up and acting other.

Allow my voice to become Antigone's, and lift yours to the body of Kreon. If my allusion escapes you, the reference is to Sophocle's Greek tragedy *Antigone*, known through its familiar Hegelian reading as the collision of family and state.¹ Here, the female body is the iconic source of crisis as she is exterior to community, her interests independent and antithetical to it. But as subsequent scholars, and Hegel to some degree, have acknowledged, gender-designated roles in the play do not neatly conform with such a schism.² They transgress. As such, "Antigone" may be understood as an inquiry into abject perversions of identity. To borrow a title from one of Judith Butler's books, it is "gender trouble" embodied. Unstable beings, crossing boundaries and laws, they perform deeds in the name of family and state, outside the arena which such structures permit.

Possessing a striking sense of currency in its themes of identity and the problematization of gender, the story has been taken up through the century by Lacan, Irigaray and Butler, among others, all viewing it in very divergent ways. As the daughter of Oedipus, her father the basis for Freud's theory of sexual identity formation, scholar George Steiner begs the question of how psychoanalysis might have been if Antigone had been its impetus.³ And as such, its re-emergence as a means of critique of the former seems to indicate what might yet be. The discourse becomes an updated echo of the heroine's actions, subversively burying the injured bodies of feminism, returning soul to

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, "The Ethical Order: Spirit" *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 288.

² Judith Butler, "Antigone's Claim" *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 5.

³ Judith Butler, "Promiscuous Obedience" *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 57.

body like Antigone's burial of her brother. Thus, the story of "Antigone" provides a framework through which to identify gender construction, the structures of family and state that sustain it, and a model of resistance.

The story commences in death, at the end of a war that has resettled power in the hands of the invaded. Antigone's brothers, assailant and assailed in one, have been claimed by the battle. Yet one remains unburied, body strewn on the earth in punishment for his trespass. With Eteokles both King and brother dead, Antigone's Uncle Kreon assumes the throne, decreeing an edict forbidding the burial of his nephew, the aggressor Polyneices. But ruled by her position within the family, outside the state, Antigone will not honour this law. Asserting the divine right of burial, she insists it is a matter exceeding state authority. And so disorder begins.

Antigone defies not only state law in the name of her brother, but assumes a position of conscious agency that is antithetical to the will of masculine authority signified by Kreon. As Irigaray suggests, Antigone's insistence on acting in the name of her brother is significant because the two characters mirror one another.⁴ Antigone will only die for her brother, as she claims that with her parents gone, he is irreplaceable. Yet, this is not quite all. Irigaray suggests a particular bond with this brother, as Antigone's shares the same Mother with him.⁵ At first this seems self evident, but Irigaray's reading goes deeper. It assumes meaning in relation to the way in which she characterizes Antigone's relation to her brother Eteokles, with whom she is said to share a Mother and

⁴ Luce Irigaray, "Speculum of the Other Woman: The Eternal Irony of Community" *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 221.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 217.

Father.⁶ What this subtle nuance of relationships sets up, is a system of gender determinants for the characters. Only standing for the Mother, it places Polyneices on the side of the feminine, justified by his being like the woman, foreign other, the enemy outside the state.⁷ This sense of the feminine also has a queering effect on a symbolic level, which should not escape attention. Furthermore, as Antigone's youthful brother, he, as Irigaray insists, remains closer to the family in which he once was her equal.⁸ Outside the community, the prominent position of the family still informs his complaint. As such, they seem to share the position of woman.

Yet, neither will "be" for the state, the ultimate masculine signifier of the phallus. Rather, through the act of war, and Antigone's divine recuperation of her brother through burial, they deny its symbolic power. Antigone's claim of divine law is important as it too is outside of Kreon's command. Gods are immortal, their bodies changeable, and thus without need of the phallus. In the most acute sense, they already possess its position. As such in this way, her disobedient act is *étrange*, that is, outside the perimeters that characterize the norm. For Lacan, the etymology of "*étrange*" derives from *être* and *ange*, suggesting an angel being.⁹ Thus her transgression is divine. This becomes important in so far as the sentry who first reports the act suggests it to be the work of the Gods when he cannot provide the culprit. Yet, Kreon firmly denies this possibility stating

⁶ Ibid., 217.

⁷ Ibid., 219.

⁸ Ibid., 222.

the rhetorical question, “Can you see Gods honouring criminals?”¹⁰ But one must consider if Antigone herself does not ultimately emerge to the status of the divine. Punished for her unlawful act and will, Kreon sentences her to death, leaving her bodiless, at the very least a martyr. Furthermore, Lacan suggests that her lack of pity and fear places her as *Atè*, or atrocious in her fulfillment of desire.¹¹ He states, “*Atè* concerns the Other, the field of the Other and it doesn’t belong to Creon.”¹² As such, because Antigone violates the distinctions between state and family, she comes to symbolically occupy the position of both God and criminal, blurring the boundaries in her transgression.

Yet perhaps worse than the act of burial, is her subsequent claim to the phallus in her admission of the act. Butler suggests that her confession is not merely an iteration of words, but becomes the (re)commission of the act in her belated performance.¹³ She posits that Antigone usurps Kreon’s authority by denying his law in her stated refusal of it, and the articulation of her own. Butler further insists Antigone assumes the male position in her telling speech where she reveals, “And yet how could I have gained

⁹ Jacques Lacan, “On Jouissance” *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge* Book XX, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 14.

¹⁰ Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. Richard Emil Braun (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 32.

¹¹ Jacques Lacan, “The Splendor of Antigone” *The Seminars: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-60*, Book VII, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 277.

¹² *Ibid.*, 277.

¹³ Butler, “Antigone’s Claim”, 8.

greater glory [*kleos*] than by placing my brother in his grave?"¹⁴ Thus, Antigone's agency in the political/linguistic sphere is dependent upon the absence of her brother, whose position she will come to assume. In this way, the family's will as characterized by the woman, is in fact the destruction not only of the state, but of itself, as it is the family structure that is necessary to sustain the state.

Moreover, Kreon recognizes the significance of her act and attempts to have her deny it in language. Not once, but twice does he create an opportunity for her to revoke language and deed. When asking her if the accusation is true, she denies it. Subsequently questioning *mens rea*, he attempts to lead her to suggest that she is unaware of the offense. As such, her restated admission is a conscious effort to force the collision of family and state, demanding her punishment to gain recognition. And her motive does not go entirely unnoticed, as Kreon and the chorus characterize her claims as manly at multiple points in the text.¹⁵ The fear which such a realization effects, surfaces most potently when Kreon states, "I'm no man- / she is a man, she's the King- / if she gets away with this."¹⁶ Thus, unable to let her speech stand in the violation of state law, he defies the advice that is most significantly given by both soothsayer and his son to whom Antigone is betrothed. He buries his niece alive in a cave, so that her visible and loud disruption of his phallic authority may be halted.

Later deciding his action to be made in error, Kreon reverses his judgment, but too late. Antigone is found hanged within the cave. She displays her pain, the state's

¹⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

injury upon her body, marked like a tattoo. Her suicide is more than a quick delivery from death, (recall she has no fear) but her last performance, her reiteration of speech. It is the visibility of the original act of Polyneices' attack upon a "sick" state, and its sickness manifested in the denial of burial, family, woman and speech. Thus, it is only when her body comes to externalize the debilitating effects of its intervention into the private realm of the family, that crisis will ensue. Before Antigone forces her desire into public space, Lacan suggests that it is the image "which up till now has never been articulated, since it forces you to close your eyes at the very moment you look at it."¹⁷ Antigone, whose desire is antithetical to that of the state, must be suppressed, sequestered in the family, not seen in order to retain the state. While Polyneices' offense must be visible, as it re-enforces the role of man as warrior, his own state's double signification of manliness in its defeat of other men.

Yet upon the sight of Antigone's corpse, her fiancé Haimon attempts to kill his father Kreon, who he blames for her demise. When he misses, he fells himself, becoming the object of Eurydice's grief. Overcome by the death of her son, Eurydice takes her life, leaving Kreon alone. Left with nothing but the destruction of his own family, he assumes culpability for all, finally recognizing Antigone's claim. Kreon renounces power, and is taken away. As he who has the knowledge of state and family, in their mutual support of one another, and the fluid borders between, can no longer rule. His power passes to another. Thus, patriarchy is said to be reinstated, burying the Hegelian consciousness that once more emerged to the surface. This is our inherited legacy. But I will suggest that this

¹⁶ Sophocles, *Antigone*, 40.

consciousness need not be lost, a regression back into patriarchal structures not necessarily a predestined end. Look at my images as the body of Antigone, yourself as the consciousness of Kreon. I seek to violently awaken you, forcing you to engage in a critical looking, hearing and feeling. Question the gender structures that you support, are implicated in, and thereby stand for.

My first chapter, "Stripped Naked: AnOther Phallic Phantasy", inquires into two principle subjects. Commencing with a discussion of the privileged phallus, I examine contemporary interpretations by Cadieux, Evergon and Cumming. Collectively exposing its power as fraudulent or symbolic, their representations of the male genitalia, intervene in and challenge ways in which gender is signified through the masquerade.

Problematizing associations of the phallus as virulent and active, made claim to through the guise of its material counterpart the penis, they present the organ in antithetical terms of flaccid, visible, and appropriable through mimesis. As such, they deny it the feminine role of support through desire and being for it, assuming the role of Antigone in their comical castration of Kreon.

But just like our heroine, they may also be less than upfront with their motives. If she claimed to challenge the state in the name of her brother, the family and the divine, she did so as a means to detract the eye from her more important deed, the ruin of the family - the support of the state. Ejecting herself from it, she destroys Kreon. Equally devious, these artists employ the veil as trap for the gaze. Another facet of this masquerade, the feminine trope is used to undermine what it affirms. Seducing the viewer

¹⁷ Lacan, "The Splendor of Antigone", 247.

with the sensual properties of the surface plane, mysteries of what may lie beneath, and an illusion of appearances, they deflect probing eyes that seek to plunder subjectivity, denying it as a malleable support to bolster the power of male heterosexual privilege. As such, the refusal to allow the eye real or metaphorical depth into the image, suggests the violence of sight.

This visual dilemma becomes the impetus for strategies discussed in the second chapter, "Silent Voices, Violent Bodies." Rather than merely deflecting sight, it is made to occupy a place of friction in the realm of the multi-sensory. The initial section is concerned with a masculine language that attempts to silence and internalize the voice. Images of a pained vocality fall mute upon their exit from the frame. They come to signify a language that twice oppresses the female and queer body, in the injurious articulation of identity, and the absence of words to speak their pain. I therefore examine the artists' expressions of the body's pain, through inflected speech and surface, suggesting multiplicity and hysterical tendencies, as means of inter-textual subversion. This resilience to a stable language, finds an ally in the complementary strategy of the shifting voice. Examining the overlap of voices and bodies, a masculine privilege is shown as constructed, as mismatched sutures position fluid positions for both. If the voices of these bodies are not as literal as Antigone's seems, apparent silence or instability in contrast to Antigone's clamorous and singular demand for recognition, theirs is the assertion of another language, one that can be seen as an echo to Antigone's corpse. For there is most surely a difference between what Antigone says and means.

And it is finally her corpse that brings us to the sensory. Abject it spills into the living, grieved, caressed in the arms of Haimon, drawing him into bloodshed, in his perpetual union with her. His mother Eurydice following behind him, in the death of the son that was once one with her, of her own flesh. Her corpse is the final destruction of the family. Thus a sensual power becomes the topic of this final segment, where it is the caress that brings about intersubjectivity, fragrance becomes the simultaneous site of both power and pain, and sexual perversity becomes a means of barring the look and establishing specificity. After all, as Oedipus blinded himself for his sensual union with a mother unknown to him, it is only fitting that the story end in an equally sensory bloodshed, the unrealized love of his daughter offered in exchange for the destruction of a state and family that called his love incest. Thus, sense becoming the possibility of a new sight, it is the proper end of this inquiry into identity and the familial laws of gender.

So turn the page, and commence this journey into the identity of others and yourself. Allow your family a metaphorical destruction.

Chapter 1: Stripped Naked: AnOther Phallic Phantasy

What is the masquerade? It is the splitting of the self. To hold a mask before one's face is to suggest a relationship between surface and depth. It is to indicate a self, generated from within, discrete from an exterior mask. Its presence signifies a binary relationship between appearance and reality. Yet, the mask is not only other than what I am, but other than what I will become. For it is the mask which is fixed while identity is in flux. Behaviour displayed under its guise is called an act or performance. But if those surface identities are also assumed from within, are they not derived from the same source of that which is called the self? This premise of construction undermines the possibility of an authentic self. It challenges a linear conception of reality, postulating the question, "Can one ever be other than which I am now?" The mask suggests not. Rather than pointing to a binary relationship between self expressions of the real and fictive, it conflates two into a singular body. By pointing to such a facile transition between identities, the mask visualizes the instability or plurality of the self.

In 1929, the word masquerade took on a particular meaning in the field of psychoanalysis. Ideas of gender formation and sexuality were under examination, and the recognition of bisexuality began to wedge a space between gender and gender identity. Joan Rivière articulated this gap in terms of the masquerade. She posited that femininity was a mask worn by woman that enabled her to transparently possess the agency necessary to engage in the masculine sphere, while retaining an illusion of passivity. Furthermore, Rivière argued that its guise provided a protective shield from the negative

repercussions of gender transgression.¹⁸ Thus, the masquerade not only revealed the superficial nature of gender construction, but pointed to a patriarchal system of fear that sustained it. Despite that recognition, Rivière considered this mode of gender development to be “normal”. Women who chose alternative gender identities, did so as a result of “conflicts”.¹⁹ However, her conflation of “genuine womanliness” and the “masquerade” served to blur the boundaries between fiction and biology, relocating the formation of identity from the body to the reactionary space of society. Masquerade theory has been developed from this gap.

This chapter will function as a space to explore gender identity formation through the examination of selected photo-based material by Geneviève Cadieux, Evergon, and Donigan Cumming. It will begin with an inquiry into the image of male genitalia as a signifier of privilege and as the basis of a system that necessitates the masquerade. A (re)formation of meaning will be located from a singular position of power to a fractured space of multiplicity. Through the visual employment of marks of obscenity, the indication of performance, and images of desire, the penis and phallus will be shown to be discrete entities. The former will be exposed as reliant upon the latter for the symbolic privilege afforded by the masquerade, and as such, this gap will function to illustrate gender as a product of culture rather than nature. In extension of this phallic negation, the second part of the chapter will shift to a consideration of the veil as a surface disruption of gender identity formation. The discussion will reveal the ambiguity of boundaries of

¹⁸ Joan Rivière, “Womanliness as Masquerade” *Formations of Fantasy* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1986), 35.

¹⁹ Ibid., 35.

the body in space, as a device capable of distorting relationships between an object's surface and support. Thus, representations of the veil will be shown as both indicator and element of the masquerade, a complement to its phallic counterpart. Collectively, their inclusion will demonstrate the presence of masquerade in the works of Cadieux, Cumming, and Evergon, forming a space in which gender identity may be challenged through its own (re)production. Enacting their own dramas and comedies, they will rail against structures of a heterosexual masculinity, continuing the journey of Antigone.

Parading The Phallus

Male genitalia functions as a symbol of privilege in society. Psychoanalytic theory traces this position of authority to childhood development. Sigmund Freud posits that male children understand the penis to exist as the natural and sole genitalia proper to the human body. When they perceive the female body, they understand it as castrated, possessing a lack.²⁰ This absence causes the male child anxiety about the state of his body, as he fears the possibility of personal loss.²¹ In contrast, Freud argues that the female child immediately comprehends difference in the male body, and is overcome with envy.²² She is without the privileged organ, and her desire to possess it is so potent that she wishes to be the boy herself.²³ This desire of having is additionally motivated by observing parental relations. The father is in possession of the object of the

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Infantile Sexuality: The Sexual Researches of Childhood" *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* The International Psycho-analytical Library No. 57, trans./ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1962), 61.

²¹ Sigmund Freud, "The Passing of the Oedipus-Complex" *Collected Papers* Vol. II, ed. Ernst Jones, trans. Joan Rivière (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 271-272.

²² Freud, "Infantile Sexuality: The Sexual Researches of Childhood", 61.

feminine/maternal want. As the female child can never physically possess the male organ, Freud argues that this situation is to be resolved through the formation of femininity. She is to be directed towards a relationship with a man who will symbolically give her the phallus through the birthed object of a child, the maternal phallus.²⁴ Thus she must develop in relation to the man, forming herself as the feminine object of his desire. In this way, femininity comes to signify an identity motivated by penis envy.

For Rivière, this envy detours from the submissive path of possessing the maternal phallus, towards a rectification of lack in the phallic symbolic sphere of public relations. She positions women in an active role, in which their envy is manifested in the usurpation of masculine traits. Rivière discusses this function in the context of both workplace and business relations. Here, the phallus is symbolic of power and prestige, qualities traditionally attributed to the male identity. Cognizant of gender transgression, the woman who possesses masculine assets fears punishment. As a means of guising her actions she masquerades as feminine, flirting to avert attention from what she has “stolen”.²⁵ That is, the feminine mask allows her to wear the phallus transparently. Mary Ann Doane observes, “The ‘stolen’ property is, of course, the phallus, and the female subject has no fear of ‘turning out her pockets’ and ‘asking to be searched,’ for the phallus is an object which will never be found.”²⁶ Thus, by retaining the mask, she only

²³ Ibid., 61.

²⁴ Freud, “The Passing of the Oedipus-Complex”, 275.

²⁵ Rivière, “Womanliness as Masquerade”, 38.

²⁶ Mary Ann Doane, “Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on the Female Spectator” *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1991), 34.

appears to defer to the man. Ironically, it is the man's mistaken identification of his penis as phallus that facilitates the woman's appropriation of phallic privileges.

The notion of appearance is fundamental to the masquerade, for it negates the very ground from which the theory stems. There is no inherent envy from the girl child as Freud suggests, but rather, desire for the penis recognizes that one is embedded in a culture that privileges phallic possession. Thus, to foster a myth of penile jealousy, serves to validate more than the worth of the organ, but by extension, a unique male authority characterized by phallic supremacy. The male organ thereby becomes the centre of a symbolic structure, organizing the interaction of all social relations. Disposing of a gender binary, identity is determined by one's relation to this imaginary core. Jacques Lacan investigates this possibility.

Lacan understands the masquerade as an illusory act that enables the phantasy of the phallus, and functions solely within the symbolic sphere.²⁷ He suggests that the woman feels deprived of the phallus, and seeks to rectify this absence by addressing the other's desire, for which she expects to be the object of love.²⁸ As such, she facilitates a system of gender difference, becoming the support mechanism for virile display.²⁹ This dynamic is what Lacan terms, "being" the Phallus; the feminine exists to sustain the

²⁷ Jacques Lacan, "De L'Amour à la libido" *Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse* Livre XI (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973), 176.

²⁸ Jacques Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus" *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 84.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

masculine, so that he may “have” the phallus.³⁰ In effect, her absence of the penis affirms his possession of the phallus. Judith Butler elucidates this relationship as a Hegelian master and slave dynamic.³¹ In other words, position is dependent upon mutual participation in the structure; one affirms the other. Thus, the woman aids the male in his attempt to have the phallus, supporting his claim to it through her desire. Yet the penis and phallus are not interchangeable entities. The penis is merely the signifier of the phallus, the object which gives form to the imaginary position that is outside of lack, and necessarily masculine. As such, woman employs the mask of femininity to affirm masculine possession through absence. Through the display of lack, she gives the man the illusion of the phallus.

Yet, Lacan’s introduction of the word “appearing” challenges the possibility of either truly “being” or “having” the phallus.³² Butler has interpreted this appearance to be feminine in absence of an explicit gender designation. She suggests that because lack is generally attributed to the female, this statement must apply to the woman.³³ Nevertheless, to suggest such a possibility indicates a fundamental misreading of Lacan. Butler’s own textual evidence, in fact, contradicts her claim. This may be observed in her selection of the demonstrative passage, where she quotes Lacan’s assertion that, “an

³⁰ Ibid., 84.

³¹ Judith Butler, “Prohibition, Psychoanalysis and the Heterosexual Matrix: Lacan, Rivière, and the Strategies of Masquerade” *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 56.

³² Lacan, “The Meaning of the Phallus”, 84.

³³ Butler, “Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Heterosexual Matrix: Lacan, Rivière, and the Strategies of Masquerade”, 59.

‘appearing’ which gets substituted for a ‘having’ so as to protect it on one side and mask its lack on the other.”³⁴ Here, Butler’s textual evidence is contradictory to her claim, for when has this structure ever sought to protect the interest of the female body? If gender must be designated, the “it” must be considered masculine, as it is the man’s lack that must be masked. Because the woman already exists as “being” for the phallus, to affirm the man’s possession of it through her lack, she has nothing to hide. Therefore, her being as phallus allows him the appearance of “having”. But perhaps, a further complexity is indicated in the ambivalence of gender designation. Might not gender be deliberately left unstated, to specify the phallus as a symbolic object, and illustrate the inherent lack in all. This interpretation further suggests that it is not female lack that must be hidden, but rather the system that suspends the phantasy or impossibility of the phallus. Femininity sustains this illusion through its superficial delivery. Behaviours expressed by both sexes are therefore not only false in performance, but “comedic” in delivery, as they expose the superficiality of the relationship.³⁵ As such, Antigonean acts that shift power signification from the locus of gender to the greater locale of subjectivity, serve to disrupt the system.

Cadieux comically evokes this structural weakness in the two-piece, *Loin de moi et près du lointain* (1993) [Figure 1.1], as she images the end of a sexual encounter. Displayed as jarringly near close-ups of the body, a limp penis and a field of pubic hair, are out of focus and suggestive of environmental topologies. Scott Watson places these images within a series of Cadieux’s work that utilizes techniques of pornography and

³⁴ Ibid., 59, quoting Jacques Lacan, “The Meaning of the Phallus,” *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1985), 83-85.

³⁵ Lacan, “The Meaning of the Phallus”, 84.

medical documentation as a means of intervention in traditional landscape representation.³⁶ In this way, a commercial industry arguably geared to male, heterosexual subjects, seeks to control the female body through a consumable sexual display, and a historically like dominated medical discipline that names the body's ailments assuming power over it through language, becomes the object of the look. Both practices and perpetrator are called into question, and indeed the proclaimed validity of both is shattered. The male body is further likened to the feminine landscape, offered as sexual surface to support a system of representation, his role relocated from a place of "having" to one of "being". His penis on a metaphorical platter, he is offered as evidence of the construction of the masquerade. His feminine display indicates gender to be discrete from sex.

Dabbling in the obscenity of truth, Cadieux photographs a post-orgasmic penis, debased like a fallen flag. Darkened by the rush of blood, the organ lies limp and spent, challenging associations of masculine virility suggested by the erect stance. It can no longer uphold a sense of hermetic closure, as the semen reveals marks of an interior/exterior relationship. In its anamorphic state, it seems to signal castration, like Lacan's reading of Hans Holbein's oblique image of the skull in his painting, *French Ambassadors* (1533).³⁷ The moistened tip of the wet surface reflects the light, creating the illusion of an almost hollow surface. The effect recalls the female genitalia, serving to

³⁶ Scott Watson, "The Near and the Distant" *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 1999) 54.

³⁷ Jacques Lacan, "Anamorphosis" *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* vol. 11, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alain Sheridan (Harmondsworth, Eng., Penguin., 1977), 88.

undermine the phallic position through the collapse of gender distinctions. Additionally, the profuse pubic hair that exclusively screens the second image, might belong to either sex introducing yet another sign of gender ambiguity.

Phallic authority is further diminished in the objectification of the penis as pictorial subject. It is emasculated as it is barred from its active function of inscription on the female body. Denied power of representation, it becomes the represented and manipulated object of the female photographer. The metaphorical quill has been visually written upon, stained, reducing its capacity for signification.³⁸ This relocation of position becomes meaningful in a historical context, as it disrupts and inverts a tradition of masculine power exercised through representation of the nude female body and genitalia. Here, a woman images the forbidden phallus, symbolically castrated in the isolated confines of the frame. Sitting in a mass of pubic hair it does not appear to be clearly attached to the body, nor is there any additional marker of gender specificity to re-enforce its masculine position. The lingering signs of sexual encounter, recall its implied temporary consumption by the female body, re-enforcing notions of castration. As such, through the recollection of the sexual act, Cadieux disturbs conceptions of phallic property. Held captive by the woman's body, the man's penile privileges are exposed as dependent upon the implied presence of the male genitalia, and the feminine validation of its purported supremacy. Sex therefore becomes a sign of phallic vulnerability, deflating

³⁸ Mary Ann Doane, "Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman" *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 67.

the phallus of the status with which the Freudian tradition of psychoanalytic theory seeks to endow it.

Furthermore, the detached, flaccid penis undermines the notion of phallic *jouissance*. This joy of the phallus comes not from the sexual pleasure of the woman's body, but from its narcissistic position as the object of desire.³⁹ It is positioned as the primary genital object, the woman's clitoris relegated to a secondary, lesser role. Thus her pleasure is derived from his before her own. The woman's *jouissance* is phallic pleasure. Elizabeth Cowie quotes psychoanalytic theorist, Moustafa Safouan to situate the female position. Safouan states, "she invests the man as having the phallus. But she cannot thus invest him without the wish to be, herself for him the phallus. . . in the end she finds her being not as woman but as phallus."⁴⁰ As such, maintenance of the system required to create phallic *jouissance*, denies the woman her own identity, as she exists to support the myth of the phallus before the reality of herself.

Yet the flaccid phallus seeks to disturb such a system. In this state, it cannot suspend the continuation of joy, for here it is not the phallus, but a limp penis. The visual confession makes it impossible for woman to invest herself as phallus, as its existence is clearly fallacious. Simultaneously, through the act of sex, one must come to the realization that the woman is without lack, for the end of copulation must always be the realization of self and other. The title supports this premise. Translated into English to

³⁹ Jacques Lacan, "On Jouissance" *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality The Limits of Love and Knowledge* Book XX, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) 7.

mean, "Far from me, near in the distance", it bespeaks the alienation between man and woman even in their greatest intimacy. As the spatial relationship of the sexual encounter and the emotional one are not equivalent or consistent on a temporal plane, sex suggests the divisiveness of the self as consistent with the masquerade. That is, the performative function of sex is an extension of gender identity in so far as the bodies meet in spatial proximity experiencing the other as gender symbol. Thus, the intimacy of carnal relations is illusory. Furthermore, this sense of distance may be explored in the relative closeness of the two images. Here, the slightly blurred penile close-up, is in spatial contrast to the extreme intimacy of the detailed strands of hair in the paired image. As the penis is the proffered sign of masculinity in sex, and is proportionately closer than the strands of hair, it follows that it is symbolically further from her. Conversely, the hair that is an extension of the body, but distanced by the politics of vision, covers the photographic surface in its enormity. This shift in scale brings it visually closer in the pictorial field, directing attention to touch; the sense that Irigaray privileges in the woman. As such, in her focus upon the greater erogenous area, in the texture of each strand of hair, she discovers that her designation as not one, is not isolated to her sex. In this way, she gains access to him not in the nearness of the phallic sign, but when it is de-signified in its post-coital state, so she may see his sexuality beyond the signs.

Cowie further suggests that the intimacy of sex is fleeting. Once the sexual act is complete, man and woman are two once more, and the woman may be re-assigned to her

⁴⁰ Moustafa Safouan in Elizabeth Cowie, "Female Sexuality, Feminine Identification and the Masquerade" *Representing the Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1997), 240.

place as other. Cowie describes this relationship as “the woman’s re-pose demand for love re-replaces her as other which their very love-making had annihilated, presenting to the man the issue of castration.”⁴¹ Thus woman’s desire to copulate with man is to contain his penis as a means of disavowing her otherness. As such, the visual/symbolic castration that occurs in the sexual act, illustrates the phantasy of the phallus. Through this process she denies validity to the phallic system that relegates her to the role of the subordinate other. Although the act is temporary, the disruption of the system remains. It is only the woman’s willingness to (re)assume her masquerade of femininity that returns power to the phallus.

Cadieux’s image of the post-orgasmic penis also imagines the possibility of remembrance, by sustaining the moment in a photographic frame. Cemented as image, man is forced to reflect on his essential lack, the knowledge that woman had previously sheltered him from. By consequence, he must concede the superficial divide of gender identity as tied to sexual difference. Thus to image the post-orgasmic state is to divest the phallus of its symbolic connotations of desire, revealing the lack of lack, and the false pretense of the system from which its power is derived.

Pressing further, one might suggest that this flaccid state, not only disrupts a system of desire, but points to a sexual surrender. For Nietzsche, this concession is the proper act of the female. It defines the subordinate role of femininity, and for this reason, it is necessary that the man abstain from such love.⁴² For it is through this state of

⁴¹ Cowie, “Female Sexuality, Feminine Identification and the Masquerade”, 238.

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, “Book V: 363” *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), 319.

vulnerability that lack is established. Here, the artist images masculine absence by divesting the man of phallic control. He has given himself to the woman, and now she is gone. She has seen that the penis is not the phallus, and she has had it. Although the phallic order will reintegrate her into a state of willing denial, the captured moment visualizes a gap in logic. It is the moment at which she commits Antigone's crime of burial and her subsequent claim to the action. She defiantly shows the phallus as absent, further asserting the act of unveiling as hers. Thus, "lack", a word most often ascribed to the female body, comes to symbolize phallic lack in all.

Yet there is a simultaneous absence through which the female counterpart is required to indicate a visual lack. It is her presence in absence that is laden with the potential for sexual intimacy as a means to undermine male authority. On the surface, a paradoxical proposal that sexual relations should establish a rift between the male body and its symbolic façade, but as they visualize the man in a position of desire, they imply his necessary otherness. His penis is not the self-sufficient phallus. Male lack can only be fulfilled through the consent of the other that sustains his position of privilege. Thus, his lack exposes the fabrication of the gender structure through the representation of the completed sexual encounter.

If lack may emerge from the catharsis of witnessing post-carnal relations, it may also come to appear through the spectacle of self-presentation. As such, the focus will now shift to Evergon's interpretation of the male organ as a performative symbol. Frequently appearing as an erotic element in his work, one must consider the mode in which the phallus is displayed. Furthermore, meaning of the organ should be situated

within the context of the artist's *Ramboy* series. Its impetus in graffiti heralding male prostitution in the lakeshore areas of Chicago, Evergon realized an affinity between promiscuity and, to take a term by Michel Foucault, the "distopias" of urban space that manifested themselves in the cover of parkland.⁴³ Evergon saw the homoerotic possibility within the natural sphere, as aligned with William Burroughs' *The Wild Boys* and William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*.⁴⁴ As such, he turned to the sexually potent symbol of the ram from earlier works, and produced it as the symbol of a fictitious society of homosexual promiscuity, referencing the unmentionable within. Therefore, for Evergon the phallus indicates deviance from, and resistance to, the normatives of heterosexual culture.

This can be seen in *Portrait of the Old Alpha Ram* (1994) [Figure 1.2], where Evergon creates an image brimming with gender ambiguities. Here, the Ramboy reclines against satiny drapery reminiscent of both stage and bed. Sheets trailing on the floor persist in the theme of a boudoir. By symbolically relocating the private sphere of the bedroom, into the public space of the stage, the artist suggests that sexual/gender roles are performative. This becomes significant not only in the recognition of gender construction, but by consequence, in the destabilization of heterosexuality as the natural form of sexuality. If one accepts the premise that gender is constructed, then cross-dressing, suggested by the feathery texture of the garb, is not a copy of the original, but as

⁴³ Bruce Hugh Russell, "Queer Epiphanies and the Pathogenesis of Paranoia" *Ramboys: Bookless Novel and Other Fictions* (Ottawa: The Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995), 50-51.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

Butler proposes, a copy of the copy.⁴⁵ As such, the costume functions in the subversive role of parody destabilizing the gender divide.⁴⁶

Furthermore, it serves to illustrate the problematic of meaning in a historical legacy of inscribing difference on the homosexual body. Lee Edelman suggests that the necessity of performing queer identity, through drag or other codes to transmit meaning, undermines the binary logic of sexual difference.⁴⁷ Butler would concur with this analysis, as she believes that dress appears as a surface alteration of the body's fixed gender, while it simultaneously makes claim to be the manifestation of the body's essence, which gender fails to realize.⁴⁸ Thus, she suggests that body and artifice negate the priori claim to authenticity in one another. In other words, to mark the homosexual body is to expose the superficiality of all gender boundaries. To the homophobic person, this poses a quandary, because if one does not visualize difference, then it is transparent. This sexual anonymity produces anxiety, as it necessarily means integration. However, by the exterior marking of identity, one indicates "the impossibility of any 'identity'," ⁴⁹ for it is the necessity of the visual that admits the suspension of disbelief that constitutes

⁴⁵ Judith Butler, "Subjects of Sex / Gender / Desire: Language, Power and Strategies of Displacement" *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 41.

⁴⁶ Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories/ Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 31.

⁴⁷ Lee Edelman, "Homographesis" *Homographesis: essays in gay literary and cultural theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 12.

⁴⁸ Judith Butler, "Subversive Body Politics: From Interiority to Gender Performances" *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 174-175.

⁴⁹ Edelman, "Homographesis", 13.

gender relations, undermining the system of power through which the heterosexual male enjoys a position of privilege.⁵⁰

Even the name of the artist seeks to thwart the possibility of a stable identity. Calling himself Evergon (ever gone), the artist suggests the fluidity of identity; as it is constant only in its inevitable change. This conception functions much along the lines of Simone Beauvoir's notion of becoming a woman, a process that is characterized by its constant transition without beginning or end.⁵¹ He further indicates the multiplicity of the self through his cross-gender personae. The personages Egon Brut, Celluloso Evergonni, and Eve R. Gonni, all create different forms of art within his opus, respectively producing erotic pornography, planting false archeological information and acting in the role of documentarian. Thus the only stable object is the fictional body of art, which self-admittedly exists as performance.

Recall the feathery adornment, reminiscent of a woman's boa, and cross-dressing as role-play. Superficially, female gender transgression may seem to undermine an authoritative position of the homosexual as first and foremost male. In fact, one of the primary critiques of Butler's *Gender Trouble*, was her endorsement of parodic strategies of cross-dressing and camp in the subversion of gender identities. Leo Bersani claimed that the contravention of such boundaries, further reiterated the homosexual identity as feminine.⁵² As such, he argued it denied the body specificity, situating the homosexual as

⁵⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁵¹ Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire: Language, Power, and the Strategies of Displacement", 43.

⁵² Leo Bersani, "The Gay Absence" *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 48.

either drag queen or macho male, a mimesis of the “true” man.⁵³ He has also viewed attempts at loose drag family formations as perpetuating a position of feminine subordination within the family.⁵⁴ Therefore, identification with the feminine, be it through parody or other means, Bersani understands to be ineffectual in producing change, and as a reaffirmation of the dominant order.⁵⁵ He appears to find the process emasculating, castration lingering in the air. Yet, the homosexual male is without the phallus, as he confuses the binary system of gender positions that sustains the patriarchal position of privilege. He has nothing to lose, he is already lacking, so he may freely adopt feminine attire. Rather than signaling his position as masculine shadow, it seeks to expand the possibility of identity.

This performance contradicts the function of the feminine masquerade, as what the woman does to hide her masculinity for fear of reprisal. It is clear that this is not Evergon’s intent in the portrayal of the Ramboy. Here, the penis is conspicuously left uncovered, the result of a strategic positioning of the textile. Instead of disguising the masculine, Evergon seeks to blur gender signifiers. Although the male assumes feminine garb, his penis denies the possibility of his body belonging to the female gender. There is no contesting his sex. The visual isolation of the penis from the body furthermore exposes the organ as signifier before gender determinant, suggesting that they are not synonymous. Exposed, it draws attention to the performative role of the phallus, and reveals the penis as no more than a piece of flesh. His feminine attire, which should

⁵³ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 52.

support his “being” for the phallus, cannot function with the revelation, simultaneously undermining the woman’s role in the system’s support. Related to Cadieux’s *Loin de moi, et près du lointain*, Evergon’s unveiling, leaves the penis no longer able to sustain its symbolic position of power.

But the homosexual not only adopts the guise of the masquerade from a position of default, but from the recognition of its subversive powers. Like Antigone who usurps the masculine privileges of speech and action, not simply for their power, but to corrupt and denaturalize a toxic system of gender determinants that denies subjectivity, Evergon transgresses. The masculine appropriation of femininity intervenes in dominant gender conceptions, illustrating the fluidity of identity. Although the homosexual masquerade does not rely upon the transparency of the conventional conception of the feminine as a natural state, it seeks to retain what such a performance exposes. Moreover, its visibility is empowering. The fear that urged the female to comply with her feminine role, and the queer male to disguise his sexuality, has been transformed into the pride of choice. Transitioning from the covert to the overt, the homosexual retains the symbol of change exacted through the veil of the feminine. If the woman reinforced the patriarchal structure through her willingness to assume the feminine image expected of her, she simultaneously used that image as a means to effect change as she manipulated both public and private spheres. Thus, by fabricating a costume of the feminine what Evergon indeed produces is the unveiling of the masculine as construct. He usurps the codes of femininity, thereby indicating the myth of the phallus. As Mary Ann Doane states:

⁵⁵ Ibid., 151.

At first glance then, sexual difference in psycho-analysis seems to hinge on the visibility or invisibility of the sexual organs, the phallus taking on prominence as it is most easily seen. Yet, the phallus actually only becomes important in so far as it might be absent, it might disappear. It assumes meaning only in relation to castration.⁵⁶

This is useful from a queer standpoint, as it also serves to distance sexual practices from gender stereotypes. This becomes problematic as the premise of the masquerade is based upon the desire to possess the male organ. (Recall Rivière's suggestion that the woman even places herself in jeopardy to possess the phallus.)

Interestingly, the Ramboy retains the phallus. Visually isolated from the body by the white textile that frames it, the structure places emphasis on the cultural meaning of the phallus, rather than strictly denoting the organ in the pictorial field. Here the penis does not operate as phallus, but the phallus appears as a sign of the penis. For as Doane notes of the Lacanian structure, the phallus can only play its role when veiled.⁵⁷ Through the fluidity of absence, it is able to assume a multiplicity of expectations unique to individual perceptions. Yet once revealed, it is fixed and unable to approximate the masculine ideal. This concept is most clearly understood in the context of the strip tease. Mark Simpson has observed that the pleasure of the act is the anticipation rather than the revelation.⁵⁸ He suggests that prior to the unveiling, the audience may maintain a suspension of disbelief, that the stripper indeed possesses the privileged phallus. But once revealed, it is no more than the flesh of the penis, a sign of castration. It may only be

⁵⁶ Doane, "Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman", 45.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁸ Mark Simpson, "Dragging It Up and Down" *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 187.

redeemed through the possibility of glamour, providing it a space of immunity through its distracting properties.⁵⁹ Furthermore, a gape in the material that makes the eye privy to the phallus, creates a circular hole that is almost an echo of the female genitalia. Thus the phallus is doubly negated. By isolating the penis Evergon creates a metaphorical castration. Through this action he undermines the myth of the phallus as a disembodied member shrouded in white purity, and shows it as symbol. What this allows him to do is to reclaim the penis and create new meanings for it: Ones that are less loosely tied to the ideas of male heterosexuality and its implicit position of power.

Running one's eyes up the body, the notion of the masquerade in a more literal sense may be observed. The subject is faceless, insofar as his face, the prime signifier of identity, is concealed. This veil reiterates the autonomy of identity formation as a process discrete from surface revelation. The hidden or interior process implied by the facial covering, elicits fear in the observer. Although it is not the metaphorical mask of the feminine gender, it too carries with it a sense of apprehension and danger. As Stephen Heath states, "if there is a mask, then there is a behind-the-mask and we need to know what is behind, to be sure."⁶⁰ As identity can only be perceived through the mask of surface revelation, Evergon purposely panders to the fear of his audience. Playing upon the stereotypes of the homosexual as sexually perverse and morally degenerate, the artist recalls mythology. Part of the larger Ramboy series, these masked men reference the forest satyr, a sexually promiscuous figure. Here the men indulge in various hedonistic

⁵⁹ Ibid., 187.

⁶⁰ Stephen Heath, "Joan Rivière and the Masquerade" *Formations of Fantasy* (London: Methuen, 1986), 50.

acts by themselves, or in the company of others, including animals. Images also depict babies who are stolen at birth, for the continuation of an all male society. Thus through the use of parody, the faceless, gender transgressing male seeks to instill fear in the homophobic male through excessive stereotypes. In this process, he claims the mask as a site of power upon which the performance of identity is played out.

This charade of gender identity is used not only to signify power, but also to assign positions in its maintenance. The production of desire is a fundamental aspect within this performance, and through object choice and identity formation the participants sustain it. This can be seen in Donigan Cumming's series *Pretty Ribbons* (1993), a multimedia collection comprised of 63 photographs, accompanied by diary entries and two soundtracks.⁶¹ Visually, revolving around the figure of an elderly woman named Nettie, her body, song, and stories are made to intersect with the intimate diaristic writings of the artist's deceased friend, Harry Strong. Here in the photograph, *May 27, 1992* [Figure 1.3], where Nettie and her lover hold hands in nudity, the unrequited desires of Strong seek to vicariously find the erotic, fleeting space of the corporeal through the body of the other. That his romantic possibilities remain unrealized perhaps is indicative of his ignorance of female desire. However, as writing overlaps image, Strong's voice is made to intersect with the bodies of Nettie and her lover, providing a colliding narrative and its subsequent fracture within and of the image. Through this disruption, he adds motive and intrigue to the structure of the lover's desire, while simultaneously reconciling his own

⁶¹ Nicole Gingras, "Introduction" *Donigan Cumming: Diverting the Image* (Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1993), 8.

need for love within their pictorial unity. As such, the image becomes a demand for love, one vested in the phallus, a point none too subtly made through the stark exposure of the male organ.

Eyes pointing towards it, the penis is the formal and metaphorical focus of the image, the symbol of desire. All other elements are cheap mimetic representation of it; held hands, drooping breasts, and a dangling arm function as surrogates or visual echoes. Consider this image in the context of Nietzsche's philosophy on women, distilled by Heath as, "woman is a lie, adornment is her truth."⁶² Here, the only item that Nettie dons is a simple chain. As she bows over to leer at her younger partner's penis, the metal appears to weigh heavy on her, like a yoke of femininity. Thus the adornment becomes not the misogynist truth that Nietzsche makes claim to, but rather, it illustrates a system of gender signification. Luce Irigaray acknowledges this system stating, "«féminité» est un rôle, un image, un valeur imposés aux femmes par les systèmes de représentations des hommes."⁶³ Through its presence, it indicates that gender is ascertained by something greater than physiological difference, but through cultural markers such as jewelry. Noticeably, the man is faceless, and free of adornment. This lack of specificity further facilitates Strong's entry into the image, as this body is both nobody and somebody, desired and desirer.

⁶² Heath, "Joan Rivière and the Masquerade", 51.

⁶³ Luce Irigaray, "Pouvoir du Discours, Subordination du Féminin" *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1977), 80. "Femininity is a role, an image, a value imposed on women by a system of masculine representation."

Yet, Nettie's traditional feminine masquerade is something of a paradox. For as Irigaray argues, to participate in the masquerade, is to renounce a feminine desire in favour of reflecting the male's. For Irigaray, this pathological behaviour is the feminine norm. She argues, "Dans cette masquerade de la féminité, la femme se perd, et s'y perd à force d'en jouer."⁶⁴ Thus for Irigaray, lack exists in the masquerade rather than in gender. But if a masculine desire exists, it is beyond the scope of the picture plane. Strong is beyond the picture, and his life has brought him only disappointment in love. As such, to symbolically fulfill his needs, he must engage with Nettie on her terms, rather than his own. Much like Antigone's brother, desire may only be realized through its vicarious manifestation in the desire of his other. As such, not only is the image absent of visual cues of desire, but the viewer must confront Nettie's age. A good deal older than her male counterpart, her geriatric body is far from the traditional conceptions of youthful beauty. Wrinkled skin hanging over the skeleton it once firmly framed, her sagging breasts thin and limp, Nettie's body staunchly contrasts the robust figure of her companion. Although this does not entirely preclude the possibility of Nettie eliciting and engaging male desire, it functions in juxtaposition to the dominant model, and forces the viewer to consider its construction. It reposes the relationship between woman and man, asking that Strong or this body be for her, while she might have them *une par une*.

But one must not halt at the consideration of how the necklace implicates her in a system of male desire. Rather one must examine the nature of her gaze. There is an

⁶⁴ Ibid., 51. "In this masquerade of femininity, the woman loses herself, and in it loses the possibility of playing with it."

undeniable element of want in her unabashed stare directed towards his genitals. Yet Freud denies the possibility of a feminine libido, and defines such manifestations in relation to the masculine.⁶⁵ In fact, as Irigaray points out, Freud only permits female desire to exist as a form of penis envy. As such, her desire for sexual relations is motivated out of lack. For only through intercourse, may she momentarily emerge from her castrated state, and perhaps, even gain the maternal phallus. But this is problematic as psychoanalytic theory insists that desire can only be sustained through the hidden presence of the phallus. Juliet Mitchell states, “The phallus—with its status as potentially absent—comes to stand in for the necessary missing object of desire at the level of sexual division.”⁶⁶ Yet in the penis’ presence it seems to create a fetish-like desire. Here, this organ becomes the passive rather than active object. The fetish is the substitute for the phallus, and in this way the power positions are reversed to reveal their superficial construct.

This thought is supported by Nettie’s own possession of the phallus. A shadow produced from the couple’s clasped hand, falls on Nettie’s pudenda. Its shape is evocative of the male member, endowing her with the power that the symbol evokes. Yet it is a shadow, not the penis, calling into question the difference between the physical organ and the symbolic function of the phallus as created rather than original. Through gender parody, the phallus shows its transferable properties, indicating that the function is

⁶⁵ Sigmund Freud, “Female Sexuality” *Collected Papers* Vol. V, trans./ed. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 257.

⁶⁶ Juliet Mitchell, “Introduction” *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 24.

owed to the possibility of illusion, rather than possession. The shadow seeks to remind the viewer, that the photograph itself is only a product of light. Although a positive step in the destabilization of such a gender-based system, it is not without psychoanalytic baggage.

As Irigaray might argue, although the phallus has been relocated to the woman, the patriarchal system that privileges this organ remains in place. The woman is still located in relation to the man, and exists only to complement his sexuality through mimesis. Although she may no longer symbolically reference lack, the phallogentric structure continues to deny the woman any sense of her own “spécificité.” In this context, she remains his sexual opposite who characterizes excess through her feminine masquerade of jewelry and phallus. But is this indeed what transpires in the picture plane? Notice the male who is her partner, an anonymous body made to signify the extraneous other of Strong, wearing his voice as parallel adornment. It is all masquerade. Perhaps such imaginary gender signifiers, shifting meaning in presentation, do not negate all of the cultural baggage of their origins, yet they do problematize the binary structure that separates male from female.

Critics who would see the subversive power of the mock phallus, as already undermined through a (re)affirmation of the image it seeks to negate, raise a valid point. Irigaray suggests in regards to the male body, the existence of “un autre sexe, d’une autre: femme, lui paraisse encore inimaginable.”⁶⁷ In other words, Cumming could only conceive of his intervention within terms of the masculine. But why should this

necessarily indicate apathy or a lack of resistance. While an alternate feminine language might provide a more specific speech, its desire synonymous with the female speaker, all language assumes meaning through context and repetition. As such, it should be considered whether Butler's notion of intervention, be it parody, counter-signification, or any means within the existing order, is not a better solution. Cumming's production of signs of the superficial, within the sphere of a naturalized gender, undermines the system by raising consciousness. In contrast, a blatant attack and overthrow seems authoritarian in its zeal. As such rather than creating a space merely for the feminine, Cumming opens the gap between the sexes, widening subjectivity choice for all. In this greater territory, Cumming finds space for the other, reopening the possibility of a feminine desire, outside the masquerade. Nettie becomes the promise of this other.

As such, gender autonomy appears to derive from the site of location. Within a cultural system of determined gender identities, the sexes, particularly males, may prosper in so far as they validate the presence of phallic authority and mask it in transparency. Likewise, outside the system, those who indicate its fallacious nature through degradation of the phallic form as obscene, performed, and dependent upon a structure of desire, may assert power through knowledge of appearance. Like Antigone, they may shift their bodies from without to within, rupturing gender divisions in behaviour and implication. Thus, by offering themselves, they acknowledge the mask as display, separate from identity. Through this realization, they reclaim difference as a site of undetermined power, where identity is generated from complex negotiations between

⁶⁷ Irigaray, "Pouvoir du Discours, Subordination du Féminin", 82. The existence of, "an other sex, of an

the body and its environment. As such, masquerade becomes a place of agency, a desirable point of origin, and a rich site for raising the consciousness of identity formation.

Veiling Over the Masquerade

While the masquerade is largely structured by phallic concerns, its disruption need not be solely effected by blatant displays of the male member. Alternate devices such as veiling provide an equally potent means of disrupting normative gender conceptions. A subsequent layer of femininity, it is the thorns on the rose, pricking those who would cut it for their own. In the distance, seemingly an echo of the woman who would be for the man, in proximity a sign that she is for herself, veiling what she might “have”. As such, covering both absence, and presence, the veil intervenes in the commodity of phallic structures, marking the veiled body as sexually ambiguous. In its destruction of definite signposts, the veil denies gender signification through difference. Although the pivotal position of the veil may confirm phallic authority in its suspension of disbelief, there is a danger that it might confer the same privilege on the body of the woman. As such, the power of the veil becomes its ability to intervene in the scopic register of perception.

The veil has become a none too sparingly used word in contemporary discourse. Multivalent in form, it has had the distinction of being claimed by various disciplines, saturated with divergent and conflicting meanings. Although, its origin cannot be precisely located or dated, the cultural phenomena seems to have emerged from the

other: woman, who again appears unimaginable.”

Middle East, and in quite a different form than Western thinking has attributed to it. Fadwa El Guindi characterizes its Western inheritance within the common trope of the “veil-harem-eunuchs-seclusion-polygamy” dynamic.⁶⁸ As such, its borrowings in Western culture suggest not only an exotic sense of sexuality, but its subsequent critiques have forced it to bear the double burden of absorbing the onus of gender inequality. Yet, the phenomenon of the veil is not as singular as such a representation would have one suppose. Guindi notes that not only do both men and women wear veils in the Middle East, but the meaning is complex and varied.⁶⁹ In the case of the *lithma*, the garment simultaneously communicates femininity for the woman, while it is a mark of virility for the man.⁷⁰ Furthermore, she relates that in contrast to the Western tradition, there is no single word for the veil in Arabic, as there are so many forms and significations.⁷¹ As such, this inquiry into the veil within the Western tradition will not attempt to conflate a complex cultural system of dress, within another culture’s misrepresentation of it. Rather it will look to ways that its objectifying legacy may be intervened in.

A concept film theory has engaged on many occasions, the veil’s fluid properties disturb both physical and symbolic boundaries between surface and depth. Doane speaks of it as a lesser foil to the phallus, an object imbuing the subject with superficial depth on

⁶⁸ El Fadwa Guindi, “Introduction: Veiling in Perspective” *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

the surface.⁷² She suggests that this appearance of an exterior interiority, albeit veiled, makes the female subject an accessible surface; she is reduced to a sexual object.⁷³ Although I would not deny that the traditional cinematic use of this device would be intended to function in such a way, allaying masculine fears, I would suggest it is necessary to question if it does. By offering surface as soul, subjectivity is indeed afforded a barrier of protection. Laura U. Marks identifies such surface markings in contemporary cinema, within the rubric of Gilles Deleuze's haptic images.⁷⁴ Defining them as engaged with texture over form, she suggests that, "It [the eye] is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze."⁷⁵ She goes on to insist, that such haptic forms bridge the space between viewer and viewed, resolving their relationship on the surface.⁷⁶ In this way, erotic desire, an attribute almost intrinsic to the veil, is resolved beyond the boundaries of the subject. As such, visual appropriation of the body is denied, imbuing it with a complex opacity, giving rise to agency through veiling. Thus in its ambiguity, it is made to function within the same deceitful confines that structure the use of the mask. Properly employed it facilitates a renegotiation of the visual power structure. Yet perhaps there is a greater nuance of complexity. While the veil's function is to disguise, it simultaneously signals what it covers. Whereas the phallus derives meaning from context, the veil serves to contextualize. It functions to

⁷² Doane, "Veiling Over Desire", 52, 55.

⁷³ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁴ Laura U. Marks, "The Memory of Touch" *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (London: Duke University Press, 2000), 162.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 162.

disrupt a visual structure of logic that reinforces psychoanalytic conceptions of normative gender roles.

With this said, there is another body of thought, emerging out of post-colonial discourse, suggesting that the photographic fascination with traditionally veiled Muslim women enacts aspects of cultural and gendered subjugation. Alloula Malek, who has studied representations and readings of the Algerian tradition of veiling, suggests that when the veil of anonymity frustrates the photographer's desire to capture the individual subject, he simply removes the barrier, giving representation to her body.⁷⁷ Now while I do not dispute this to be an act of violence, one of control, I would suggest it has very little to do with the strategic functions of the veil. Rather, it is an unfortunate act of aggression in response to the violation of sight. Yet it need not remain uncountered, as the conclusive mark of authority. None of the images that I will introduce are literal veils. They function akin to the veil in so far as they screen vision, but their power arises not from their impenetrable surfaces, but from their mirror like qualities. Rather than show themselves in their negation, they reflect the viewer's transgression, bringing about a self-consciousness of the act. The pleasure of the look becomes the other's pain, if not effecting remorse, at least designating responsibility. As such, even the denuded body, need not be simply appropriated by the removal of the veil. For representation need not

⁷⁶ Ibid., 185.

⁷⁷ Malek Alloula, "Women from the Outside: Obstacle and Transparency" *The Colonial Harem Theory and History of Literature* Vol. 21, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 14.

be uniform and is always coinciding, in conversation with the production realized by others.

In the crudest sense, vision is typified by the active male gaze that exercises power over the passive female subject. It functions to symbolically illustrate dominance and control over her body. In the 1970s, Laura Mulvey began to explore this structure in the context of cinematic space. Her study yielded knowledge of a profound link between the notions of sight and pleasure. She argued that cinema fostered the scopophilic gaze, Freud's term for the pleasure that visual/psychological control over the passive object, afforded the viewer.⁷⁸ This effect was implemented through the imaging of the female as spectacle. Mulvey further argued that woman's traditional function in cinematic space was "to-be-looked-at-ness", directing both the view of the male protagonist and exterior observer to herself as the desired object.⁷⁹ In contrast, the male figure was outside of exhibition, existing only as a vehicle for spectator identification. Through the narrative, she argued that the male character came to possess his female counterpart, creating a vicarious visual pleasure of ownership for the spectator.⁸⁰ Furthermore, by fetishizing the woman's image, castration anxiety was eased, and the woman was divested of subjectivity.⁸¹ Through this process, the voyeuristic look came to be validated.

⁷⁸ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" *Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Longman, 1993), 114.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

Mulvey seeks to undermine this form of scopic pleasure through analysis. By revealing its function, she divests and demystifies the visual power structure. Yet, as revelatory as Mulvey's observations were, they could only suggest a tendency of the past in the recognition of the present. Through the fabrication of this system, she denied the possibility of either female intervention or agency within the system of sight, except in alternative cinema. Yet the veil seems to provide precisely that, a disruption of the phallic structure of the gaze. By screening the object from complete visual knowledge, symbolic appropriation is halted, as possibilities of danger deny possession and comprehension. Like Antigone, who veils her behaviour in the motive of divine law, suggesting that she acts as and for her brother, while in reality acting for herself in her transgression, the veiled subject simultaneously acts against and points to the forces which necessitate her veiling. Hers is an injured body that exacts revenge through the ruination of the system that has harmed it. That is, through her veiling she usurps the man's phallic privileges, showing that they are none. She acts, and she sees, both signs of agency. Thus the veil is a means of destabilizing the gaze, even if it occurs within the arguably negative arena of reactionary behaviour, as Doane posits.⁸² Yet feminine veiling need not constitute merely a defensive position, but may also signify a point of subversion. As veiling arouses the desire to know what is covered, one might even suggest that the veiled subject is in possession of the libido. In this way, the veil may come to signify masculine authority. Moreover, by visualizing a space between surface and appearance, it creates a place of subjectivity. Regardless as to whether or not this gesture is reactionary, it serves to

⁸² Doane, "Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman", 48.

reposition the subject at a new point of origin, presenting an opportunity for the (re)formation of identity. As such, the veil enables both defensive and active strategies in the subversion of the gaze.

This is nicely illustrated in Cadieux's *Juillet 94* (1995) [Figure 1.4], where surfaces deny themselves in the traces of a field of red clover and timothy grass. Overexposed and closed in upon itself, the possibility of botanical documentation is dismissed in its blurred ambiguity. Yet despite a lack of scientific value, the viewer is bombarded with the superfluous proximity and intimacy of visual information, magnified and enlarged, within the space. Largely an extension of the artist's close-up, a shot most commonly characterized by body images evocative of landscape, nature becomes an extended surface of the corporeal in the field of flowers. Akin to *Tears*, Cadieux's portrait of hazy snow with a title located in liquid pain, *Juillet 94* too, finds meaning in its relation to the human body. Its title a summer month, *Juillet 94* is in dialogue with other pieces such as *Juin* (1999), and *Tears* (1995), suggesting a cycle of generative renewal, as the seasons change. Transitioning through Winter, Spring and Summer, the meaning of the land becomes its reproductive continuity. As such, it metaphorically echoes the procreative purpose of woman.

Hardly a complex connection, woman and nature have been conflated as one for hundreds of years, both conceived of as reproductive property of the masculine. Reaffirming this link between floral field and woman, the name Juliette is structurally similar to the summer month. In this light, with Cadieux's frequent cinematic references, one wonders if the title is not a photographic echo of Fellini's film, *Juliette of the Spirits*.

Cited by Michèle Montrelay for its excessive depiction of the feminine masquerade, this film sees feathers, hats and “baroque constructions”, layered one upon another.⁸³ In this context, the repetition of flowers, like an overflowing “womanliness”, might signal the constructed nature of femininity. Following in the strategic subversions of Butler who sees repetition as a means of undermining the notion of an original gender, their profusion situates both as accessory, symbol. As such, the traditional affinity between woman and flower is affirmed. Yet the reference to construction becomes their disentanglement illustrating the gender connotations imposed on both. Hence, as valuable as this strategy might be, in this instance, it is at best subtle.

Therefore attention must be further directed to the affinity between nature and woman in the visual field. Noting their similar positions within the patriarchal order Gillian Rose states, “the sensual topography of land and skin is mapped by a gaze that is eroticized as masculine and heterosexual.”⁸⁴ As such, although scapes of different dimensions, they both occupy the place of sexual object, a marked territory of the eye. Recognizing the problem Rose further notes a necessity to intervene in the gaze through methods of, “position, scale and fragmentation”⁸⁵. Such techniques have obvious parallels to the function of the veil in its disruption of positions defined by viewed and viewer, and the visual fragmentation of the face. As the veil is largely synonymous with

⁸³ Michèle Montrelay, “Inquiry into Femininity” *The Woman in Question* ed. Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie (Cambridge Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1990), 264.

⁸⁴ Gillian Rose, “Looking at Landscape: The Uneasy Pleasures of Power” *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 97.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

the facial close-up, a comprehensive sense of scale also tends to be resisted. Hence, a field treated like a veil symbolically prevents not only its own plundering, but speaks to the assault upon its human double. Therefore, the subject matter is not contained within the frame, but rather its representation facilitates that which it points to. As such, the floral surface indicates a veil, functioning as a visual cue to the greater structure of sight reception and production. It visualizes the gaze.

Lacan understands the gaze as operating beyond the subject's scopic field, it is the vanishing point that is other to him, his *objet a*. As such, what he sees exceeds the property of the self, as the gaze emanates from a counterpoint containing those objects in his visual register as well as himself. However, as man understands his implication in this space, Lacan suggests that he manipulates his appearance through an invisible screen, and likewise understands what he sees to be marginal to the real.⁸⁶ Speaking of man's intervention in the gaze, he states, "He [Man] maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it."⁸⁷ As such the screen, much like the veil, is employed to stabilize vision through offering an appearance of reality, while it simultaneously functions to redirect or trap the viewer's gaze. This lure may manifest itself as a *dompte-regard*, or taming of the gaze, in so far as perception will depend on his willingness to lay aside his gaze.⁸⁸ In other words, to facilitate the reappearance of the

⁸⁶ Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze: What is a Picture" *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* vol. 11, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 108.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

represented, one must conceive of the idea of it, as the eye cannot exceed its position of lack. As such, in the context of photo-art where appearance is necessarily manipulated by the maker, something of the screen's function is most certainly visualized. That is, because the field appears just out of focus, one must confront the knowledge that vision may never confront the actual image. It is always interrupted, veiled. As such, scopic disruption seeks to illustrate the impotency of the appropriating look, offering only appearance, annihilating the symbol of power through the indication of its nothingness.

For Cadieux, the flowers are the support. They play a secondary role in the production of meaning. Here, the true subject is the screen itself, her mediation of sight, and the viewer's reflections upon its structural significations. She uses a flat surface and over-exposure, as a means to indicate vision as subject, offering the invisible in a tangible form. It recalls the painting that looks at us, and the look of its maker. It becomes subversive as it does not simply visualize a blurred sensation of nature, but through its indication of the Idea of appearance, it suggests that the world is constructed. Thus, it is like Parrhasios' painting of the veil which succeeded in deceiving his colleague Zeuxis. While Zeuxis could paint grapes that might trick birds into misrecognition, Parrhasios' veil moved beyond mimesis to incite desire, the question of what lay behind.⁸⁹ By presenting a screen of distorted flowers, Cadieux too provokes the desire to know what exceeds the limits of the frame. Yet Cadieux's model challenges the authority which permits the translation of desire into visual knowledge, for her screen indeed refers back

⁸⁹ Ibid., 102.

to its referent. Thus, through her mediation of the image, she suppresses the phallic gaze, and affords her floral subject with agency.

The mark of the artist's hand, redirects the viewer's attention to the field of clover, which originally deflected vision away from itself as the possible subject of representation. The manipulation of space might have been rendered with any number of objects to create surface tension, but a field was chosen. As a manifestation of nature, an object in constant flux and regeneration, it seems to mimic the instability of vision. Yet perhaps it evokes more. Couched in a long tradition of female flower painting, the subject suggests both feminine creation and the allegory of the female as the seemingly fecund, passive flower. Thus the field becomes a stand-in for the female body, a surrogate skin.

There is no phallic focal point, but rather, in the Irigarian sense of sexuality, it is not one. As the structure disrupts the gaze, it blocks penetration allowing the woman to retain this sense of multiplicity, closed in upon her self. By repositioning it at a point of power within the visual and phallic structure, stereotypes are undermined and shown to be false, as it is simply a veil that suspends this reality. Here, the Freudian binary of the passive and active look, as respectively feminine and masculine, is disturbed as the female subject of the image, in a Lacanian sense, looks back. If Freud's seeing is ultimately derived from touch, then the unstable surface plane aspires to deny this possibility.⁹⁰ This is therefore a feminine vision seeking to disrupt a male structure of sight/site formation.

⁹⁰ Stephen Heath, "Difference" *Screen* 19.3 (1978), 86.

The image also dispels the myth of feminine weaving as examined by Irigaray in the *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Here, she ponders how the only invention in history attributed to woman is the art of weaving. Irigaray suggests that this act is justified as proper to woman, as it is a mimesis of nature, specifically the pubic hair.⁹¹ The woman is said to use this act of weaving like a veil in which to guise her lack and disguise what value she may possess, thus divesting herself of power.⁹² Through this guise she eases male anxiety surrounding castration and invests the phallus with an even greater significance as fetish. Her hymen is either hidden within the context of the disavowal of feminine castration, or it becomes the property of the marriage contract in which it serves to wrap and guise the process of reproduction.⁹³ In the latter case of the matrical, the possibility of feminine *jouissance* is denied, as the woman must suspend the illusion that she is not without.

It is within this context of sexual encounter, that a recuperative possibility presents itself. Although the comprehension of difference may be suppressed, the experience remains. Cadieux's floral image, woven in its surface texture, plays upon this fear. As much as it appears to veil, the signification of flowers is indisputably reproductive. Generative growth is externalized, visualizing that which is presented in terms of absence or lack. Thus the veil becomes the valued body of reproduction, signaling gender difference. Although the ultimate message is one of gender specificity, it

⁹¹ Luce Irigaray, "The Blind spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry" *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 115.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

relegates difference within the confines of the biological. Here reproduction is validated as a feminine function, yet the passively observed woman as object is shown to be no more than illusion constructed by a culturally impaired gaze. Thus Cadieux's use of structural veiling in *Juillet 94*, of the surrogate female as flower, functions to destabilize a theorized system of looking that violates the female body through the gaze.

Cumming, too, turns to the veil as a retaliatory gesture against the gaze, yet his approach is realized in a largely different manner. In the *May 13, 1992* [Figure 1.5] image of Nettie, from the *Pretty Ribbons* series (1993), structural symbols are once again (re)appropriated. Here, Nettie's wrinkled face lies beneath billowy white material that echoes the curtain in the background. Although not a literal, material veil, the gauzy effect of the curtain and its careful placement allow it to function within the same symbolic structure. That is, through the concealment of the face, the desire to know the surface beneath is incited. Yet to sustain this desire, it is necessary never to access the masked surface. This structure is described by Lacan who states:

Generally speaking, the relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves allure. The subject is presented as other than he is, and what one shows him is not what he wishes to see. It is in this way that the eye maintains the function as *objet a*, that is to say, at the level of lack.⁹⁴

Thus, as Lacan acknowledges, desire is suspended by this sense of absence. This creates what Doane considers to be "contradictory desires", which she conceives in terms of distance.⁹⁵ She argues that the veil compels a wish to know what it covers, but what it

⁹⁴ Jacques Lacan, "The Lign and Light" *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11 ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 104.

⁹⁵ Doane, "Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman", 54.

covers is a lack of depth, it “reduces all to a surface”.⁹⁶ As such, Doane argues that rather than protect the woman’s subjectivity, it offers her as an erotic support for representation.⁹⁷ Thus for Doane, the veil is not a means of averting the gaze, but suspends it in the production of desire. Therefore, its removal would be more fortuitous for the woman. However for Lacan, even upon its removal the object will not be seen, as the viewer is incapable of perceiving the real. Because of the eye’s lack, what one sees is always mediated by the screen. As such, the inclusion of the veil functions to indicate the presence of the invisible screen, suggesting the woman’s appearance and perception as produced by subjects. As such, it points to the lack and instability in vision.

Yet at this level of misperception, there is a gender bias. Doane suggests that to name the veil feminine is to suggest that femininity is unstable and deceitful, functioning akin to the material cover.⁹⁸ This designation functions in contrast, if not in support of the claim to a stable male identity, as the female body is made to signify the impossibility of knowing any identity. Her body becomes likened to the veil, dangerous in its concealment, and concealed to mask its danger. It points to the need to control her, while simultaneously allowing the illusion that she is knowable, mapped upon the surface material. As such, the haunting fear of what lies beneath is allayed, as he simplifies it to be synonymous with the surface. Therefore, while his face remains exposed, it does so to signify the subjectivity of the individual. In contrast, the material surface of the veil is

⁹⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 74.

⁹⁸ Doane, “Veiling over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman”, 46.

seemingly written upon, controlled from an exterior position. As such, the agency of the subject, who creates sexual desire through the mask, appears to be usurped by the (re)appropriation of the mask.

The distance between body and masquerade is also re-enforced by the veil. It traditionally allows for the woman to become (no)body. Distance is suggested through the hidden face as a denial of individuality, and the subsequent signification of the veiled body as woman. That her eyes are covered, implies lack of sight or passivity in looking, relegating her to the realm of the object and outside of agency. The male may look upon her in a voyeuristic manner, for she does not return his gaze, her purpose is to fulfill his visual consumption. As this state of visual relations is superficial and fabricated, distance is required to suspend the fantasy. That is why Derrida defines woman's seduction as dependent upon distance, but what he in fact reveals is that the performance of gender requires distance. Yet as Marks suggests, the eroticism of intimacy closes that distance.⁹⁹

The veil plays a pivotal role in the suspension of gender difference. Speaking in the context of the *film noir*, Doane argues that the *femme fatale* destabilizes the gender divide through her claim to desire. As seductress, she improperly exercises the male libido, positioning herself as the object of want. Yet her seduction is performative, duplicitous and unstable.¹⁰⁰ These attributes elicit fear in men, who question what lies beneath the guise. To rectify the problem, Doane suggests that Hollywood has coded feminine deceit through the introduction of the veil. The veil points to this deception,

⁹⁹ Laura U. Marks, "The Memory of Touch" *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, 174.

¹⁰⁰ Doane, "Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman", 46.

defining it against a stable masculine identity that is purportedly knowable. As such, Doane argues that, “the veil functions to visualize (and hence stabilize) the instability, the precariousness of sexuality.”¹⁰¹ Thus, it seeks to re-invest a binary system of gender relations, by suggesting essential identities, rather than constructed ones. This form of representation harkens back to Nietzschean ideas of woman as actress “they” ‘put on something’ even when they take off everything.”¹⁰²

However, the surface is only part of this equation. It is also necessary to examine the object that the veil covers. The veil guises the face, the space that Doane locates as the property of the other.¹⁰³ Susan Stewart suggests that it is a corporeal text that communicates through a system of signs.¹⁰⁴ Thus to cover the face is to deny the gaze, and by implication, knowledge. Simpson notes that the face is also the vehicle through which sex is represented in the visual sphere. He suggests that the display of pleasure functions to retain visibility of the phallus when it disappears into the body of the other.¹⁰⁵ As such, Nettie’s no face, allows the viewer to project his imagined phallus into the image, as there is no other sign of masculinity, yet it simultaneously repulses his visual advances, as her form is stagnant. Her mask is the rejection of the masculine other’s privileged phallus.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁰² Nietzsche, “Book V: 361”, 317.

¹⁰³ Doane, “Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman”, 47.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁰⁵ Mark Simpson, “A World of Penises: Gay Videoporn” *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 136.

Simultaneously, in a complex game of semantics, Cumming reclaims an identity for Nettie. Her naked body is exposed, suggestive of sexuality. She is clearly a stable body, contrary to Nietzschean assertions of the feminine, and is in possession of the characteristically male libido. It is undeniably through her masquerade that she incites desire. By imaging her flesh, one understands woman as an ontologically produced being. Her identity is not the masquerade of femininity as Rivière posits as the nature of woman.¹⁰⁶ Nor is it Derrida's belief that woman is a "non-identity, a non-figure, a simulacrum – is distance's very chasm."¹⁰⁷ However, he is correct to claim her 'distortion' of an essential gender.¹⁰⁸ But both authors fail to see the relevance of this gap between gender and identity. It is not a divide between woman and her appearance as feminine, but the indication that all behaviour is separate from one's biological position. In contrast with the tangible surface of Nettie's skin, the veil indicates the space between body and performance. Layers, one on top of the other, they will never be as one.

Nettie's nudity further serves to undermine traditional associations with the veil, as she is neither young nor beautiful. A woman well into her senior years, her body is marked with liver spots and wrinkles, while swatches of grey, highlight her hair. Absent of the primary characteristics that the veil wields in its acts of seduction, the figure of Nettie confuses its signification. Other to ideal beauty, her aged body, like the corpse of Antigone, cannot stand for the female gender. Yet, Nietzsche, who believes woman to be

¹⁰⁶ Joan Rivière, "Womanliness as Masquerade" *Formations of Fantasy* (London: Methuen, 1986), 38.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 39.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

incognizant of her deceptive masquerade, as a condition for its performance, awards the older woman a special position. He suggests that in the absence of beauty, she may see the superficial displays of feminine identity as merely a device to bring modesty to sexual relations.¹⁰⁹ Thus for Nietzsche, sex/sexuality is shameful. Here, Cumming exposes Nettie's knowledge of the masquerade through the visualization of age, but invests her body with a positive sense of sexuality, refusing to cover it. Her body becomes a site of power where she may manufacture a masquerade, not to conform to ideas of the feminine, but as a space from which agency is derived. Visually it is the body that is stable, while the surrogate veil is caught in the wind, transient. Through the display of nudity, modesty is dispelled and notions of desire echo the signification of the veil. Just as Antigone's inanimate corpse references the activity that left her in this state, Nettie's partial veiling indicates the entirety of the sexual body behind. Agency is relocated.

For both Cadieux and Cumming, the veil serves as a device for the feminine to renegotiate a system of seeing, to reclaim power. In the next image, Evergon, too, employs such visual interventions manifest in a pricking disruption of penetration. However, there the veil is not singularly confined to the realm of sight formations. Evergon's *St. Sebastian* (1984) [Figure 1.6] may also be explored through a symbolic structure, as a means to locate spectator position. Although the veil does not exist as a material object, it functions as a communication screen, selectively transmitting degrees of meaning. In effect, cultural literacy functions as a pre-requisite to transgress the veil in the form of viewer identification. As such, even if the eye attempts to transgress the

¹⁰⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Book II: 64" *The Gay Science* (New York: Random House, 1974), 125.

picture plane, usurpation may not occur. Because a subsequent veil comprised of symbols covers meaning, to access it will never be an act of aggression, as understanding requires an invested recognition. That is, in the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “to identify *as* must always include multiple processes of identification *with*.”¹¹⁰ As such she suggests that viewer recognition is a fundamental part of the communicative process as it implies more than comprehension, but community.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Sedgwick sees this identification as particular to homosexual culture, as it privileges the “homo” aspect of sameness.¹¹² As such, employing culturally coded queer imagery, Evergon’s work is largely dependent on the pre-established knowledge of a like community. Therefore, through individual comprehension or lack thereof, strata of identity are established. Cognition of queer implications suggests a position within, or periphery to this community, while those who fail to understand the visual language remain exterior to the metaphorical veil. Thus, the structure facilitates the transmission of voice, for and through the male body, simultaneously shielding content from potentially confrontational forces.

This is most clearly demonstrated in the subject matter selection. Although Evergon presents the figure of St. Sebastian, a message of Christian morality seems an unlikely interpretation of the sensual image. Yet this apparent contradiction serves to

¹¹⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Introduction: Axiomatic” *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 61.

¹¹¹ Kim Michasiw, “Camp, Masculinity, Masquerade” *Feminism Meets Queer Theory* ed. Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 161.

¹¹² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Introduction: Axiomatic”, 62.

locate meaning. It references a tradition of representation that has depicted the scantily clad saint as effeminate, sexually charged, and almost masochistic in nature. This erotic display conveyed an alternate image of the male body that could generate meaning distant from its religious origin. Thus, St. Sebastian came to be co-opted as sexual object, into the sub-cultural language of the queer community. Jean-Martin Charcot's use of St. Sebastian's body for scientific conceptions of the homosexual and Julia Kristeva's claim that he is 'soulosexual', gives academic validity to the popular sub-cultural notion.¹¹³

However, this queer reading of the saint is not necessarily overt, if not quite oblique from a heterosexual standpoint. In fact, the indication of homosexuality threatens phallic authority, as it seeks to distill the homogenous form of masculinity which stakes claim to it. That the homosexual male body can only be read through performative or symbolic display, further illustrates that sexuality is in no way dependent on gender. This transparency of sexual preference can confer a place of power for the homosexual within the dominant order. It can provide both protection from persecution, while undermining the values of the persecutors through a seamless integration into the heterosexual society.

A parallel to this structure may be seen in the events leading to the canonization of St. Sebastian. A Christian saint, Sebastian died for his religious convictions in an intolerant third century Rome. Discovered to be infiltrating the Roman military, he was shot by archers, and failing this, beaten to death.¹¹⁴ The danger of the saint was not his Christian faith, but his infiltration into the pagan army as other. Although an unfortunate

¹¹³ Ibid., 90.

demise for Sebastian, the representation of suffering, suggests the ultimate triumph of his cause, and its subsequent uncovering. Sebastian functions as a sign of the oppressed transformed into legitimate authority, providing both a model for the homosexual community, as well as a subversive commentary on Catholicism in its rejection of the homosexual culture. Thus, just as the female blinds the male to her theft, through a surface negation of masculinity, guised by the mask of the feminine, the male averts signs of difference through the excess of sameness. His ability to superficially conform, destabilizes a seemingly intractable homogenous order of masculinity, indicating sexual difference from within. This allows for the formation of political change from the position of the dominant voice.

Evergon further exploits this perceived point of power by subversively representing Sebastian in a largely traditional manner. Broadly quoting a Baroque style, he references a history of religious suffering in which the expression of pain and pleasure become dangerously close to one another. Head and eyes tilted back, the mouth parted in a suggestive moan, Evergon's St. Sebastian does not suffer, but rather, seems to be in a state of ecstasy. This expression appears as a belated echo to Bernini's statue of *St. Teresa of Avila* (1645-52), about which Lacan states, "As for Saint Teresa-you only have to go look at Bernini's statue in Rome to understand immediately that she's coming, there is no doubt about it."¹¹⁵ Rather than the pious tone, appropriate to a saint ascending into the spiritual realm, she appears to be enjoying a distinct carnality in the penetration. Her

¹¹⁴ Richard A. Kaye, "Losing His Religion: Saint Sebastian as Contemporary Gay Martyr" *Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities and Visual Cultures*, ed. Peter Horne and Reina Lewis (London: Routledge, 1996), 89.

face reveals that the arrow piercing her flesh is no more an arrow than Evergon's needles. It is a sign of phallic pleasure. This is precisely what Lacan means when he claims, "virile display itself appears as feminine."¹¹⁵ That is, masculine presence is reliant upon its affirmation in the expression of the penetrated, read female, body. Thus, the saint's face possesses a double function of signifying both male sexuality and desire. St. Sebastian becomes the hermaphroditic body capable of indicating both masculine and feminine positions. As such, like Antigone he confuses sexuality, simultaneously performing as male and female.

The notion of penetration is also enforced by the enlarged figure whose blurred image functions in the space of the frame, and blends into the main surface image as landscape. He functions to suggest penetration through the picture plane, visually becoming the origin of ecstasy, and symbolically situating the viewer as penetrator. Thus, he forces the viewer not only to confront his visual trespass of voyeuristic hedonism, but further presses him to reflect upon his own sexual tendencies both repressed and realized.

Prying vision is further checked by visual cues that block the gaze, providing a surface where power positions may be renegotiated. This is most clearly indicated in the arrangement of needles that lie flat across the surface. Semantic stand-ins for the arrows that pierced the Saint in his martyrdom, the needles fail to puncture his flesh. Rather, they hover on a horizontal grid across the surface, independent of the Saint's body. As such, they serve to disrupt a direct view of the subject, placing distance between the viewer and

¹¹⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne* trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 147.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

the viewed, and the saint and his martyrdom identity. They are a peculiar surface anomaly that through the catalyst of form, forces the viewer into reflectivity. The substitution of needles for arrows must necessarily jar the passive look into the inquiry of intent. Context provides a vehicle for explanation.

It is here, that it once again becomes necessary to comprehend the queer implications of the work. This is not merely a (re)production of the Christian Saint, but the image is imbued with a homosexual connotation of sadomasochism and perhaps a footnote to AIDS. Initially marginalized as a homosexual plague, and justified by conservative critics as divine vindication for immoral acts of sexuality, allusions to the terminal illness may not seem likely upon first perusal. Identified spectatorship rather acknowledges the possibility of tone to construct a nuanced meaning. Fabricated by a homosexual artist for a like, identified, or ignorant audience, perhaps its purpose is to excite a more constructive message. Shirking the literal, the needles may suggest a positive symbolic function of the disease. Peculiar as this may first appear, AIDS has been theorized as a post-modern disease of simulacra, as generative and incurable, outside of medical control.¹¹⁷ As it negates the possibility of an exterior regulation of the body's health, it functions to mirror the absurdity of attempts to repress or regulate sexuality. Thus the Cartesian divide of mind and body is reduced to ridicule. The mind can neither alter disease nor sexuality, as both stem from the body. Thus the

¹¹⁷ Lee Edelman, "The Mirror and the Tank: 'AIDS,' Subjectivity and the Rhetoric of Activism" *Homographesis: essays in gay literary and cultural theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 95.

representations of AIDS become a symbolic point of power, far from a position of Bersani's death in the rectum, as the subordinate who is penetrated.¹¹⁸

The arrows perhaps also function at the level of parody. An obvious phallic gesture, the repetition of needles implies phallic excess. Through this measure of repetition, what in fact is imaged, is the sign of the masculine. Yet instead of depicting a single object of phallic desire, multiplicity suggests a greater possibility of object choice. Much like the drag queen who assumes feminine attire, or the lesbian's mock phallus, repetition of the model creates a space in which gender roles may undermine the system from which they are derived. Through tedious repetition, the penetration of the penetrator becomes normalized.¹¹⁹ In a Deleuzian sense, the function of repetition also serves to illustrate the fundamental difference in identity.¹²⁰ Arguing that imitation's primary significance is difference rather than similarity, Deleuze indicates a possibility of various meanings emerging from a singular form. This translates as a plurality of sexual object choice as natural or authentic within the sphere of sexuality. As such, the metaphorical arrows simultaneously function as spatial disruption of the unidentified look, while unveiling the lack of authority that such a gaze exposes through the visualization of its construction.

And it is truly the notion of authenticity that the masquerading subject seeks to undermine. Be it through its overt disruption of the phallic symbol in its denaturalization,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁹ Judith Butler, "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion" *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 125.

or in the shameless mutation of the surface of a feminine veil which looks back, the masquerade always has the potential to undermine the distorted gender roles which first gave rise to it, for which it was fabricated to support. It does not deny difference between the male and female body, but rather seeks to expose cultural constructions that make claim to a natural identity proper to the sexes. This charge is not innovative, yet the process through which it comes to be co-opted into the new naturalized order of thought, is still a fertile ground for inquiry. Cadieux, Cumming and Evergon all produce confrontational images that visualize the ambiguity of gender identity, problematized by shifting societal conceptions of the body. By disrupting traditional power structures defined by the mock phallus, and its position of power in vision, these artists foster a critical understanding of the meaning of gender. They do not strive to belittle the male subject, but through use of the post-orgasmic penis, implications of masculinity as performance, and shadowed mimesis of the original object, propose to give him greater depth. While masculinity may have existed as the site of privilege, it also precluded the possibility of experiencing the full spectrum of human emotion and behaviour. Thus, to undermine the privileges of the phallus is to generate a space of identity formation choice, congenial to all. Simultaneously, the veil becomes the vehicle through which scopophilic structures are disrupted, sexual connotations are deflated, and layers of identity come to be realized through self-recognition. It provides a protective barrier for the subject and implicates the viewer in the gaze. Thus, the masquerade becomes the Antigonean process of self-awareness. It becomes the realization that one's body is not a

¹²⁰ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: The Pluralist Empiricism Studies in European Thought*

product of its gender, but rather a complex being in constant negotiation between self and environment, perception and presentation.

Chapter 2: Silent Voices, Violent Bodies

Since Descartes first postulated a separation between mind and body, authors of western discourse have sought to concretize the divide. This disjuncture has been widely realized through the creation of a sensory hierarchy that has assigned privilege to the senses most distanced from the body. Functioning within a society, deemed by many to be predominately visual, words and images have come to indicate a standardized meaning, articulated in a communal space beyond the body. This homogenous quality suggests a rational, uniform meaning that de-emphasizes the individual signs of tone and texture in a pretense of interpretative sameness. Yet this illusion cannot be sustained. As the multi-sensory is located within the visual codes, a friction arises between what is imaged and its relationship to the human body. The ways in which visual objects produce emotional stimuli within cannot be relegated to the classification of a common exterior experience, but must be understood as unique. As such, a slippage between what one sees and experiences through other senses must be admitted. In this way, sign and sense become indivisible.

Cognition is hence not an intellectual process, but rather an embodied recognition, the image a stimulant of a latent memory. Images that are evocative of taste, touch, smell, and sound heighten this realization in the viewer, undermining the illusion that the visual exceeds an embodied comprehension. They underscore the interconnectivity of the senses, narrowing the divide between a presumably “rational” vision and the emotional connotations of the greater sensory system. This serves to divest the visual realm of its authority, suggesting a bodily mediation of the image, and denying the possibility of its

content as a single truth. This juxtaposition of the senses indicates subjectivity in the scopic register, dislocating traditional positions as designated between the seer and the object of sight. Colliding at the intersections of visual evocation, sensory representations expose the superficial nature of a codified visual knowledge. They undermine a position of privilege, while simultaneously re-investing its codes with new meanings. As such, they serve to subversively awaken the viewer from the normative.

The call for a sensory awareness in the viewer has been evoked as a contemporary strategy to re-assign subjectivity to the imaged body. It stimulates two primary realizations. On the first count, it demonstrates how the visual register seeks to contain the object of the look as spectacle, distinct and distanced from the self. Like Freud's observation of child's play, in terms of *fort* and *da*, or here and there, the object of the look is the "not me".¹²¹ Through the display of the sensorial, the space between the image and viewer collapses as the viewer engages sensory stimulants in himself. The spectacle is relocated. As such, viewer behaviour shifts from voyeurism to an embodied empathy motivated by identification with the subject. This brings about a heightened awareness of power relations structured by the scopic register. That is, through empathy evoked by sensory stimulus, the viewer becomes the object of the look and hence heightens his awareness of his voyeuristic intrusion in the penetration of the frame. Secondly, it negates the Cartesian split reintegrating body and mind. As such, the body assumes an

¹²¹ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 18. ed./trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 15.

increased importance in the understanding of subjectivity, describing environmental interactions encoding material experience in the flesh.

By no means a new technique, sensory stimulus has manifested itself at various intervals throughout the history of art. Orientalists of the nineteenth century transported the viewer to the Occident through the scent of ethereal trails of opium smoke and the cool touch of silks, skimming the surface of warm bodies. Flemish painters of the seventeenth century taunted salivatory glands through the representation of rare and decadent lemons and oranges. The white flesh of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) evoked the purity and smoothness of virgin skin cloaked from the sun. In each case, the images functioned harmoniously within the visual discourse in which they operated; they reaffirmed the exotic sensorium of foreign/other cultures and the worth of the woman as manifested in her exterior form. Sensory representations were made complicit in the subjugation of the female/exotic other. Passively permitting observation through pleasing representation, sensory elements were made to affirm the structure of vision, like the woman's absorption of masculine lack. Hence, to reclaim the sensory presents the body with a means to articulate its pain in a manner antithetical to the images, locating them at injuries' structural cause. It becomes the visualization of Antigone's corpse which might have been a blushing bride. As such, their discordant re-emergence in contemporary art practice, largely in the work of feminists and post-colonial artists, is highly appropriate in the project of reclaiming the 'other' body.

Geneviève Cadieux, Donigan Cumming, and Evergon have eloquently drawn upon strategies of sensorial discourse in their representation of other bodies. Sharing an

underlying respect for the represented subject, they have maintained a protective space of agency in the presentation of their subjects through sensory-stimuli. The opening of a silent mouth is a recurrent image in their collective oeuvres. Brimming with symbolic connotations, it is the juncture between the body and the exterior world. It is the site of verbal output, the indicator of sound. Conjuring the silent voice from the photograph, each artist seeks to move the images into the psychoanalytic sphere, the space which Stephen Heath has calls the “anti-visible.”¹²² It is through this device that Cadieux gives expression to the unspeakable, Evergon indicates the hysteric’s intervention in language, and Cumming explores intersections of voices and bodies. Yet, representation reaches beyond voice, spilling over into a wider sensory field. Cadieux presents the abject and aromatic touch of perfume, visualized in tears of consciousness. They denounce the fragrance’s implication of the woman’s body in a commodity of desire, in being for the other. Turning mythology back upon itself, Evergon too challenges a language of judgment and subordination in the sensory realm. Eliciting fear in an allusion to sexual perversity, he employs the fetishistic object of the shoe as a means of threatening the authority of the phallus that rejects and ridicules the queer body. Finally, Cumming images the properties of touch in caress, implementing hybridity to undermine traditional power structures of sanctioned racial relations. Harnessing sensory agents of the body, summoning voice, touch and scent, Cadieux, Evergon and Cumming challenge the primacy of a phallic vision, exposing it as fraudulent and offering a place of resistance.

¹²² Stephen Heath, “Difference” *Screen* 19 (1978): 3, 58.

Voices Void and Variant

Voice becomes the site of agency in Cadieux's *Hear Me With Your Eyes* (1989) [Figure 2.1, 2.2, 2.3]. Consistent with the artist's images of injured bodies, the silent scream slips through the subject's lips, disavowing the visual field that seeks to contain her cry. A conceptual triptych spatially dislocated, three large-scale photographs of two headshots, and a close-up of a mouth, comprise the piece. Remarkably similar to one another in pose and expression, the two facial images are distanced by more than a moment in time. Here, Cadieux offers up her sister Anne-Marie as visual spectacle. Through the subject's muted pain, an attempt to repulse intrusive eyes and promote reflection upon trespass, is suggested. Heavy eyelids close the model's eyes to the gaze that has fallen upon her bare shoulders and parted, stained red lips. Hair upswept, Cadieux removes her sister's last barrier from vision, offering her body as surface.

Yet there is a variance between the two portrait shots. The black and white image comes from the same film used in the earlier work, *Voices of Reason, Voices of Madness* (1983), creating an uncanny echo of it. While the similar second shot, taken several years after, reiterates the temporal lapse by the juxtaposition of colour and black white photography. The double exposure of the latter image further affirms the gap between the two. Distorted by the slow shutter speed, a blurred profile of the head extends from the frontal body that simultaneously suggests the multiplicity of the subject, and the long endured consistency of pain. Ever breaching the gap of proximity, the images culminate in the final frame, an isolated icon of the lips, vast and gaping. Collectively, cinematic in scale, these intense close-ups impinge on the intimate space of the viewer, almost

sculptural in nature. Here, the voice functions as an extension of the body into external space.¹²³ Yet, the extreme close-up of the mouth bespeaks what has remained stagnant, the silenced voice, the scream. In this way Geneviève Cadieux's oeuvre eschews the visual surface through that which it signifies. Exorcising silent bodies from the frame, mute voices are recovered through the deafness of the print. What exceeds the articulation of language finds expression in the visualization of its failure.

In *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan postulates that, "every Word calls for a reply", that "there is no word without a reply."¹²⁴ He understands speech as signaling lack, equally evoking the presence of what is spoken, as the absence of the unarticulated.¹²⁵ That is, what remains unsaid elicits a desire in the auditor to discover the absence that the Word does not speak. As such, the auditor must observe what cannot be articulated. He must turn to what is made manifest in the subject's behaviour. It is this limitation of speech that Cadieux seems to evoke in her broadly instructional title, "*Hear Me With Your Eyes*". Quoting a seventeenth century poem by Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, she suggests a need for an alternate form of perception for when the voice cannot speak or to convey what is in excess of speech. Moreover, an early advocate of education and woman's rights, Cruz was silenced by the church for her activism.¹²⁶ As such, Cruz's

¹²³ Elaine Scarry, "Introduction" *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 33.

¹²⁴ Jacques Lacan, "The Empty and the Full Word" *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968), 9.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²⁶ Peggy Gale, "Skin Deep: The Beauty and Resonance of Geneviève Cadieux's installations come from her mixing of memory with desire" *Canadian Art* vol. 7, no. 1 (1990 Spring), 64.

covert language called for a bodily resistance of gestures; a less firmly codified site from which to challenge authority. Cadieux's reprisal of Cruz's demand, suggests stagnant gender politics, a continued silence, and the need to perpetuate this strategy of resistance. It is also a tribute to the memory of Cruz, part of a feminist attempt to recover and acknowledge a history of women.

The photograph necessarily produces a mute subject, but more accurately indicates the woman's silence in language. Its figurative content points back to its literal connotations, relocating meaning in lived space. Although woman might speak, there is no assurance that she will be heard, or understood by the other. She indeed bears a double burden, as her failure to communicate exceeds the Lacanian notion of the "Empty Word". It is not that she is incompetent or incapable in her expression, but rather language denies what she must speak. There are no words, no structures to fulfill her expression. The language that brings her into being as a linguistic subject denies her subjectivity. As Lacan suggests, one is born into a language that enslaves through the first inscription as being, that is, the proper name.¹²⁷ Moreover, the designation female bears an even bleaker future for the subject. In it, she finds herself belonging not only to language, but as a subordinate to the lesser slave, to man. In this way, the words that she speaks come to betray her, as they identify her as subject, divesting her of subjectivity. To achieve recourse, Cadieux empties language through a scream leased into the silence of the

¹²⁷ Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" Jacques Lacan: A Selection trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton & Co., 1977), 148.

frame. In doing so, she directs the viewer to the more immediate sphere of the body, to signify what her subject cannot say.

Cadieux's use of multiple languages further underscores this disparity between the spoken and the heard, the confines of speech in language. Employing three different languages, she denies the completion of meaning in any one. This effect is realized through the presentation of a mystical Mexican *lamento* translated into English, although intended for a primarily French audience. Her interwoven languages may initially frustrate the viewer, simultaneously including and excluding him from meaning. For in their multiplicity, they do appear to underline the intrinsic failures of communication. However in their variance, they simultaneously seek to thicken meaning in the field of representation.

Johanne Lamoureux has argued that Cadieux's use of language, too, emerges from a particular Québécois context. She suggests that French Canadian art has traditionally been presented as the feminine, poetic element, in contrast to a masculine, theoretical genre, largely typified by production in Vancouver.¹²⁸ In other words, the French contingency has structurally held the position of the woman. She brilliantly acknowledges the parallel, likening Pierre Trudeau's query, "What does Quebec want?" to Freud's question of the woman, "Was will das Weib?"¹²⁹ This observation suggests an oppressed French populace that is not only the feminine structural support of English Canada, but a community that is not understood by it. Even through the gesture of

¹²⁸ Johanne Lamoureux, "French Kiss from a No Man's Land: Translating the Art of Quebec" *Arts Magazine* vol. 63, no. 6 (February, 1991), 48-49.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 52. "What does woman want?"

translation, she suggests that divergent positions of the cultures refuse exact meaning, producing, “mute translations.”¹³⁰ However, Lamoureux posits that this piece may help to facilitate communication through a shift of the sensory. In this way, moving attention beyond the structure of language to the emotional indicators of the body, visual expression stakes claim to its being as universal language. As such, the pained signs of mouth and visage appear to be a truthful externalization of the internal, codified and knowable by the other.

Something of physiognomy and a society of *flaneurs* emerge in such a presumption, in the desire that a surface will suffice for knowledge of subjectivity. Yet, a problem arises in the process of its codification, revealing its claim to an ontological naturalism as a hoax. Akin to language, it is fundamentally comprised of readable signs, gestural words culturally constructed outside the body. Lacan in fact suggests precisely that.¹³¹ However, greater insight into subjectivity may be gleaned by the singular abandon of both. Although there will never be complete comprehension of the other, the spaces between provide an oblique glance at meaning. In their crossings, they reveal something in excess of sign. Furthermore, the body’s contradiction of speech destabilizes its content, indicating the unbridgeable gap between the spoken word and meaning. The intended communication is always in excess of the sum total of speech or perceived gestures in the visual field. Like Antigone’s declaration that she acts in the name of the divine, when her agenda is clearly to undermine the authority of the state/family, what is

¹³⁰ Ibid., 54.

¹³¹ Jacques Lacan, “Interpretation and Temporality” *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968), 60.

absent becomes the point of meaning. In other words, Antigone speaks of her act as other than the act is because masculinist speech will not validate her action. Thus Anne-Marie's silence indicates the impossibility of the act of speech, while subversively using that language to point to the pain that its oppressive inadequacy effects. In this way, Cadieux uses language and vision, tools traditionally implemented in the oppression of woman, to undermine one another. In effect, she produces what Lacan considers to be the disfunction of language. Through the increased attention to subjectivity, created through a greater specificity of facial and body gestures, she negates speech's function as language.¹³² In the absence of voice, they signal something of a tone inflected in speech, a specificity that language is unable to approximate.

Furthermore, the absence of the "Empty Word" demands an infinite delivery of subsequent speech in its appeal for the completeness of truth.¹³³ It produces a desire to know. Therefore, it is through the unspoken which speech veils that the other is seduced through language. Lacan suggests that it is due to this emptiness, which constitutes the construction and subsequent reconstruction of the self that the desire of the other is sustained.¹³⁴ This seduction is echoed in the ambiguous facial expression of Cadieux's subject, one that verges on the precipice between pleasure and pain. The parted sultry red lips are erotically charged indicating the desire to be desired which Lacan believes to be the function of language. His use of the German term *durcharbeiten*, or working through,

¹³² Ibid., 62.

¹³³ Lacan., "The Empty and the Full Word", 9.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 11.

most clearly elucidates this dynamic. It is this sense of a continuous repetition of the self through the “Empty Word” that sustains desire, which Lacan believes to be the subject’s primary goal.¹³⁵ As such, through the visage of her sister, Cadieux seems to indicate the seduction intrinsic to identity construction. In other words, what she withholds from the viewer can never be fully gleaned. Any claim to possess a complete knowledge of the other is no more than an illusion, the distance that sustains desire.

Yet perhaps her introduction of this erotic element does not so much admit the acceptance of the Lacanian structure of desire in language, but offers a critique of it. If the Lacanian subject loses the self in language, becoming a slave to the desire of the other, as one’s own desire, that self must conform to a constructed image of what is desirable. As such, despite its structural -as opposed to literal- function, one other clearly possesses a more favourable subject position. The woman is constrained within and by a system of privilege that denies her, culturally confined to a role of passivity. As she is the support of the phallus that is the man’s desire, words from her sultry red lips should fall mute with little resistance. Their role is to signify her as knowable surface, silent, sexual object. Furthermore, any wish to know what she might speak, is motivated by the viewer’s aspiration to a position of control. Therefore, to educe desire, Cadieux redirects the look from language proper to bodily expressions. In doing so, she reinvests the subject with subjectivity through a veiled lure of parted lips that diffuse sexuality through echoes of pain. As such, reformation is brought about through the knowledge and accepted culpability of the viewer in the trespass. The language that reinforced gender

¹³⁵ Ibid., 10.

inequality is silenced to visualize an embodied tone, ultimately intervening to subordinate its privilege in meaning.

Irigaray understands this masculine bias in language to be characterized by a sense of ownership and commodity; defined by order, form, unity, and visibility.¹³⁶ Clearly drawing on Lacan's sense of the *objet a*/phallus that is conceived as solid, Irigaray posits the image of the erect penis as representative of, if not the impetus for, this mode of discourse.¹³⁷ Realizing its limitations for the use of woman, she has called for a discourse of the feminine: a mimesis of another body. Understanding this language to emerge from the female genitalia, she sees its defining mark as the touching lips of the vulva in their autoerotic heterogeneity, the woman's *spécificité*.¹³⁸ Through this pleasure of herself she experiences a liberating feminine *jouissance* that had been denied to her in the phallic structure. Furthermore, Irigaray's desire for another language loosely situates her among the French authors of *écriture féminine*, such as Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Monique Wittig. There, she finds language's feminine impetus in the fluid nature of the woman's body, the instability, the *flou* that Lacan so derisively associates with the *moi* (me) that will never be the *je* (I), characterized by its lack as not Other. Irigaray states:

La femme ne parle jamais pareil. Ce qu'elle émet est fluent, fluctuant. *Flouant*. Et on ne l'écoute pas, sauf à y perdre le sens (du) propre. D'où les résistances à cette

¹³⁶ Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en pas un* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1977), 85.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 85.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 24-28.

voix qui déborde le <<sujet>>. Qu'il figera donc, glacera, dans ses catégories jusqu'à la paralyser dans son flux.¹³⁹

Like Irigaray's model which emphasizes an unstable identity of fluidity, Cadieux's sister is simultaneously three in one. As her body moves through time, she hangs at the abyss of language, the mouth between self and other, interior and exterior. Her vocal signifiers inscribe her within an alternate mode of feminine articulation. Taking Lacan to task, Irigaray suggests that the incoherence or intelligibility he attributes to the female voice, in reality indicates more about the observer than the observed. She proposes that this statement signifies a masculine reluctance to attribute worth to the woman through the act of listening.¹⁴⁰ As such, the title's command, "*Hear Me With Your Eyes*", in fact appeals to a male sensibility. If he cannot or will not listen to her vocal expressions, he surely possesses the capacity to observe. For he has assigned primacy to an authorial vision for many years, and if he fails to accept what he sees, he must at least be cognizant of it. Yet, Cadieux intervenes in his realm, fracturing the gestalt surface of the ideal *je* through which he wants to interact with her. Three in one, she visually indicates a slippage between the *je* and *moi*, or the gap between identity's representation and its being. As such, the imaging of time in Cadieux's work comes to indicate Anne-Marie's infinite (re)signification to the other and (re)identification of the self. Thus to hear her with his eyes, the man must come to know her body, her language.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 110-111. "The woman never appears to speak. That what she emits is fluent, fluctuant. Vagueness. And one doesn't listen to her, save to lose the sense of one self. Hence, the resistance to this voice that exceeds the subject. So he will fix and freeze her in these categories, until she is paralyzed in flux."

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 88.

Yet, to hear her voice is to suspend his own desire. Irigaray explains this muteness within the logic of sexual relations, suggesting her compelled silence re-inscribes her as being the phallus, so that the male may appear to “have” it. Language denies her speech so she may be dominated through it. By parting the lips of the silenced speaker, Cadieux plays with this power structure. Voice is at the edge of the body, and while no sound is as of yet emitted, its very omission from the aural field seeks to point to its repression. In this way, the unheard voice functions to indicate its silence, indicating an implicit critique. In the double exposure, Chantal Pontbriand suggests that the motion is indicative of a woman who has just been slapped.¹⁴¹ This reading suggests a metaphorical violence, served by the imposed muteness of the feminine. That this image does not stop at the head, but moves towards a close-up of the lips, rips the body from a passive position to a threatening location of action. Parted and spread, the lips evoke female genitalia, the gash that is the threat of castration. As such, the emergence of her voice becomes perilous on numerous levels. The symbolic act becomes one of agency, locating her in the realm of the political. Or rather, the need for the *spécificité* of such a language is conjured up within it. In chastisement of the conditions that bring about the woman’s silence, Irigaray explains causation. She states:

Même si elles jacassent, prolifèrent pithiatiquement en mots qui ne signifient que leur aphaisie, ou le revers mimétique de votre désir. Et les interpréter là où elles n’exhibent que leur mutisme revient à les soumettre à un langage qui les exile toujours plus loin de ce que peut-être elles vous auraient dit, vous soufflaient déjà.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Chantal Pontbriand, “Language is a Skin,” *Geneviève Cadieux* (Montréal: Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal, 1990), 76.

¹⁴² Luce Irigaray, “Cos Fan Tutti” *Ce Sexe Qui N’En Est Pas Un* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1977), 111. “Even if they [women] jabber, pathetically proliferate in words that only signify their aphasia, or the

As such, woman's distance from language and her implication in male desire, appear as the cause of her silence. In a cyclical structure of linguistic violence, even the silence that has become hers in her subordination is (re)appropriated in its explanation of it. Hence she is further inscribed within the masculine order. To rectify this scenario is the obvious reversion to one's own body, one's own desire. However, *Hear Me With Your Eyes* seems dissatisfied with such a facile solution. Although stating the problem within the same terms as Irigaray, Cadieux's image resists a singular answer. Rather, audience cognition of the limitations of language is induced, retaining attention at the surface of the image. Through the blurred effect produced by the slow shutter exposure, and the Deleuzian effacement of the close-up of the mouth, this effect is achieved. As such, although drawing upon Irigaray's concepts, the feminine language is clearly employed in a manner that plainly contradicts its author's intent. In this interplay, an alternate language of the feminine is utilized to challenge the means in which the masculinist discourse is naturalized, thereby validating patriarchal power structures. Hence, rather than supplant the system, the image indicates a desire to intervene in the masculinist language as a means of subverting its claim to authority. In the fashion of Judith Butler, it is the (re)performance of a sign of oppression within a context that exposes the offence at

reverse mimetic of your desire [they are mute]. And hence to interpret them [women] there where they demonstrate their silence, amounts to subjecting them to a language that always further exiles them from what perhaps they would have told you, already whispered to you.

the point of signification; thus ascribing a positive value to its repetition.¹⁴³ The acknowledgement of injury becomes the subject's point of power.

This means of delivery resonates with Evergon's articulation of the mute body in *Untitled* (1982) from the *Horifique Portrait* series [Figure 2.4]. Despite a shift in sex, his, too is an injured subject, a queer body silenced. Mouth opening into scream, his portrait body signifies what language cannot speak. It becomes the body hysteric, the intimate expression of pain in the uniform artist and subject, somewhere between ecstasy and torture. Consistent with other images from the series, Martha Hanna notes the directness of the images, absent of the "subversive planes" characteristic of his earlier work.¹⁴⁴ Understanding the portraits to extend from the artist's need for "exorcism", she suggests their design to be characterized by simplicity and intensity, with the intent to engage the viewer.¹⁴⁵ Here, Evergon is shown blindfolded by a strip of silver duct tape, his face bound by twine. Yet, the ineffectual tape is left to peel up and ties fail to extend beyond the head, indicating the bondage as internal rather than physical struggle. A halo-like aura emanating from his head, further points to pictorial meaning as beyond the material realm. Ascending upwards, the golden rays are mirrored by a downward trailing scream, visually signified in a stream of ethereal red. Collectively these dramatic gestures serve to bring consciousness to Evergon's production of his body as performative,

¹⁴³ Judith Butler, "Subversive Bodily Acts: From Interiority to Gender Performance" *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999)176.

¹⁴⁴ Martha Hanna, "Form and Former Meaning", *Evergon 1971-1987* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1988), 11.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

inscribed upon him self. In the preceding chapter, homographesis was discussed as a marking to identify the other, to make him visible, as a means of allaying fears of difference. Here, Evergon borrows a derogatory feminine stereotype of hysteria that has been reclaimed as a point of resistance in feminist rhetoric. Through it, he finds a means of conveying an effeminate queerness and simultaneously resisting that label through its (re)articulation as agency.

The hysterical body has come to be an almost archetypal image in contemporary western society. It has been medicalized and categorized by Charcot's photographic collection, and has been shaped by Freud's subsequent conversations with Her. The somatic aside, Freud outlined three primary symptoms characteristic of her behaviour, commencing with "aura-sensations". This initial stage was marked by the subject's experience of a constricted throat, throbbing temples, ringing ears and complex feelings.¹⁴⁶ An echo of Freud's laundry list of symptoms, Evergon's halo overhead and mouth spewing crimson rays, seems to visualize such inner happenings. Progressively failing, the hysteric was said to subsequently produce *grands mouvements*.¹⁴⁷ Although this image displays no external indications of agitated gestures, the subject is noticeably bound, perhaps signaling the necessity for bodily constraint. Finally, Freud claimed the hysteric to experience hallucinations, and while here the audience is not privy to the internal workings of the subject, the representation is consistent with the subject's

¹⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Hysteria" *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 1, ed./trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1966), 42.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

journey into ecstasy.¹⁴⁸ He is clearly in excess of material presence, in ascension of it. Through these symptoms, the hysteric enacts something of a masquerade, a performance, inconsistent with the stable body of language's production.

As such, Lacan's analysis of the hysteric as actor provides insight into function. He states, "For the hysterical subject, for whom the term 'acting out' takes on a literal meaning since he is acting outside himself, you have to recognize where his action is situate."¹⁴⁹ This performance seems to indicate slippage between what can and what wants to be said. Performing a queer hysteria, Evergon intervenes in designated gender codes contradicting what his body attempts to affirm. That is, the phallus is negated by his hysterical call for help. Like Josef Breuer's famous patient Anna O, who is recorded as fracturing various languages and grammatical structures, only to re-articulate them within her own terms of outward incomprehension,¹⁵⁰ he intervenes in language to expand gender designations. As such, the rupture of language, its denial, or gestural usurpation, indicates a potent break from a masculine structure of language that is wont to confine such expressions, and in its interpellation of them as hysterical, codes their deviance to that system. Evergon will assume the feminine position to employ the tactics of the female hysteric, as "the hysteric passively acted out through her body what her

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 41.

¹⁴⁹ Jacques Lacan, "The function and field of speech in psychoanalysis" Jacques Lacan: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton & Co. Inc., 1977), 90.

¹⁵⁰ Dianne Hunter, "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna O." *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory* ed. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 260.

voice could not speak.”¹⁵¹ He will use his body to present the possibility of an alternate queer aesthetic.

But why is the scream such a pivotal mark of hysteria? Freed from language, the meaning of the scream is purportedly pure sound. Its claim is, of course, an illusion, as sound is adjusted to connote meaning in the cultural arena. However, in absence of the distracting properties of language, intonation itself becomes privileged. Always present in speech, language’s instability, its signification is often overlooked. Yet, as Charles Affron notes, in speech what is spoken and its linguistic recognition are inseparable.¹⁵² The individual takes ownership of the symbols of language, inscribing them through voice as they take form. They are unique. As such, in a Husserlian sense, “Meaning is the sound of the voice.”¹⁵³ Thus, the scream signifies itself, bypassing the mediation of language to emit a more direct expression of the subject’s pain. It is through this vocal emission that the subject parts with the excess that must be other to him in the unification of the self.¹⁵⁴ He releases his pain, positioning it as *objet a*, to reconstitute his identity. The hysteric’s scream signifies an illusory phallic lack, necessarily affected by some outward influence of abuse that places it in the position of being. As such, the scream indicates survival, a resistance within a system that seeks to extinguish the body through pain.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵² Charles Affron, “Voice and Space” *Cinema and Sentiment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 105.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 105.

Furthermore, the hysteric's scream possesses an even greater nuance in meaning. This can be observed in Claire Kahane's definition of the hysterical voice in terms of "tonal instability" as established by Barthes in *SZ* (1974).¹⁵⁵ In this work, Barthes describes the voice of the classic text which "gets lost, as though it had leaked out through a hole in the discourse . . . leaving a gap which enables the utterance to shift from one point of view to another, without warning."¹⁵⁶ As Evergon's scream commences outside of discourse, it too is without fixed location. It is emitted because language has denied him words adequate for his expression. Fluid, the hysterical voice eludes capture, and hence forced cessation. Its rejection of language is the source of its subversion, providing both an outlet for expression, and a protective barrier in its intelligibility. As the latent image of the photograph, it possesses properties of absence beyond control. The hysterical scream becomes the shrieked secret of incomprehension, the desire to simultaneously act accusatory and injured, echoing such erratic positions in its reception.

Furthermore, within this discourse of hysteria, Kahane suggests the figurative "big mouth" as the cause of the male anxiety.¹⁵⁷ And indeed, as sound is absent, the appearance of the mouth is the sole perpetrator of uneasiness. Both visually and symbolically evocative of the lips of the female genitalia, the voice poses a supposed

¹⁵⁴ Jacques Lacan, "The Line and Light" *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11 ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 103.

¹⁵⁵ Claire Kahane, "Preface" *Passions of the Voice: Hysteria, Narrative, and the Figure of the Speaking Woman, 1850-1915* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), viii, quoting Roland Barthes, *SZ* trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 41-42.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xv.

threat of castration to the male audience, as it externalizes the internal as devoid of lack, undermining the binary system that articulates the difference between the male and female body. Her mouth threatens him as it signals her Antigonean potential for speech. That she might aspire to the phallic position of language, displacing their conventional respective positions within is alarming. In fact, Freud does suggest that hysteria is a disavowal of genital difference; a sign of bi-sexuality that manifests itself in disturbances of the body, he positions the voice as the primary site of aberrance. Through speech, she will have what was his, and the illusion of the phallus will be no more. But as the homosexual male has nothing to lose, he is exempt from such figurative castration. With the knowledge that the phallus is only a ghostly echo of the genuine object, he may join in the oral terror. As such, the possession of a strong voice by the female or homosexual other renders the man impotent in speech, leading Kahane to suggest that her voice is equivalent to the “vocal Medusa”.¹⁵⁸ The hysteric, “the freakish man-woman with a voice was the woman with a phallus.”¹⁵⁹ Thus to hear her will be the silence of the voice which oppresses her, as the look which sought to possess her, ensures the finality of sight, blindness, castration, and power. Like her body’s repulsion of vision, her voice determines the possession of the phallic property of agency.

Yet this usurpation of the masculine privilege is not universally held to be the best course of resistance. Irigaray understands the hysterical voice to be a mimesis of the phallus. For Irigaray, hysterics are the consequence of a foreign masculine language that

¹⁵⁸ Kahane, “Preface”, x.

¹⁵⁹ Kahane, Claire. “History/Hysteria: A Glance Backward” *Passions of the Voice: Hysteria Narrative and the Figure of the Speaking Woman, 1850-1915* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 7.

denies the female voice a sense of *spécificité*. Because she believes language to place women outside the structure that designates them, she suggests that an intervention within that language is impossible, if not a paradox.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, that psychoanalysis has codified such feminine signs of resistance further buries the point of causation, as it seeks to protect its own position of masculine privilege.¹⁶¹ Despite these attempts to silence her, or resignify her behaviour, hysteria remains her only mode of expression. As such, she posits that through hysteria, the woman attempts to “save her sexuality from total repression and destruction.”¹⁶² In this way, Evergon’s scream becomes the desire to retain a queer identity that is excluded from language. Yet for Irigaray, the sign of pain is not enough, it must come to articulate itself in a language relevant to the female body. Or for Leo Bersani, homosexual identity might find its position asserted against the dominant order which has oppressed it, as “anticommunitarianism”, an attribute he suggests to be consistent with “homo-ness.”¹⁶³ As such, Evergon’s isolating scream and blindfolded eyes that further affirm interiority are the formation of identity. They are the expression of his position as a traditionally ostracized minority, secluded, closeted from the communication of pain.

Hence, in an exclusionary manner, Evergon’s facial emphasis facilitates understanding of state of mind, while distancing the viewer from complete

¹⁶⁰ Luce Irigaray, “Questions” *Ce Sexe Qui N’en est Pas Un* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1977), 134.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁶² Luce Irigaray, “The Blind Spot of An Old Dream of Symmetry: That Necessary Remainder: Hysteria” *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 72.

comprehension. This dynamic functions closely akin to Deleuze's understanding of the facial close-up as "both face and its effacement."¹⁶⁴ Here, the artist offers a surface of symbols, intended to foster understanding, yet fixes the gaze upon the surface, to invest the subject with an unknowable depth. This chasm is beyond the point of the other's sensation. As Elaine Scarry notes in her discussion of the body in pain, "the act of making a sound that cannot be heard, coincides with the way in which pain engulfs the one in pain but remains unsensed by anyone else."¹⁶⁵ In this way, his scream may elicit empathy, but requires the homogeneity of a like position for identification. Placing his sorrow outside of language, through the scream he finds expression for an unspeakable identity. Screaming, he moves beyond a structure that abandons him to its exterior. For as Julia Kristeva notes, it is in the poetic, almost pre-discursive excess of the finite signs of language, in which the subject is reinvested in speech.¹⁶⁶ Yet it is this failure to recognize tonality that leaves the subject voiceless, perhaps reasserting the strategy of silence. Here, Evergon must turn to the hysteric's tonal instability in its gestural articulation, writing traces of violence upon his face. In the process he allows the individuality of voice to resurface in the viewer's consciousness, subtly instructing critical attention to the

¹⁶³ Leo Bersani, "The Gay Absence" *Homos* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 53.

¹⁶⁴ Gilles Deleuze, "The Affection-Image Face and Close-up" *Cinema I: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 100.

¹⁶⁵ Elaine Scarry, "The Structure of Torture: The Conversion of Real Pain into the Fiction of Power" *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 51.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

overflow in language and sight. Muteness becomes a subversive sign of oppression, simultaneously challenging the validity of the oppressor's act through its exclusion.

Sarah Kofman's "suspended tongue" functions in a similar vein to the accusatory silent body. Referencing a form of feminine agency, enacted within traditional patient relations between the female hysteric and her psychiatrist, the patient might remain silent in the face of his oppressor.¹⁶⁷ According to Kofman, Freud observed that women kept love secrets as a means of "avengement" and "self mastery" from the patriarchal society that oppressed them.¹⁶⁸ Therapists, such as Freud, would attempt to compel speech as means of re-imposing order. Key to the psychoanalytic process, healing could only be realized through the coercion of speech. Essentially, by divesting their secrets women could be relocated to passive roles of femininity, rectifying their deviance in the system. In doing so, they resubmitted to the law of the Father as represented by the therapist. As such, they were properly refolded into the phallic structure that positioned them as accepting a subordinate role, while supporting the masculine position by a desire to be a man. Yet, for the resistant woman, silence was her agency, for it facilitated retention of her own identity. For as Michèle Montrelay acknowledges, the crime of the female hysteric was that she "never gave up the wish to be her sex."¹⁶⁹ As such, therapists would denounce these masculine women who refused to accept a role of femininity, rather than

¹⁶⁷ Sarah Kofman, "The Suspended Tongue" *The Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud's Writings* trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 42-48.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁶⁹ Michèle Montrelay, "Inquiry into Femininity" *The Woman in Question* ed. Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1990), 265.

allow them to maintain their identity. For to permit the woman the possibility of existing as herself, would shatter the phallic system of being for. Order could not be imposed over this veiled threat. In this way, Evergon's silence becomes the reassertion of a queer identity that he refused to alienate. What he presents is a performative display of hysteria, unstable and filled with love secrets. The heterosexual male will not recruit him through a refusal to sanction his position. Neither will he force a private confession of love, in service of that man's lust for control and desire for the vicarious experience of homoerotics.

Even the queer *jouissance* will be placed beyond the captivity of language. Mouth breaking into scream; how similar the signs of pain and pleasure appear to be. Evergon will rebuff the viewer for his injury, simultaneously finding pleasure in the process. An apparent reference to orgasm, it seems the therapist had an even further reason to fear the silence of his patients. Drawing on Lacan, Judith Butler notes that it is only outside of language that *jouissance* can be realized, as speech always emerges out of demand, dissatisfaction.¹⁷⁰ Because it must be born out of silence, one might argue that it produces a form of equality between the genders. As language denies the possibility of a feminine *jouissance*, placing her in support of a phallic one, it logically follows that outside and independent of it, she may divest the phallus of its *jouissance* to reclaim her own. Thus the woman's silence could be understood as this inarticuable pleasure, inextricably linked with orgasm. Yet, the queer other experiences no loss in her silence. Both penetrated and

¹⁷⁰ Judith Butler, "Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Heterosexual Matrix: Structuralism's Critical Exchange" *Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 55.

penetrator, he has never been given the appearance of having. Indeed, he too requires a place beyond language to find this unspeakable joy.

Furthermore, Evergon's expression indicates more than *jouissance*, but the production of silence that Irigaray understands to be required for love.¹⁷¹ Although she posits this love to be between man and woman, there is no reason why the structure might not be transferred to the queer experience. For, despite their shared sex, the binary from which Irigaray understands the difference to originate, the meeting of two individuals will never be like. As such, speaking of this silence as a difference of subjectivities that must be "protected, cultivated and generated," Irigaray suggests that both the silence of the self and other must be guarded in the production of love between equals.¹⁷² Refusing its reduction, she claims love to be at least three, the love of man, woman, and its production.¹⁷³ Clearly referring back to the *Antigone*, she suggests that it is also the space in which both "State and the family lose their authority over the word and silence."¹⁷⁴ She further asserts it is the introduction of all persons into civil society.¹⁷⁵ Hence, Evergon's orgasmic reference refers back to his love, that of his lover, and their mutual production as the destruction of the authority of the state and family. Its dual function as scream furthermore indicates the necessity for such an overthrow. As such, like the female hysteric's love secrets, through his silence he sustains his identity satisfying the demands

¹⁷¹ Luce Irigaray, "To Conceive Silence" *To Be Two*, trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 62.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

of his homosexual position. Furthermore, he generates and retains love. Thus, silence symbolizes a form of agency. It functions as a means of maintaining autonomy outside the phallic order. Comparable to the nothing of the female genitals, the threatening unseen voice is his power. His silent, unstable voice will be his point of resistance.

As the hysterical voice refuses to make itself heard or its meaning intelligible, the cinematic voice-over and voice-off, assert the autonomy of unanchored speech. Like the hysterical voice that sought to escape appropriation from the auditor, the latter distances itself from all things corporeal indicating language as superimposed meaning. Evincing the split between voice and body, Donigan Cumming seeks to dislocate voice in the gelatin silver print *May 29, 1994* [Figure 2.5]. Functioning within the greater context of the series *Reality and Motive in Documentary Photography, Part III*, meaning is derived from sites of intersection, where letters, voice and image blur subjectivities across bodies and voids.

Frozen in a state of peculiarity, a woman is boxed into the stage of her wall, encased by the boundaries of the household television, table, food and refuse. Legs visually truncated, her body seems almost to emerge from the garbage, evoking the term “white trash”. Mouth and eyes wide shut, she grips a microphone drawn towards her mouth, designating it as the site of vocal production.¹⁷⁶ Yet the closure of her lips, and photographic silence, disables the simplicity of the sign system. Although the accompanying recordings may be hers, they do not emanate from the represented mouth at this moment. Propped between the bed and table, her male companion stands barefoot,

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 66.

arms rigidly hugging his sides, eyes closed in a reverent pose of aural attention, a further attempt to suspend the emission of her voice within the photographic frame. Yet as a silent body, the over-laid sound of his voice comes as an even greater surprise. It is a leap of faith, if one will attribute the utterance to him. The only affirmation of its unity appears to come from the title plate, hardly a transparent seam. If one is to locate a visible reference to his voice, it must derive from his phallic claim to language.

Sexually charged, the image also references fellatio as Jean holds Gordon's surrogate phallus to her mouth in the object of the microphone, his eyes and mouth closed in a concentrated pleasure. Bed alongside, a pen erectly placed on its cushion seems to echo the act, as do structural signs of receptacles and their penetrators. Lamp, bottle, and legs become the phallic counterparts of open garbage, slippers, bowls and cups. Food and water on the floor additionally suggest the notion of "eating". As such, while the woman requires the microphone to designate her voice, for the man it appears as implicit. However, perhaps her symbolic milking of it, in the act of fellatio, further confuses the unity of body and voice. It certainly empties the phallic privilege from it, displacing an innate masculine claim to language. For as the image and sound track collectively attest, there is no guarantee of continuity between voice and source.

Voices are further confused and interwoven through the accompaniment of love letters (1980) and a sound track. The letters are a composite made from the collection of a woman named Betty; she believed Elvis survived his reputed 1977 death, and wrote to him care of a tabloid. Imagining that she had been contacted via songs on the radio and

¹⁷⁶ Affron, "Voice and Space", 106.

by his tapping her phone, she came to understand their relationship as one of intimacy. Visually absent from the series, her narrative re-emerges through read letters and Presley songs sung by strangers in the photographic field. By appropriating words of the distant voices, models Gordon Alexander and Jean Claven assume something of Betty's and Elvis' identities, lending their bodies in return. It is this point of juncture, where Nicole Gingras notes the revelation that, "The body creates sound with a double resonance: it generates sound but it also opens itself up to it."¹⁷⁷ As such, the voice's meaning is dependent upon the way in which it is synchronized with the body in its mutual relationship of affirmation. But here, voice and body do not confer a sense of completeness upon one another; rather they insist upon their independence as they derive meaning through the repetition of shifting circumstance.

But what is the power of a disembodied or misaligned voice, and by extension an autonomous body? In cinema, the floating voice manifested in the voice-off or the voice-over, becomes a point of undisputable power. In the case of the voice-over, or the *acousmètre*, the disembodied voice is authoritative, functioning as external to the story in the capacity of the omnipotent and omniscient narrator. The voice-off, too, possesses a similar sense of privilege, in that while the character's voice may be heard, the person remains off screen. Yet as Kaja Silverman observes, the voice-off is not equal to the voice-over in its autonomy, as the voice may conceivably be re-embodied by its off-screen counterpart.¹⁷⁸ But for Cumming voices exist and bodies exist. There is no attempt

¹⁷⁷ Nicole Gingras, "Sound, Voice, Text - Photographic Strategies" *Donigan Cumming: Diverting the Image* (Windsor, Art Gallery of Windsor, 1993), 40.

¹⁷⁸ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 48.

to effect an invisible suture. The voice structure is two in one, both voice-off and voice-over. Two recorded voices are heard, two bodies are present in the photographic plane, but there is no guarantee as to their point of origin, their collusion in meaning. This strategy frees voice from a cinematic tendency in which Silverman observes, “‘interior’ rhymes with ‘inferior’.”¹⁷⁹ This unenviable position of femininity connotes her lack of power and agency in the cinematic field. In contrast, to be outside the body is for the masculine voice to escape the silence that Pascal Bonitzer sees as the inevitable sign of mortality. Thus, the failure to reconcile subject and voice in Cumming’s work is the survival of subjectivity and individual autonomy. Furthermore, the gap is the voice’s salvation from a feminine subjugation that Silverman designates in terms of “spectacle, castration, and synchronization.”¹⁸⁰ However it is interesting to note that Jean’s body is shown as the most likely source of vocal emission through her possession of the microphone. As her mouth remains shut, and no noise emanates from its pictorial source, it serves to visualize a compelling break between woman and her embodied voice. As such, she appears to assume the masculine position of privilege, which the vocal-body connection denies her.

Yet, her disembodiment poses a troubling quandary, for how is she to be invested with this power without a binary object to stand for the corporeal. Who is to absorb Jean’s lack? As Silverman notes, in the Lacanian gender-based system, “The female subject is obliged to bear a double burden of lack—to absorb the male subject’s castration

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 50.

as well as her own.”¹⁸¹ Therefore, the phallic masculine voice may only possess autonomy if the woman is willing to embody hers, the point that Michel Chion characterizes as the subject’s demise.¹⁸² As such, like Antigone’s double act of violence in first usurping the male voice, and later ascending it through death, Jean’s fracture of body and voice is the ruin of the system, as she is voice *and* body, external to rather than integrated with one another. This position allows her access to the masculine domain of language that is the mediated expulsion of external signs through voice, and its separation from the more subjective articulation of corporeal experience. This dual location seems to illustrate Deleuze’s concepts of “between” and “and”. Arguing that cinema purports to manifest its subjects as, *Being=is*, he suggests that sensory juxtapositions rescue subjectivity from its enslavement to phallic authority. As such, meaning is not the fabricated voice as body, but their intersection, the ways in which they affirm and contradict one another. Hence, vocal gender structures that place woman as corporeal and man as disembodied soul are unable to function, as clearly all bodies are both. Thus an even more facile transition is fostered between the voices and bodies of Gordon and Jean, Elvis and Betty.

If Cumming’s overlapping of voices at times tends to be perceived as mockery, be it the middle-aged reprise of Elvis or the public address of Betty’s obsessive letters, it is more indicative of the viewer’s sensibilities than the artist’s. Like cinema where the tension of cross-gender vocal location, must be deflated through the indication of the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 63.

¹⁸² Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema* Trans. and ed. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 101.

woman as monster or as a matter of humour,¹⁸³ it is the power that the other's body assumes in the transgression that incites fear. That the working class or poor may enjoy, in fact may share, in the same speech as the legendary rock idol Elvis, undermines traditional social and gender hierarchies. Although Elvis may have originated from, and may symbolically embody the position of the working class, he ascended to a position of privilege through his commercial success. And as such, the possibility that this might not be an isolated incident, that others of his former status may seek to elevate themselves through association, is problematic. It threatens the spectator's ability to sustain his own voice, when it may so clearly become the power of the other. Furthermore, that Betty's voice may be elevated to something of sanity, a universal cry for love in her letters, is unsettling as it places her akin to the viewer. Here, it is equal to the music of Elvis - in conversation with it. As such, Cumming's fracture of bodies and voices becomes a point of disquietude, as it disrupts traditional power dynamics within the frame and beyond. It challenges not only the position of the presented subjects, but those of its spectators, opening possibilities of movement within identity. Therefore, the (re)presentation of Betty's letters and Elvis' music, become societal sounds, shifting and changing meaning as they cross over voices, and voices suggest forms for them. In this way, the relationship between voice and body is not defined by a stable identity, consistent in subject and expression, but rather through the grain of context.

Whether meaning manifests itself in the content of voice, or through words lost in becoming, signs of speech may function as powerful agents in the re-articulation of

¹⁸³ Ibid., 132.

vision. Yet, the possibilities of oral communication are incomplete in their isolation, as there are times at which the body must necessarily exceed language. Tim Dean seizes on this point in “Voices That Mutter” his response to Judith Butler’s seminal work, *Voices That Matter*. The issue that Dean broaches in his overt word play is the limitations of a sign system exterior to the body. He states, “While speech comprises signs and signifiers, muttering comprises the symptom, which represents a literally unspeakable desire.”¹⁸⁴ As such, Dean understands language to eschew the body in a traditional Cartesian split. In its detachment, he posits that what words fail to transmit, the body must articulate in the form of the mutter. That this utterance be heard is of prime importance for Dean, as he situates the mutter as an index of pain.¹⁸⁵ In the first portion of this chapter, the limits of voice are indicated in the way that it confines the expression of both Cadieux’s and Evergon’s subjects, who I argue represent silenced, hysterical bodies. Moreover, the distance between language and self may be observed in Cumming’s interchangeable shifting of bodies and voices, and the subsequent meanings found in disjunct attempts to re-suture them. As we turn to the second segment of the chapter, this call to hear the deafened cries of bodies, and desire to see the expression of pain, will be addressed in a move to other forms of sensory stimulus, traditionally located closer to the body. In Cadieux’s *Parfum*, tears will be examined revealing how they give rise to what language cannot speak. Evergon will comically explore the fetish through olfactory and tactile sensations as a means of undermining the impositions of a heterosexual language.

¹⁸⁴ Tim Dean, “Bodies that Mutter” *Beyond Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 202.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

Finally, Cumming will enter into Irigaray's notion of the caress, as the unspeakable relations between bodies. As such, through alternate sensory means, the need to mutter will be resolved, challenging the language that denies it.

Sensing Salvation

Muttering manifests itself through the tears that swell from closed eyes in *Parfum* (1991) [Figure 2.6]. Photographed in both black and white and colour, two adjacent pairs of eyes are cropped to overlap, evocative of a third eye. A reference to inner sight, it suggests both the power and means to see beyond the woman's culturally constrained vision. Yet, in her imposed blindness she is denied more than sight, but recognition. For which woman is she? Eyes are touted as the window to the soul, but in their closed state, their specificity is lost. Sealed with tears her eyes provide a surface for the masculine to claim her perfumed femininity as emotional weakness without the strength to see. Yet their doubling points to their function as sign, designating them to stand for all women and none in their plurality and generic state. As such, her identity is barred from prying eyes that might seek to name her feminine. Furthermore, the repetition points to their temporal aspect. Tears are not an isolated event, but indicate a continued violence. As such, the slightly askew suture portrays them like a scar between past and present. The eyes' juncture visualizes the perpetuation of sorrowful tears like a narrative. Yet the story that is told is a matter of perspective, for just as they might situate their subject as victim, they may also indicate defiance, a visual confrontation with authority.

Taking Laura U. Marks' premise as a basis, that tears "are a material expression of an internal state", one might consider the droplets of water to be the tactile equivalent

to the mutter.¹⁸⁶ Separated from the self, expelled into the realm of the 'not I', they seem to qualify themselves within the notion of Julia Kristeva's 'abject'.¹⁸⁷ Tears function akin to the theorist's discussion of an anorexic child who rejects the food that signifies the desire of the mother and father, expelling the substance that has become her in order to constitute herself as other.¹⁸⁸ They indicate a resistance to the desire of the other, be it expressed in words, touch, or scent. Rejecting the inflicted pain that has come to be one with the subject, tears function to dispel the substance of body, facilitating preservation through a (re)becoming.¹⁸⁹ Kristeva argues that like a crime, the abject disturbs ordered systems and identities in its ambiguity.¹⁹⁰ There is a reason why men do not cry. The absence of masculine tears is fundamental to the law of the father, for were the liquid to cross and transgress borders in its fluidity, where would one draw the line between the sexes? It is for this reason that in the context of the word *parfum*, the substance of tears is not the sole indication of their abjection. Rather, and perhaps more significantly, it is the friction that arises in their juxtaposition with perfume.

A metaphor for woman and her sexuality, tears indicate a discontent with the notion of a femininity that may be confined to the meaning of a floral fragrance. That tears exist, or worse still that they are seen, threatens to disrupt and expose a system of

¹⁸⁶ Laura U. Marks, "The Memory of Things" *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 122.

¹⁸⁷ Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection" *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press), 3.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

masculine privilege. The knowledge that the woman may be forcibly confined to her identity, that she could possibly exist as other, is threatening in revelation. For what happens, if she no longer will be for the phallus? Cadieux's repetition of the feminine stereotype, as such, operates as intervention. Drawing upon the structural logic of Judith Butler in her assessment of the Althusserian criminal, she suggests that the "hailing" or "interpellation" of woman as *parfum*, positions her as society's subject, establishing the fear of the law.¹⁹¹ Despite possessing slightly different connotations, the criminal and the female both disturb the order of patriarchal authority. And in the case of Antigone, are two in one, indistinguishable. Where the criminal may intervene in the capitalist economy, the woman threatens a binary system of gender identity. As such, the reluctant acceptance of the name criminal or woman provides a position from which the actor may exercise agency.¹⁹² She obliquely violates the order of the system by her repetition of the name within a reconstructed context. Tears mingled with perfume upsets the sadistic label, indicating the masculine bias, thereby undermining the authority of supposed neutrality. Through Butler's strategy of repetition, the given subjectivity fails to transform itself into the positive, yet visualizes its destructive intent. As Butler states, "The compulsion to repeat an injury is not necessarily the compulsion to repeat the injury in the same way or to stay fully within the traumatic orbit of that injury."¹⁹³ As such, the

¹⁹¹ Judith Butler, "Gender is Burning" *Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 121.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 124.

repetition becomes a point of resistance. Tears become the meaning of perfume, encouraging a critical understanding of the image.

Yet the moist droplets possess a further degree of complexity. As Marks notes, tears are dissolved back into the body. As such, the subject re-embodies the index of her pain.¹⁹⁴ What the woman rejected as abject, exorcised as other to her self, she reabsorbs within her. Unlike the mist of perfume, that through its scent seeks to signify her body as woman, tears indicate an independent subjectivity. Far from the standardized, mass produced bottle of fragrance, they are hers alone, unique and transitory taste, texture and smell. Tears remove her from the space of sexual commodity.

Despite the ruin of herself as masculine product, her deliverance from the market place must not be ignored. Perfume remains an iconic symbol of feminine sexuality, a sexuality that aligns her as parallel to the product. Something of Irigaray's commodity of the feminine lingers in the analogy, positioning both within the patriarchal economy of property exchange. A claim founded on a text by Marx and Engels, Irigaray suggests that the root of the problem is the family structure, once again leading us back to the Antigonean dilemma. In the monogamous union of marriage, she identifies the enslavement of woman and children as paternal property, a legacy that she suggests, still resides in contemporary life.¹⁹⁵ She identifies its mutation as the woman who may now work in the public sphere but is still expected to retain traces of a fabricated femininity,

¹⁹⁴ Marks, "The Memory of Things", 122.

¹⁹⁵ Irigaray, "Pouvoir du Discours, Subordination du Féminin", 79.

to define her as other.¹⁹⁶ Irigaray states, “Dans notre ordre social, les femmes sont <<produites>>, utilisées, échangée par les hommes. Leur statut est celui des <<merchandises>>.”¹⁹⁷ This allegation suggests that the subjugation of woman has not ceased, but has rather shifted arenas. Be it the explicit commodity of the sexual which she designates, or her body’s worth determined within its connection to economic, social, or cultural exchange, Irigaray suggests that the woman is made to renounce her sexual *spécificité*, thus denying her the possibility to effect change through an alternate system of representation.¹⁹⁸

Unable to speak, the subject is indeed reduced to tears. Noticeably, the eyes are the only portion of the body made accessible to the viewer. Narrowing the site of representation, focus is clarified, re-indicating the perfume’s role as metaphor. Although the eyes might belong to a person of either sex, the culturally gender-coded word *parfum* indicates the feminine. Designed to induce olfactory pleasure and serve as a sexual attractant, the properties of the product seem to suggest a narcissism that is appropriate only to the female body. The woman must add to the inadequacy of her body, necessarily defined by lack, to become the desired object of the phallus. As such, the perfume functions as lure, directing masculine attention to her body as spectacle. She is made to fetishize herself, and in the act forgo the privilege of sight. The fragrant liquid further seeks to blind her vision, positioning her in the pre-established role of the passive object

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 80.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 81. “In our social order, women are products, utilized, exchanged by men. Their status is that of merchandise.”

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 81.

of the look. Yet tears indicate resistance to the violence of the visual trespass. She will not remain submissive.

That perfume is an olfactory experience, also suggests a need to close the eyes. Returning to Kristeva, albeit in a less overt reference to the abject, she discusses Baudelaire's use of perfume as a "bomb", an "atomizer", something that "pulverizes" both the meaning of language and identity.¹⁹⁹ Prior to a language that constituted bodies as subjects, Kristeva suggests that perfume signaled "lovers' indefinite identities."²⁰⁰ As such, perfume becomes the symbol of unstable bodies beyond language, and in excess of it. Having itself been co-opted into the ranks of language, its material properties seek to vanquish the word that has named it as feminine commodity. Purging the injury through tears, Cadieux's subject may absorb the perfume in its pre-linguistic state, producing a point of resistance in which she may find her identity outside of language. Hers is the strategy of Butler's performativity, the (re)signification of meaning through a shift of context.²⁰¹

While the exploitation of the female body is never acceptable, abuse is not hers alone. Anything that may appear in a queerer shade of male may also become a point of visual fascination. Evergon plays on this dynamic in *Rambo Sniffing Boot I* (1995) [Figure 2.7], luring the viewer into a sensory experience designed to create awareness of

¹⁹⁹ Julia Kristeva, "Baudelaire, or infinity, perfume, and punk" *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 329, 334.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 334.

²⁰¹ Judith Butler, "Introduction/ On Linguistic Vulnerability" *Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 40.

visual relations. Head thrust deep into an ornate boot, echoed by two shoes strewn on the ground, the archetypal image of the fetish is none too subtly summoned to the forefront of the picture plane. Base and sensual, smell re-invests the subject as body and suggests an implied sexual perversity in the corporeal sphere. Scent is evinced as an integral part of attraction, while the vaginal shoe and phallic foot is removed from a mechanical relationship to an olfactory experience. With this knowledge, the viewer must admit the unmentionable odors and fluids of the body that conventionally remain wrapped in the linguistics of speech.

A Christianity that sanctions sex for solely procreative purpose must frame the act within the confines of a cerebral context, distancing the experience from the debase sensations of pleasure. In fact, as Simpson observes, in right-wing Christian terms, the very act of homosexuality is necessarily perverse, as it is outside the sphere of reproduction.²⁰² Although this is indeed the case in many other religions, Evergon's emphasis on Christian imagery in his larger oeuvre, positions it as the logical point of inquiry. Freudian psychoanalysis reiterates this sense of abnormality, suggesting homosexuality is the failure to pass through the Oedipal stage, redirecting one's object choice to the other. It is perverse or immature sexuality.²⁰³ To achieve this moral polarity, evocations of the sensory must be labeled perverse as they re-integrate sex with body, the site of pleasure. Perversity furthermore exists as the object of loathing as it is

²⁰² Mark Simpson, "Introduction" *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 1994),

²⁰³ Mark Simpson, "Introduction", 7-8.

characteristic of an abject that intervenes into religious, legal and moral order.²⁰⁴ It is what must remain outside of the dominant structures as obscene, literally located beyond, off scene, un(re)presentable.²⁰⁵ Only within this syntax that positions it as other to a normative set of values, may it constitute itself as beyond those constraints. It is this way in which Christianity situates pagan culture as abject, trespassing on the sacred if not at the antithetical apex of its foundation.

Kristeva links the abject with the polluted. Its body is that which blurs the boundaries between self and other, interior and exterior. It is namely the forbidden pleasures of dietary substance or sexual exploit that indicate individual agency in the act of ingestion and the transformed substance of ejection, Christian sin.²⁰⁶ Outside of control, authority must attempt to suppress the abject body, reclaiming it within the dominant logic in terms of language and moral positioning. For it is the unnameable that Mary Douglas suggests evokes a sense of danger.²⁰⁷ As such, this is the site where those structures must be challenged to overturn their oppressive ideologies. Kristeva suggests, "The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them."²⁰⁸ It is Antigone's defiance of the state through her usurpation of a

²⁰⁴ Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection", 16.

²⁰⁵ Lynda Nead, "Theorizing the Female Nude" *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 25.

²⁰⁶ Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection", 15.

²⁰⁷ Nead, "Theorizing the Female Nude", 6.

²⁰⁸ Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection", 15.

masculine civic voice that clearly does not belong to her. As such, it is befitting for Evergon to assume the construction of a pagan society of Ramboys, as it so clearly opposes the rigid discourse of a monotheistic Christianity. It is also a complementary echo to a re-signified, queer, Christian vocabulary prominent in his work. Yet here, by prefiguring the religion in both its allusions and fabricated mythology, the fabricated pagan content not only dilutes its message, but undermines its authorial claim of truth through fiction. Colliding with Christian morality the Ramboy society shamelessly posits the existence of divergent identities and values. As such, one need not look further than the symbolic function of the Piraeus in Plato's *Republic* to find the source of Christian unease. The Athenian Port is the site of cultural exchange, the site where new Gods come into being, bringing forth innovative ideas.²⁰⁹ If Christianity's claim is to represent an enlightened knowledge, possessing the single truth of existence, an intersection with the other cannot be embraced in such an inclusive way. Rather, it must be denounced as immoral and pagan. As such, Evergon places his Ramboy within this economy, yet intervenes with it. For the fetish that he engages in indicates the lack and fear of that order which seeks to judge what lies beyond it.

However, outside of sensory associations, conventional fetishes may be quietly sanctioned at the perimeter of the heterosexual order. Because in Freudian terms, the fetish is the surrogate feminine phallus prior to the child's realization of her lack, functioning to ease male castration anxiety.²¹⁰ His narcissistic tendencies, which

²⁰⁹ Allan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay" *The Republic Of Plato*. 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 311.

²¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism" *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Vol. 21, Trans./Ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 152-153.

necessarily make his love object like him, may be sublimated if the woman is able to retain the phallus as constructed in his psyche. As such, he can function within the normal heterosexual matrix, and need not confront his homosexuality, nor suffer the repercussions of their realization in a society that neither fully accepts nor accommodates it.

Yet this boot belongs to no woman nor do the shoes alongside. The female body is outside the realm of the all male society of Ramboys, beyond desire. Within a fantasy world, described by the artist as Baudelaire's 'bastard novel', a promiscuous homosexuality constitutes the norm.²¹¹ There would be no need to re-invest the female with the phallus, as there is none. Despite this, the fetish image is retained, its very presence begging the question of its purpose or signification. Perhaps it is a subtle reminder that no one possesses the phallus, that it is an ideal that will infinitely fail to be approximated. That the particular shoe fetish is derived from the child's feelings of excitement upon peering up the woman's skirt,²¹² to the site of her genitals, and his subsequent association of the shoe with arousal, generally cannot be transferred to the male body. Clothing constraints prevent such an experience, and help to dispel such a fetish as a cultural construct, rather than a truthful dictum. As such, the homosexual male will not be governed by the shoe fetish, as there is no presumed lack for him to fill, no male body in absence of the penis.

²¹¹ Stapp, Will. *Evergon 1987-1997* (Bradford, England: National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, 1997), 11.

²¹² Freud, "Fetishism", 155.

This figure's face submerged in the boot further blinds his sight, leaving him in darkness, promoting the sight of other senses. The sensory sight negates the phallus as something that derives its power from the scopic register. Although the male body is on display, it does not indicate elements of subjugation generally seen in the female nude. Despite the fact that the subject's eyes remain veiled in the boot, the image does not facilitate an easy voyeurism. Playing on the stereotypical position of the male looker, it imposes its homosexual content on homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, democratically queering vision for one and all. This dynamic seeks to suggest a repressed homosexuality, by eliciting an immediate response to the erotic, sensory content. It poses the same dynamic that Simpson broaches in regards to military showers. He suggests that one's own nudity is not the fundamental issue of showering in an environment of varied sexualities, but one's own look.²¹³ Prior brotherly love threatens to reveal itself as indiscrete from an innate bi-sexuality in all, subsequently revealing the looker as identified with the object of his look. The logical extension of this line of thought is the destabilization of the phallic order, as the looker becomes the object of his look, the penetrated penetrator. As such, the blinding does not castrate so much as indicate reluctance to conform to the male heterosexual fantasy. That the boot mimics the penis below seems to indicate the dichotomy between biological penis and the constructed phallus. The highly decorated boot reaffirms this. Furthermore, that the fetish transforms man into beast suggests Freudian theories of orality. It defies charges that male homosexuality stems from fears of the female genitalia, the fear of the mother as an

²¹³ Simpson, "Introduction", 6.

indication of his desire to be a woman himself, for her. Here, the man looks down the symbolic gash, burying himself in it head first. He has no fear. His “perversion homosexuality”, as Edmund Bergler termed it, is only a regression to the oral stage, its compulsive repetition, as far as it is the heterosexual fear.²¹⁴ As such, Evergon reclaims the deviance of perversion for the Ramboys as a positive strategy through which normative values of society may be subverted and displaced.

If Cadieux and Evergon gave agency to their subjects in *Parfum* and *Ramboy Sniffing Boot I*, through their qualities of a sensory object within the phallic structure, Cumming perhaps produces something more conciliatory. Locked in an intersubjectivity of touch, his models not only intervene in the patriarchal structure but posit an alternate form of relations. In this way desire is transferred from a need to fulfill lack, to an embrace of what is present. This can be seen in Donigan Cumming’s *October 23, 1991* [Figure 2.8] image from the *Pretty Ribbons* series, where two bodies are pressed together with only a ribbon of fur between them. Reminiscent of youth, soft strands of fur meet Nettie’s coarse grey hair in a subtle extension, falling like feminine locks over his shoulder. Visualizing the fabricated codes of gender, it exposes the small swatch of her beaded dress and slick glaze of lipstick as further signs of femininity. They mark her as comical construct in the Lacanian *parade* of sex. Moreover, partial views of the models, the male cropped and Nettie in a semi-obsured profile suggests superficial display. Each appears to signify gender before self. Yet perhaps there is something more profound

²¹⁴ Kenneth Lewes. “The Theorists of the Oral Period: 1930-1948” *Psychoanalysis and Male Homosexuality* (London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995), 101.

revealed in their relationship. As withered, wrinkling, white skin and a middle-aged dark body embrace in a mutual surrender, masks are penetrated to subjects. For Irigaray this form of touch has a particular specificity as wanted caress. It is beyond the hardship of work, and its yield is without productive value.²¹⁵ Rather, the caress is the realization of a consensual intersubjectivity. She states:

In order to go beyond a limit, there must be a boundary. To touch one another in intersubjectivity, it is necessary that two subjects agree to the relationship and that the possibility to consent exists. Each must have the opportunity to be a concrete, corporeal and sexuate subject, rather than an abstract, neutral, fabricated, and fictitious one.²¹⁶

Thus, the caress functions as the virtual antithesis of vision, making Laura Mulvey's "visual pleasures" inaccessible in the reciprocal exchange. The scopophiliac who finds pleasure in his voyeuristic intrusion, and derives a sense of power from his position, can garner no more than equality in the caress. The subjects' closed eyes reiterate this point. Not only does their voluntary blindness indicate a desire not to conceive of one another within the terms of ownership, it intervenes in the look of the viewer. Rather than facilitate a facile look at a pair of passive subjects, their bodily embrace points to the limit of viewer experience. They indicate their temporal absence mockingly suggesting the viewer's position of power to be an illusion. No longer is their act corporeal, but it is a trace, and as such, the viewer is necessarily excluded. Their union has occurred without the viewer's consent and is buried in time. Unable to intervene in what has been, the only positive position that the viewer may assume, is that of empathy. Drawing on Levinas,

²¹⁵ Luce Irigaray. "The Wedding Between the Body and Language" *Two Be Two* trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Cocito Monoc, Marco F. (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 25.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

Gabriel Josipovici speaks of emotional comprehension as beyond facial expression recognition. He insists upon identification through the commonality of bodies, that a remembered bodily experience may be triggered through the visual sign.²¹⁷ As such, he re-centres recognition from the cerebral to the body. Only through such an embodied encounter with the image can the viewer come to understand the relationship between Nettie and her male companion.

This recognition of the other within the context of one's own body, serves as a form of agency for the subjects in their resistance to the look. For the viewer can no longer engage with the subjects as a casual observer. To see his own body, he must become implicated in their touch, and try as he might to isolate action from reception, to touch is to be touched. He will not leave the image without gleaning something of intersubjectivity. He will recall his own experience of touch through identification with the imaged subjects. As Kreon witnessed Haimon in his last breath, his son's fall in a death embrace, he could not help but feel empathy; for Kreon could recall the touch of his son, the caress of his wife which would soon leave him. As such, the caress becomes a place in which identity gives way to one's relationship with the other.

It is in this vein that Irigaray considers the caress as a meaningful gesture in the subversion of cultural identity construction. Placing the caress outside the realm of either activity or passivity, Irigaray provides a useful vehicle to undermine the traditional Freudian binary of gender definition. Furthermore, it seems to suggest an alternate form of language, which has the perception of being primary, but in fact offers a

²¹⁷ Gabriel Josipovici, "The Lesson of the Hand" *Touch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 8.

complementary mode of expression to linguistics. Irigaray discusses the attributes of caress as an, “. . .awakening of gestures, of perceptions which are at the same time acts, intentions, emotions.”²¹⁸ She qualifies these expressions within the context of personal relations, finding specificity between two, as opposed to a universal discourse. Pressing further, Irigaray asserts that not only does the caress awaken the body, it simultaneously jars it from the complacency of identity, seeking to dissolve it, much like Kristeva’s understanding of the properties of perfume. Applying this to gender politics, Irigaray states, “The caress. . . is a gesture which goes beyond the civil cloak or border of a proper identity, which exceeds the right to exist as a subject with one’s own gender: a male or a female subject.”²¹⁹ A rather Utopian idea, one wonders if its enthusiasm does not spill over to the work of Cumming. What does it mean to find Nettie and the male subject in consensual caress? A sense of an advantageous exchange seems to surface in which boundaries of difference, falter upon touch. Amidst caress, one cannot exist as simply self, whether that image be identified as the gender which Irigaray privileges, or be it an identity of race or age. Through touch, the other comes to be felt at an extremely visceral level, within the self, confusing a politics of difference.

Yet to have the other pressing against the boundary of the self is a highly charged matter in body politics. Homi K. Bhabha considers the racial other in terms of absorbing Caucasian lack through his visibility, mirroring the Lacanian structure.²²⁰ Yet, to have

²¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 26.

²²⁰ Homi K. Bhabha. “The Other Question” *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994) 77.

identified with the other through caress, seeing the self in the other, places this system in a precarious position. How can one suspend a binary relationship positing the Caucasian in the phallic role of power, affirmed through the other's subjugation, when the touch clearly exposes greater body similarities than differences? How can one perpetuate such a system with the consciousness of subjective equality? To suspend the validity of the offense, one must repeat false, debased stereotypes that more strongly envelop his consciousness than the knowledge of touch. As such Bhabha conceives of racial stereotypes in terms of the fetish, easing the castration anxiety of the Freudian model. In contrast, he understands the colonial fetish to be openly visible, as well an object of derision rather than love. Although, his intent is surely not to marginalize women in this assertion, it is difficult to comprehend how he does not conceive of gender based fetishism as similarly rooted in hate and oppression. In fact, in Bhabha's argument the colonial other is made to symbolize a divergent and opposing set of values that find a parallel in female representation. If the black man is to be stereotyped as dangerous and violent, the woman can manifest herself in the form of the *femme fatale*. Likewise, the passive and loyal servant finds an echo in the submissive good girl type. As such, although the colonial other and woman come from very different positions and must necessarily not be conflated into a single subject position of oppressed, it is more useful to find similarities, which are indicative of structures of oppression. They both are objects of hate and malice as they disturb the white masculine norm.

With this in mind, Cumming will not allow the repetition of the stereotype of the racial or sexual other. If his nudity brings to mind associations of a racially specific

sexuality, the feared assailant of the Caucasian woman, Nettie deflates this reading in her reciprocal touch. This is not to say that his body is validated by her love, the travesty that Frantz Fanon attributed to the black man who sought to attain a transformation of colour through white acceptance.²²¹ Rather, it finds respect in a caress that cannot perceive colour. It is only the on-looker who may be rattled by the inter-racial affair. Likewise, Nettie's age and her covered body, remove her from the site of sexual object, as her partner need not see her to enjoy her love. It is beyond the scopic field. As such, the designation of their bodies as other will be resisted through an unwillingness to accept such a position. Like Bhabha's concept of hybridity where the colonial subject is brought into being within the discordance of the violence that subordinated him, as a means of subverting that authority,²²² the injured bodies of Nettie and her lover remove themselves from his visual domain, asserting their collective autonomy. They will no longer be victims, but will appropriate bell hooks' strategy of the "oppositional gaze", turning their looks back, defining themselves within their own terms, resistant to the imposed identity of the governing power.²²³ Closed eyes, they do so through the rupture their caress represents. As such, their presence is one of accusatory agency, making them the "terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification, a disturbing questioning of the

²²¹ Frantz Fanon, "The Man of Colour and the White Woman" *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 63.

²²² Homi K. Bhaba, "Signs Taken for Wonders" *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 112.

²²³ bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze" *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 130.

images and presences of authority.”²²⁴ Empowered by the caress, Nettie and her lover meet the audience as subjective equals.

Thus the sensory is an embrace of the body, a willingness to love and live in and beyond the body, in the spaces between. The first section of this chapter sought to reclaim the voice from language, returning it to the reach of the subject. In *Hear Me With Your Eyes* Cadieux asked the viewer to listen to the cutting silence of the voice inscribed upon its facial signifier. Indicating the female voice as outside of language, she confronted her masculine oppressor, forcing his recognition of her pain in the visual sphere. Evergon was engaged in a similar project, in his *Untitled* image from the *Horifique Portrait* series which appropriated the voice of the female hysteric, disrupting the masculine heterosexual discourse through her unstable interaction in it. Thus he sought to articulate the violence imposed on the homosexual body while making that body inaccessible to the probing inquiry of authority as characterized by the therapist. In conclusion of the vocal discourse, Cumming dislocated the centre of language by removing the finite “I”. Employing the cinematic structure of the disembodied voice, he subverted language’s authority by fracturing the continuity between speech and body. Imaging its negative qualities, these works exorcise language from their bodies, finding alternative forms of expression in their collision with its constraints.

A need for a different method of meaning, found an extension in the representation of other sensory images. This may be observed in Cadieux’s displacement of fragrance in *Parfum*, from a site of feminine commodity, to one of an object

²²⁴Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders”, 113.

“pulverizing” of identity. Evergon borrowed the sensual perversity of the shoe fetish to suggest a frightening deviance of a queer culture that need not compensate for phallic lack as it knows there is none. And lastly, Cumming turned to an examination of how the caress brings about a state of intersubjectivity between equal bodies, returning subject to body.

This chapter is posed as a mirror to my initial inquiry into injuries and resistance in the realm of sight. There, the masquerade and the veil functioned to undermine the phallic signifier of vision as fantasy, a power enacted by the assumption of gender signified roles of being and having, seen and seeing. Exposing it as performative, and its chastising entrapment of the look upon the veil of surface planes, both real and metaphorical, the ethics of vision were called to account for deleterious behaviour. In this chapter, the focus shifted to the sensorial as a strategy of intervening in the visual discourse, but also as a means of examining the success or failure of such alternate expressions. Equally problematic at times, often pushing the body away in a contradictory attempt to reclaim its power, in the end it was somewhere between vision and the senses, that identity found a protective space for its fluid subject. It was in the uncharted, nameless places, that the body could learn to speak and see again, to touch and be touched. Moved there through the injury of its own body, and society’s cathartic realization in its traces of abuse, the body came to be reborn in a renewed consciousness of society.

Conclusion

My conclusion will be characterized by brevity, as I know you already think you know who you are, where you stand. Did you feel the movement as my words unfolded, as your eyes ran across surface images? Did you see, hear, touch the other's body that you might yet be? Perhaps it denied you, tears to your eyes, an accusatory trap. Try a little compassion, some empathy. Raise your consciousness, meeting others. But who are you to me? Do as you will. Bodies, identities, selves, try not to keep them separate. You might lose yourself. You might lose me.

What did you hear in my discourse, something of a masquerade? Veiling? Voice? Sensation? Something of resistance and agency? Subversion? Did I hurt you, your family? Recall Antigone in her manly acts and claims, her friction in language and gender. Would you have liked it, if she had just stayed home, unseen, passive, quiet? How ideal it would be if her belligerent acts towards family and state never came to fruition. Did you realize her name means anti-generation? Born of incest, destined to die for her father's deeds, to be born as the living dead. But generation also elicits notions of production, of wives and mothers, replicating themselves, their values. Antigone laments that she will know neither love nor children, but claims it as her own choice. As she goes to her grave, no one *she* loves will "sigh" over her. Her betrothed Haimon seems far from her mind when she asserts that she would not challenge the state, to die for a husband or child, for whom she might have another. How expendable the state structure of the family might be. But a brother, with whom she shares a Mother is irreplaceable. He is her masculine echo, her double, through whom she "died and still lived." In him, she lost her

opposition to the state, rediscovered in the burial of his body, inheriting the patriarchal privilege, only to destroy it. Her defiance in act, language, and death, places state corruption as spectacle, her body a willing victim, to be marked, letting witness be born to it. A symbol of anti-generation, she will not be ruled by the values of regeneration. Eyes wide open, she lives the Oedipal legacy of perverse intervention in family and state.

Kreon saw the anti-generation too late, when too many were dead. Sacrificing family for state, he was left with neither. A fallen father, insight came at the sight of loss, the site of family in state. Unable to claim the culpability of consciousness, he surrendered himself, folded back into the authority he had been. Do not follow. Antigone died for you, herself, leaving injured bodies in her wake. Recognize them in all their forms of parody or pain. Refuse to maintain appearances. What is your having worth to another's being? Flaccid, unveiled, mimesis of the phallus, Cadieux, Evergon and Cumming expose you. They borrow your coverings to avert your gaze, trapping it in the weave of a floral field, in the sexual repulsion of age, and needle you with something you do not yet understand. Their bodies will speak through the language that frames them, in signs of silence and hysteria, shifting places to maintain identities. When you insist they are only bodies that will become their point of power. They'll embody your perfume through tears, and find power in their supposed perversity, threatening you with phantasies of your own. Touching one another in caress, they'll find subjectivity between one another, outside of you. Don't face it like a man, for your surfaces will always be penetrated. Embrace the possibility of transgression, finding yourself and others between.

Figure 1.1 Geneviève Cadieux. *Loin de moi, et près du lointain*, 1993.

Figure 1.2 Evergon, *Portrait of the Old Alpha Ram*, 1994.

Title and date of photograph:
From the series *Pretty Ribbons*, "May 27, 1992"
Dimensions of the work:
44" x 30"

©Donigan Cumming

Figure 1.3 Donigan Cumming. *May 27, 1992*, from the *Pretty Ribbons* series, 1993.

Figure 1.4 Geneviève Cadieux. *Juillet 94*, 1995.

Title and date of photograph:
From the series *Pretty Ribbons*, "May 13, 1992"
Dimensions of the work:
30" x 44"

©Donigan Cumming

Figure 1.5 Donigan Cumming. *May 13, 1992*, from the *Pretty Ribbons* series, 1993

Figure 1.6 Evergon. *St. Sebastian*, 1984.

Figure 2.1 Geneviève Cadieux. *Hear Me with Your Eyes*, 1989.

Figure 2.2 Geneviève Cadieux. *Hear Me with Your Eyes*, 1989.

Figure 2.3 Geneviève Cadieux. *Hear Me with Your Eyes*, 1989.

Figure 2.4 Evergon. *Untitled*, from the *Horriifique Portrait* series, 1982.

Figure 2.5 Donigan Cumming. May 29, 1984, from *Reality and Motive in Documentary Photography, Part 3*, 1986.

Figure 2.6 Geneviève Cadieux. *Parfum*, 1991.

Figure 2.7 Evergon. *Ramboy Sniffing Boot I*, 1995.

Title and date of photograph:
From the series *Pretty Ribbons*, "October 23, 1991"
Dimensions of the work:
44" x 30"

©Donigan Cumming

Figure 2.8 Donigan Cumming. *October 23, 1991* from the *Pretty Ribbons* series, 1993.

APPENDIX A

Artists' Biographies

Geneviève Cadieux:

Wounded bodies of cinematic scale are the works Geneviève Cadieux has made her name with. Her oeuvre is intimate and distant, often accusatory and always speaking to a lack. Challenging the complacency of sight, she moves viewers to a realm of unheard voices and probing gestures that point to injurious, social relations. As critic Chantal Pontbriand notes, Cadieux's work is the "incessant interaction between Self and Other – their shifts, failures, and encounters –".¹ Pivotaly informed by psychoanalytic and film theory, her work intersects with its discourse.

Like vision, the constraints of language are a recurrent theme in Cadieux's work. Exploring the failure of communication between bodies, she positions speech as an unanswered demand for love. Juxtaposing visual and vocal, she suggests a meaning between. This field of inquiry has been further taken up in gestural signs misrecognized by the other, and through her foray into video that began in 1993. Moreover, a frequent use of light boxes, and exterior mounting on Plexiglas, imbues her work with a sense of tactility, broadening its signifying capacity. As a whole, Cadieux's work possesses a special quality of coherence that is most likely owing to her small production of little more than a few works per year.

¹ Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin" Geneviève Cadieux, trans. Donald McGrath (Montréal: Les Éditions Parachute, 1990), 67.

Cadieux was born in Montréal in 1956, where she continues to work and reside. Internationally known, she has prolifically exhibited since her beginning in the late seventies in numerous solo and group shows. Some of her more significant exhibits have included self-titled shows at the XLIV Venice Biennale di Venezia (1990), the Musée d'Art contemporain de Montréal (1993), the Bonner Kunstverein (1994), and a traveling series from the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (1999). She holds a BFA from the University of Ottawa.

Donigan Cumming

The oeuvre of Donigan Cumming is a problematization of ethics informing traditional social documentary photography. Intervening in its codes, he undermines a claim to validity, situating the documentary image within a theatrics of fiction. Cumming's work at first appears to be a very straight photography in its sober black and white shots. But it possesses something of the absurd. A very conscious arrangement of environment indicates the image to be the conception of a person, opposed to an impossible truth. Most commonly recording images of the working-class, poor, and those at the socio-economic margins of society, Cumming brings 'other' bodies to vision's fore. Sometimes using a model only once, at other times mapping human progress through a continued relationship, the artist employs respect in negotiating the portraits of his subjects.

It is through such interventions that Cumming seeks to place his work as both "continuity and rupture" of the documentary tradition. Imaging these persons as the

'obscene' objects of spectacle, he confronts the viewer with a body that engagingly looks back. It is a trap for the gaze. Further removing the viewer from the complacency of looking, he juxtaposes his work with sound recordings. By introducing other medium, he subverts visual authority, calling attention to the meaning derived between image and sound. In more recent years, Cumming's focus has taken a logical extension towards a video emphasis, while still employing a variety of mediums.

Born in 1947 in Danville, Virginia, Cumming has for a long while been tenuously related to the arts. He explored "legitimate theatre" in the 60s, performance art à la Fluxus and Funk, and even made his first video during that decade. Earning a B.Sc. from Florida State University in 1978, he later returned to the arts to receive a M.F.A. from Concordia University in 1985. He began exhibiting in the early 1980s, and is known internationally for series such as "Reality and Motive in Documentary Photography" (1986), "The Stage" (1991), "Diverting the Image" (1993), "Pretty Ribbons" (1996) and "Continuity and Rupture" (1999). His works have, and continue to meet with both approbation and applause in their frank approach to ethics and the history of documentary photography.

Evergon (Eve R. Gonzales, Celluloso Evergonni, Egon Brut)

Evergon's work is driven by a need to articulate queer identities in new and meaningful ways. His name, largely a profession of his ideology, locates him as an unstable subject, always absent. Inhabiting a plurality of locations, he has more recently assumed a subset of personalities, allowing him to simultaneously be man and woman,

elderly and middle-aged, pornographer, documentarian, and always, homoerotic artist. Playing with the notion of homosexual deviance, he employs perversion as a strategy to assert a queer difference at the edge of society. Performing identities, he claims his homosexual difference to take form in a Queer culture of "Act Up".

Evergon has spanned a wide gamut of styles in his representation through the years. His work has moved from a highly personal iconology in his Xerox colour prints and early SX-70 Polaroids to large scale Polaroids termed "homo-baroque" to holographs, to a mythology of Ramboys, to a more stripped down style of pseudo-documentary records and almost pornographic studies. Evergon is perhaps best known for his use of the large-format Polaroid camera. This unusual approach allowed him to construct sets and models to be photographed by a camera that produces instantaneous and life-size 40 x 80 inch prints. Moreover, the instant feedback meant that he was able to engage his models' opinions in the process. However, he has more recently moved away from a technological emphasis, employing a more sober black and white aesthetic, appropriate to a shift in aesthetics.

Born in Niagara Falls, Ontario, in 1946, Evergon graduated with a B.F.A from Mount Allison University in 1970 and an M.F.A. in Photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1974. Since then, he has taught at numerous schools across the United States and Canada, spending twenty years at the University of Ottawa (1974-1994). He has also held the position of artist in residence at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1993-1994) and the University of Windsor (1995). He is currently employed as an Associate Professor of Photography at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia

University, Montréal. Well known in Canada and abroad, he has earned various accolades, including the Canada Council's Victor-Martyn-Lynch-Staunton Award (1987), Petro Canada's Technology Award (1990), and the Bradford, U.K. Fellowship in Photography (1996).

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