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The Remains of Language

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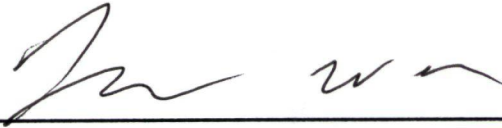
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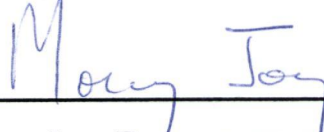
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Remains of Language" submitted by Nicole Shukin-Simpson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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ABSTRACT

It is difficult to delimit which texts do and which texts do not enter into the flexible dynamics of pastoral. Taken in its broadest sense, pastoral includes writing and thinking that operate by way of oppositions. The classic opposition between city and country finds a more contemporary expression in the pastoral opposition between First and Third Worlds. For women, pastoral is complicated by hierarchical distinctions between male and female, culture and nature, respectively. This thesis aims to read literary, philosophical, and cultural texts that invite an identification with pastoral ideologies. By regarding how language conceals social, economic, racial, and gendered contexts in order to present human subjectivity at the center of the pastoral "clearing," questions are raised about the subject of language. Is language wielded by human agents, only, or does it belong to an event composed by far more than human players?

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For J. E.

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"What remains to be said." --Maurice Blanchot

"What remains is founded by the poets."

--Holderlin

Preface

The reader of this thesis should be prepared for what is at times its itinerant process.¹ As an interpretation of an interpretation, or a reading of my own reading habits, it takes certain liberties in attempting to enact its argument. Let me prepare you, then, for a community of essays -- ranging from several pages to several sentences in length -- that I hope will inquire into and involve rather than resolve my topic.

The essays take place at the intersections of three cultural approaches to reading - Heideggerian, feminist, and postcolonial. Explorations of "otherness" -- a deliberately broad term that will accommodate various interpretations -- these essays analyze the loss, distortion, and possibility of relationships between self and other. I draw upon a wide range of texts, from postcolonial and feminist pastoral to twentieth-century philosophy, poetry, and film. I am interested in situating the pastoral distinction between city and country as symptomatic of how self and other are often described in oppositional terms. Even as I critique pastoral oppositions, however, I will elaborate upon what it is in the pastoral space that nonetheless holds promise of a radical implication between self and other, an implication of each in each that defies strict divisions between city/country, nature/culture, and other binaries.

I engage several texts that clearly make pastoral an issue. In *Life and Times of Michael K*, J.M. Coetzee problematizes South African pastoral; I read the novel both in terms of that problematization and in terms of my own awkward identification with the male figure of resistance, Michael K. David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life* is, like Coetzee's, a postcolonial novel embarked on the task of rewriting pastoral themes. I approach both Coetzee's and Malouf's novels through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's ontological theory of "becomings." Again, however, the pastoral space that fosters metamorphoses in *An Imaginary Life* is reserved for male figures like Ovid and the wild boy; I will question why female metamorphosis is often denied,

¹ I use "itinerant" deliberately, a word that I will link up with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's use of it in *A Thousand Plateaus; Schizophrenia and Capitalism*, transl. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987) 36.

and what it might entail. By the time I arrive at Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Fish," I am well on my way to imagining a feminist version of Deleuze and Guattari's "becomings," one that erodes the identity of anthropological "man" by virtue of human being's irreducible connexion to non-human others. I will read Bishop's poem as relinquishing the heroic selfhood that still surfaces in the pastoral of Coetzee and Malouf. The horizon of my reinhabitation of the pastoral genre, finally, is drawn by Lisa Robertson's *XEclogue*, a series of ten pastoral poems that dares to incorporate postmodern cyborgs into the pastoral glade.

Dispersed throughout the readings of these literary works are minor forays into other texts, entries that constitute a subtext digging its way towards subterranean alternatives to representing oneself as a woman within language. I will suggest that subterfuge is vital if structures of speaking, seeing, working, and being are to be transformed. Via the feminist cultural theorists Rey Chow and Shoshana Felman, I read Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* to explore how attempts to represent the holocaust visually may demand of its subjects and its viewers a participation ominously akin to fascist demands for public exposure.

I trace William Spanos's argument, too, as he challenges the humanist outrage precipitated by a scandalous statement of Heidegger's on the technologization of agriculture. Spanos reads the counterstrategy of the Vietnamese in the Vietnam War as one that befuddled the United States' desire to delimit and target a visible opponent; humans and agriculture could not be separated and hierarchically evaluated by the U.S. military. As with the work of Spanos, the subtext of this thesis is informed by Heidegger's critique of humanist, enlightenment reason, and especially by his distinction between an uncanny (non-human) Language and a scientific, or controlling (human) Logos.

But Heidegger himself will not escape the anthropological humanism (the bias for language as articulate and disclosing, a masculine human trait) that he calls into question. I challenge Heidegger's denial of language in animals -- and his disavowal of animal spirit - with the help of thinkers as various as Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. I do so by calling for a reinterpretation of language as *affect*. Not only does affect suggest other ways of thinking about the human "subject" who speaks, it

accommodates those foreign, inaccessible bodies (animal, plant, stone) that humanity has othered on the grounds that only it possesses language.

A reader and writer who tends to treat of subjects as though they were at her beck and call, I am enmeshed in modes of literary production that depend upon enlightenment values (or what I will take to task throughout my essays as an imperializing eye seeking *evidence* of the other through visual objectification). Theorizing alternatives to the demand for evidence cannot be detached from the form of theory I adopt; in what you will read I try, then, to return the implicit to academic discourses which expect at least the semblance of explicit information. It is in this sense that my subtext is a subterfuge. By departing from many conventions of intellectual argument, one of which has been to downplay the partiality of thinking and its necessarily imperfect analysis of the matter at hand, I mean to call into question the explicit, visible, operative subject of knowledge acquisition.

My attempt to produce a collage of essays in which self and other may find some startling juxtaposition that illuminates necessarily also results in blind moments that are not *productive* in the usual sense. From within a genre that has abetted colonialism and capitalism off and on for centuries,² I will suggest that perhaps only the indolence, or itinerancy, of pastoral -- the resistance to a certain work ethic -- remains unsettling. I have remained as itinerant in my thesis as I can without abandoning an itinerary altogether. I do so in the hope that the following essays will elude finally congealing, concealing their partiality. This is keeping in mind, as Donna Haraway writes in her essay "Situated Knowledges...", that "[w]e do not seek partiality for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (*Simians*, 196).

I hope this preamble to my dissertation helps to make its insolvent moments, within a different economy of textual work, meaningful. My belief that texts, bodies, and communities of bodies can and do work differently

²Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973) remains one of the finest studies of the connection between pastoral and capitalism/colonialism, although Williams restricts himself primarily to British literature.

than conditions of patriarchal capital might persuade pervades how I read and write about literature. As Walter Benjamin declares:

An author who teaches writers nothing, teaches no one. What matters, therefore, is the exemplary character of production, which is able first to induce other producers to produce, and second to put an improved apparatus at their disposal. And this apparatus is better the more consumers it is able to turn into producers - that is, readers or spectators into collaborators. (Reflections, 233)

The country.

Sometimes I think that I live in a pastoral simply because my house has not been broken into yet, and I have not been violated by bats, knives, guns, or random acts of terror. Sometimes I think that it is a freak of birth that I should live in a pocket of time and space seemingly immune to the violence of history. Other times, I realize that my freak of birth is in fact a well-cushioned and self-perpetuating privilege, an immunity that has been secured by inoculating against other peoples and things, a vigilant sanctuary inhabited by those with history on their side. (Those who write a sanctuary on and over and through other bodies). Pastoral has been a leave-taking, a superstructure of amnesty, a class of ceasefire sustained on the common stalk of violence.

house

In the country. Thirty-three degrees Celsius, black flies wedged between my fingers as I eat, and family members dishevelled, disjointed, flushed. I unload my books and word processor from the car, lug my props into the retreat I have imagined for myself. I don't know where to start, and feel out of sorts.

Retreating. What lyrical pressures build up behind me as I race, concave, toward the country? In the country, the country evades me. The perfect summer, the slabs of free time, the vegetative sources of creativity. Eden. Tonight, for the first time, I am curious about this great blurry green blindspot, this vertiginous swirling hole that sucks me back: the country.

There was a country mouse, and there was a city mouse. They were very different. The country mouse was like Levin in *Anna Karenin*, the city

mouse like the more dapper Oblonksy.³ Fabulous, fable-like. Moral of the story....*Stay in the country.*

When I speak of pastoral, I am speaking not of *the historical analysis of, or from Virgil to Frost*, but of a commonplace that pervades the way I have thought about how and where I live. There is no doubt that the discourse of dwelling that I inherited and have tried to prolong is informed by a pastoral web of intertexts rooted in Western culture all the way back to the *Idylls of Theocritus*. This might explain why I have been so habituated to describe my life in pastoral terms without realizing that these terms have literary, social, economic, and gendered consequences that are not as harmless as the genre pretends. I will consider pastoral as something that I am blindly habituated to, as notions of place that have contained me without my knowing. Until, perhaps, now.

For the longest time, country and city have stood in opposition for me. Migration, in my life, has taken place along the axis of city and country, crossing phantasmatic but nevertheless very precise boundaries separating the two.⁴ Country represented a site of resistance to all that the city signified. What sort of discursive construct is "the country"? What sort of discursive construct is "the city"? I am beginning to realize that by touting an idealized generality - "the country" - as a *topos* of resistance, my energy has been spent in a series of reactionary anti-s binding me to the city I meant to dismiss. I want to overhaul the country hook, line, and sinker, yet salvage something of an imaginary locale in order to foreground pastoral as the fabulous construct it is, and to show that as a fabulous rather than normalizing discourse, it might transform social relations.

³As usual, I overlook Anna by identifying (as far as I'm able) with Levin. Having to be male-identified is a central problem of pastoral for me, which enters most literature in the figure of a man. Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *Anna Karenin*, transl. Rosemary Edmonds (New York: Penguin Books, 1984).

⁴A term that first came to my attention in Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993). From Butler's extensive use of the term throughout that book, I interpret "phantasmatic" to mean how the body's apparent substantiality and reality is primarily an effect of discourse. The phantasmatic body is always in the making, always repeating illusions (discourses) until they gain the weight of indisputable matter. Butler suggests that by interrupting the repetition, or performance, of the phantasms which have acquired the status of "givens," subjects can locate the agency to challenge the way bodies have come to matter.

As Raymond Williams writes, the problem of re-imagining country and city is a personal as well as a political concern: "The importance [of the English experience and interpretation of the country and the city] can be stated, and will have to be assessed, as a general problem. But it is as well to say at the outset that this has been for me a personal issue, for as long as I remember" (2). Although a multiplicity of discursive "sets" will appear within the framework of a city/country opposition, then, I hope that the organization of my thinking around this duo in particular is recognized as personally symptomatic, as indeed it is for Williams: "And since the relation of country and city is not only an objective problem and history, but has been and still is for millions of people a direct and intense preoccupation and experience, I feel no need to justify, though it is as well to mention, this personal cause" (3). In the context of my life, how the personal and the political fuse in a lifestyle powered by positive (*country*), and negative (*city*), will be seen to affirm the feminist claim that the personal never achieves privacy or privation from cultural determination, but rather is saturated with the narratives that give meaning to experience. My beliefs, my actions -- even my most private reflections -- reproduce pastoral values that operate on far more than an individual level.

pastoral

A genre perches on the opposition of culture versus nature, city versus country, metropolis versus colony, experience versus innocence, mediated versus immediate, speech versus writing, male versus female, human versus animal, spirit versus matter.⁵ A genre that since the *Idylls of Theocritus* has variously been invested in keeping each pair in a binary set apart, and not only often absolutely different from its other, but hierarchically invested, so that although the pastoral quotient (nature, country, innocence, immediacy,

⁵ Almost any study of pastoral will reiterate these distinctions. See, for only one example, Harold E. Toliver, *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1971).

speech, female, animal, matter) is idealized as desirable, in actuality it ranks as the object of desire for an ascendent subject (culture, city, experience, mediation, writing, male, human, spirit). An object of desire that alternately impassions and disgusts the controlling term, the object of pastoral tends to be subsidiary, supplementary, and ultimately at the subject's disposal; disposable.

When the dualism of terms, such as in the litany above, recycle themselves in an oppositional dynamic of action and reaction, or when one term exists at the expense of the other, a potentially fascist *enantiodromia* is generated. Carl Jung attributes to "old Heraclitus" the discovery of enantiodromia, the wild swinging of one thing into its opposite; Jung adopts the word to describe the way the unconscious compensates for psychic energy suppressed in conscious life.⁶ The constant negation of one term by another (and hence the inevitable *return of the repressed*⁷) results in what I will regard as fascism. I am interested in how thinking might avoid the compensatory swings of oppositional logic, the extremes that portend fascism of one figuration or another. From thinking as influential in my life as Martin Heidegger's, to the commonplaces of my childhood discourses, pastoral dwelling is all too often predicated on, and so haunted by, the suppressed other.

fasci

"Country" connotes, as Raymond Williams suggests, both countryside, and country as land or nation. In my experience the discursive node of the country reflects more specifically the tension between what I perceive to be

⁶ Jung, Carl, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, transl. R.F.C. Hull (Bollingen Series XX, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966) 72.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, in his essay "The Uncanny," *Studies in Parapsychology*, ed. Philip Rieff, trans. Alix Strachey (Collier Books: New York, 1963) describes a sort of "morbid anxiety" arising from "something repressed which *recurs*," and again "something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (47).

the possibility of entering into a Heideggerian *uncanny otherness* of earth, and the probability that nation-building activities within country houses are constructions founded on systematic, *familiar otherings*. What Heidegger (and differently, Freud) call the uncanny - the return of the unfamiliar - might occur when the ontological categories I have imposed on the grass, the wind, the trees, the sky, the pond fail to confine them, so that something approaches me that I can neither recognize nor describe. "In anxiety one feels 'uncanny'...here uncanniness also means 'not-being-at-home' [*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*, transl. note]" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 233). The familiar othering that radiates out from my home in the country, by contrast, keeps things in place by holding them in strict relation to the family project, usually as its placid backdrop.

Considering my family as a text open to estranging otherness, on the one hand, and as an insular factory of familiarity providing a breeding ground for fascisms, on the other, makes apparent the contradictions my family protects. As a factory of familiarity, we tended to gather together only those items that were of our kind (kin). "Fascism," Latin for "bundling together" (a bundle of sticks), was emblemized in Mussolini's Italy. It is also an emblem for texts that act like closed and limited packages - bundles bent on preventing any loss of accumulated meaning, or bundles too tightly bound.

I acknowledge the potential engorgement of the term "fascism" risked by stuffing too much into its ties. On the other hand, I think that I avoid implicating myself in something as distant and terrible as Mussolini's Italy or Hitler's Germany when I reserve fascism for European paradigms of terror. In suggesting that my own familial setting perpetuates a degree of terror disguised from itself by the buffer zone of language (i.e. we would never call our diminution of city folk fascist, disguised as elitism is in the pastoral jargon of city-country divides), I suggest that fascism needs to be burdened not solely with events of explicit violence (the Holocaust), but with all of the discourses that for centuries in advance gather ammunition. This may include the discourse of Martin Heidegger, whose thinking familiarizes and estranges language to varying degrees, depending on what kind of other (human, plant, animal, stone) calls to be thought.

past oral

J.M. Coetzee, a South African writer whose novels seem to hang seductively in that conflict between the so-called ethical groundedness of postcolonialism and the so-called aesthetic groundlessness of postmodernism, captures my imagination precisely because pastoral becomes a dubious virtue in his essays and fiction.⁸ At the same time as he politicizes and comments upon pastoral traditions, Coetzee retains many of its most seductive images. It is this strange pushing back and drawing toward that I identify with in my own ambivalent relationship with pastoral.

Past oral. Pastoral writing usually romanticizes a fullness of life that Western civilization has lost, a fullness of life that is projected, then, onto other cultures. To extrapolate from Jacques Derrida's critique of metaphysical (a) priorizing, pastoral could be regarded as nostalgia for a past oral, for primal speech retaining presence as against the violence of writing (metaphysically regarded as deprived of immediate being, as fallen into representation). "This permits," writes Derrida, "the distinction between peoples using writing and peoples without writing" (*Of Grammatology*, 120). Pastoral traditions, reformulated to suit specific historical and political contexts, not only portray city-country dichotomies as an incompatibility between the fallenness of writing and the innocence of orality, but discursively suggest that this incompatibility is a given, rather than a narrative created and sustained by pastoral discourses themselves.⁹ Pastoral traditions can in this way justify the

⁸ Richard Begam, in an essay called "Silence and Mut(e)ilation: White Writing in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 93:1 (Winter 1994) writes: "[An] antithetical approach to postmodernism and postcolonialism is especially evident in the case of J.M. Coetzee, whose work has frequently been criticized for promoting the interests of the former before the needs of the latter, for preferring the aesthetics of deconstruction to the politics of reconstruction....[but] Coetzee has consistently refused to choose [between one or the other]" (111-112).

⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes; Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992) writes of South African pastoral as something that readies the ground for exploitation: "It is the task of the advance scouts for capitalist improvement [explorers, naturalists, scientists, writers]," she argues, "to encode what they encounter as 'unimproved'...as *disponible*, available for improvement" (61).

inscription of an imperial (writing) culture onto the awaiting slate of "barbarian" innocence. Even more complicated, as Derrida argues, is the way in which this pastoral distinction villainizes writing without actually ever changing the balance of power:

The traditional and fundamental ethnocentrism which, inspired by the model of phonetic writing, separates writing from speech with an *ax*, is thus handled and thought of as anti-ethnocentrism. It supports an ethico-political accusation: man's exploitation by man is the fact of writing cultures of the Western type. Communities of innocent and unoppressive speech are free from this accusation. (121)

Yet if this is the homely ideology of pastoral, I would suggest that there is equally an *unheimlich* (uncanny) potential, a place of social re-imagining predicated on *who* it is that adopts pastoral language. As Paul Alpers suggests in "What Is Pastoral?," idyllic landscapes "appear superhumanly perfect only when and because one is denied or deprived of them. There is, if anything, a consonance between suffering and ideal landscape" (453).

If I have till now been casting pastoral as a steady accomplice to imperialist regimes, I will suddenly confuse matters by positing that pastoral might be an imaginary interval in which the dispossessed emerge to refute dominant culture. Can the pastoral genre simultaneously encourages convention *and* resistance? If so, pastoral might accomodate temporary refusals in atopic time (the tempo of no *topos*, no enduring place) to submit to the realism with which society makes simply unrealistic certain possibilities of being. This will be the pastoral embodied by Coetzee's protagonist.

If the pastoral is normally a state-sanctioned hide-away, this pastoral double would be rather what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call a "line of flight" into alliances of other kinds (9). In this pastoral flight of fancy anything is possible, any interbreedings and becomings-animal, becomings-plant, -mineral, -water. Yet the possibilities arise out of necessity, for this is flight rather than conscious retreat.¹⁰ In the pastoral of the disowned,

¹⁰ As Renato Poggioli writes in his book *The Oaten Flute; Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1975), for characters like the Duke,

boundaries between families of 'man', packs of animals, swarms of insects or bacteria, and paths of molecules are transfigured in un-species-specific exchanges.

One of Coetzee's critics makes a connection in *Life and Times of Michael K* between what Roland Barthes calls "atopia," or "drifting habitation," and the pastoral impulse Coetzee seems always to defer.¹¹ Declares Barthes, "[a]topia is superior to utopia (utopia is reactive, tactical, literary, it proceeds from meaning and governs it)" (49). Atopia is a line of flight that has no predictable outcome. It fails to oppose meaning directly, and therefore ceases to logically relate or correspond to it. In *Life and Times of Michael K*, K turns the pastoral desire atopic, carries it like a burr in the zig-zag fabric of his life, never allowing it to regroup into a family scene or a state(d) event, but keeping it in the dynamic swirl of his various becomings.

K's pastoralism is provocatively ambivalent, hollowing out a temporary space of negotiation within white South Africa. When his mother airs the hope that they might leave Capetown for the farm where she grew up (for the interior), hare-lipped K quits his job as a park gardener, constructs a makeshift vehicle-wheelbarrow, and applies for a permit to leave the city. Knowing that the permit may never arrive, K trundles up his mother and they set out for her origins. A fugitive in her son's care skirting military vehicles and other vagabonds, K's mother contracts a cold en route and dies in a hospital just days after they depart. Desolate, K follows a disorganized path in the direction of the farm described to him by his mother. He becomes a line of flight, deterritorializing a landscape sectioned off by other people's fences, trespassing and being transported through the South African war zone like an irresolute flu bug.

K desires a piece of land and a re-connection with the fruits of the earth, but his pastoral paradise is constantly interrupted by times of war and by his identity. His return to and sojourn on the Visagie farm is rent in two: by the

Orlando, Celia, and Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, entering Arcadia takes place "not as free agents but as persecuted people, forced to abandon their land and home. Theirs is a flight, not a retreat; by accepting their quasi-pastoral lot, they make a virtue out of necessity" (37).

¹¹ I am referring to Rita Bernard's essay "Dream Topographies: J.M. Coetzee and the South African Pastoral," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 93:1 (Winter 1994) 49.

longing to have a place the way the Afrikaner Visagies could stake a slab of land as though it was up for grabs, and by his black skin, which historically identifies him as outside of the bucolic retreat (or if inside it as neither owner nor enjoyer of the pastoral, but rather, like his mother, as the invisible maintenance):

As he was prodding mud into the cracks and smoothing it flat, it occurred to him that at the next hard rain all his careful mortarwork would be washed out; indeed, rainwater would come pouring down the gully through his house. I should have laid a bed of stones beneath the sand, he thought; and I should have allowed myself an eave. But then he thought: I am not building a house out here by the dam to pass on to other generations. What I make ought to be careless, makeshift, a shelter to be abandoned without a tugging at the heartstrings. (101)

K necessarily embodies an ethics of atopia. He both consciously chooses, and is racially predetermined, to *not* repeat the colonizing pastoralism of a white South Africa. Yet during the short time K does remain on the farm, he expresses an almost Marxist desire for pre-alienated contact with the earth and with his labour. I will argue that located in a woman, the discourses of pastoralism will operate completely different. Likewise, because the following passage is iterated by a figure who falls outside of the population traditionally empowered by pastoral discourses, the pastoral desire becomes unavoidably political:

As he tended the [pumpkin] seeds and waited for the earth to bear food, his own need for food grew slighter and slighter. Hunger was a sensation he did not feel and barely remembered. If he ate, eating what he could find, it was because he had not yet shaken off the belief that bodies that do not eat die. What food he ate meant nothing to him. It had no taste, or tasted like dust. When food comes out of this earth, he told himself, I will recover my appetite, for it will have savour. (101)

In context, the above passage is indeed a pastoral "contrast"¹² to the other places society has prepared for the likes of K: the internment camp, the labour train, the hospital ward, the alleyways and homeless beaches in Capetown. The farm acts as a retreat from the terms of habitation society has established, and hence is political by virtue of a radical abstinence. Harold E. Toliver writes in *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* of Gelli's pastoral *Circe*: "[t]he primitivism of Circe's island is therefore a retrenchment, a redefining of goals in the interest of what is possible in a generally bad world" (33). The obviously timeless and transcendent, allegorical, or aesthetic character of pastoral, when detached from its privileged speaker, can become a refusal to engage in the realism of a society that dictates *this is how it is* (no alternatives). In this context, Coetzee's pastoral moments provide "a kind of social dreamwork, expressing desires and maintaining silences that are profoundly political in origin" (Bernard, 46). Coetzee recognizes that Visagies justify the colonization of South Africa with a pastoral discourse to which K would have no entry. Yet he makes K inhabit and negotiate from within a genre that depends upon - and would be sustained by - oppositions, of which the strategy of disregarding the tradition altogether or pretending it could be so easily effaced, would partake:

...[E]nough men had gone off to war saying the time for gardening was when the war was over; whereas there must be men to stay behind and keep gardening alive, or at least the idea of gardening; because once that cord was broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children. That was why.
(109)

Place in Coetzee's writing, notes Rita Bernard, is "the discursive and generic and political codes that inform our understanding of place," rather than "landscape as an object of mimesis" (34). Unlike traditional pastoral, then, in which nature is seen as uncontaminated by culture, seen as something set apart in-itself, Coetzee's places are stark allegories of a colonial Empire-building, (read "dominant discourse"), to which nature is never immune. His departure from realism toward a "dream topography" (Coetzee,

¹² Harold E. Toliver, 1.

White Writing, 6) has nevertheless made him unpopular with readers who seek explicit statements on his political orientation within South Africa - as if realism alone is the appropriate vehicle for political and social involvement. Yet precisely because Coetzee's atopic figures refuse "to settle in a space that is conventionally and ideologically given" (Bernard, 18), the realism of apartheid *or* anti-apartheid - the oppositionality of given terms - is eroded. The banks of the real and the imaginary crumble into a flux of indistinction.

Coetzee's fictional contentions against what kind of dwelling can be realized and what kind, by inference, cannot, are sympathetic to political gestures that have laced pastoral's harmless aspect; a country retreat or an Arcadian bliss are drawn as provisional sites that *make visible* the regulatory conditions of dominant cultures.¹³ Coetzee's critical essays in *White Writing* make it clear that his adoption of the genre is never naive, but intent rather on a postcolonial deconstruction of the concealed imperialism in white South African pastoral. The pastoralism of K, then, is one that undermines state-regulated conversations between nature and culture by allowing pastoral affinities that defile appropriate affiliations -- by allowing intercourse between *non-hereditary* groups such as human, animal, and earth.¹⁴

I cajole myself into thinking that Coetzee's fiction appeals to me because he shows me how a pastoral experience of country can be carried forward into the kinds of postcolonial, interstitial dwelling places that emerge between oppositional identities, nations, sexualities, races, and classes. I fear the possibility that because pastoral has been a colonizing discourse, I must disown it and the massive territory it has staked in my reading and writing of myself and of the world. But I am not, as Homi Bhabha puts it in his thinking around postcolonial discursive locations, seeking a *negation* but a *negotiation* with this genre (22). Not utopic reversal, but atopic inversion. Or perhaps the becomings-heterogeneous that I will incline towards are forms of

¹³Poggioli takes it even further, and suggests that "whether of the Left or of the Right, the political pastoral is not a plea for a better society, but a protest against society itself" (30). Such a protest would presume, however, the very pastoral split that I hope to negotiate - that between a self-regulating Nature and Culture as imposition.

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari write: "...movement occurs not only, or not primarily, by filiative productions but also by transversal communications between heterogeneous populations" (239).

contagion that Deleuze and Guattari call "involution" (238). Can I *involve* the pastoral in bodies it would properly never accommodate?

If J.M. Coetzee situates the pastoral as an atopian possibility that offers provisional sites for contaminating the "social contract," he provides me with a model that is nevertheless resolutely masculine. Civil disobedience, as Henry David Thoreau put it in one of the many novels I drank like milk for firm bones in childhood, is performed by a male character.¹⁵ ("When I wrote the following pages," begins Thoreau, "...I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only" 7). Women, whose lineage of keeping "gardening alive" during the course of recorded history has been muted, are overdetermined from without and within by their role as nurturer. Yet women are narratively supplanted by K, who becomes a strangely heroic connective with earth and silence; women's suppressed his(her)story is *heroic* only if configured by a man. "I am like a woman whose children have left the house," K thinks after a fugitive band of resistance fighters, all male, camp out on the Visagie farm en route to the mountains. K is tempted to join them, but in the end keeps his cover: "...all that remains is to tidy up and listen to the silence" (111).

Xcentric

I have emulated male literary models for as long as I can remember, longing for the critical distancing of the social that wandering eccentrics such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Henry David Thoreau typify in their autobiographical writings. Coetzee's male figures forfeit the notion of an established dwelling place, forfeit securing permanence within history, politics, and the ravages of time. This atopian deferral of pastoral proper -

¹⁵ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden or, Life in the Woods and On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, A Signet Classic, 1960).

imagining a time when living on the land might overcome imperializing erasures of others with which modern dwelling has come to be haunted - nevertheless fails to contend with the pastoral tendency to depict the object of imperialist desire as virgin landscape or bountiful mother. Gendering the landscape assists colonization by couching the exploitation of untapped reserves and the claiming of territory as a pastoral lover's adoration/ penetration of an unmapped body. Coetzee remarks upon this in his essay "Reading the South African Landscape": "...the landscape is figured, not without straining the reader's imagination, as a stretched-out woman, even a mother" (*White Writing*, 169).

Yet the solitary, emaciated K finds nourishment and pleasure only from the plump flesh of the pumpkins and in the keening water pump; he is a male returned to the pre-existing, material body of the female. "A" male and "the" female. The female, again, becomes the bounty, the source, the pastoral garden that is a de-particularized article, constant throughout time. Coetzee's K refrains (and more accurately, as a black South African has been forbidden) from inscribing himself at will on a female earth; he lives without a trace. But Coetzee the author undermines this careful character of resistance to pastoral colonialism by locating the female in the terrain, mother earth herself. While K is a particularized consciousness, surrounded by events of history, his mother grows ever more symbolic of an eternal feminine, a timeless source:

He thought of his mother. She had asked him to bring her back to her birthplace and he had done so, though perhaps only by a trick of words....He closed his eyes and tried to recover in his imagination the mudbrick walls and reed roof of her stories, the garden of prickly pear, the chickens scampering for the feed scattered by the little barefoot girl. And behind that child, in the doorway, her face obscured by the shadow, he searched for a second woman, the woman from whom his mother had come into the world....He tried to imagine a figure standing alone at the head of the line, a woman in a shapeless grey dress who came from no mother; but when he had to think of the silence in which she lived, the silence of time before the beginning, his mind balked. (117)

I, like Coetzee, want to speak of the pastoral, if only in the future tense;¹⁶ only after I have understood the insinuation of pastoral into my repudiation of the city can the genre perhaps be reinhabited self-reflexively. But I don't want, as in many of Coetzee's novels, an idyll of resistance in which the subject remains after all solitary, masculine, and heroic, but an idyll in which all those terms ranking lower in the oppositional set might renegotiate language systems: female, animal, earth. The idealized/abjected object of desire might in feminist inhabitations of the pastoral genre find an imaginary pause for mutating self and other.¹⁷

in-between

The atopic picaro is, in Coetzee's novels, a male figure. If I find traditional pastoral dwelling implicated in implicit masculinism, I find the extreme alternative - an unmoored or floating signifier - equally so. Am I trapped between a male-defined pastoralism and a male-defined postmodernism in Coetzee's novels; more, in most texts? I have striven to identify with both the rooted pastoralist (Levin in *Anna Karenin*, Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*) and the idyll of uprootedness, (Rousseau in *The Confessions*, Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolf* and *Siddhartha*, Somerset Maugham's character Larry in *The Razor's Edge*), without considering that my gender is seldom expected to identify with individualist residence *or* resistance. Suspecting,

¹⁶ Rita Bernard notes of Coetzee's conscious reworking of pastoral: "The brilliance of Michael K's own strategy is that he finds a way to reclaim displacement, invisibility, tracklessness as a form of freedom....K's mode of farming rewrites (despite *and* because of its invisibility) the rules of the game of the South African pastoral. He keeps alive 'the idea of gardening' almost by its negation: the idea of plenty through starvation, the idea of self-affirmation in self-erasure..." (53).

¹⁷I spoke earlier of revisioning pastoral as an "outside," as the residue of dominant culture. My use of abject complements this notion. Coined by Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler picks it up in her book *Bodies That Matter; On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, writing: "The abject designates here precisely those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject" (3).

possibly, that woman would not claim to be as intact and solitary as these figures whose interconnectedness with other people, things, places impedes a sense of agency (heroism) rather than compels it? Disabled historically, legally, economically, and psychically to choose to dwell *or* to renounce dwelling, neither able to positively determine patterns of settlement *or* (without high fatality rates) lines of flight, many women are excluded by the idealism of these options.

Yet to do Coetzee justice, his picaresque figures barely sustain that label, longing as they do for a stasis they cannot hope to defend, and being evacuated into as well as choosing a crisis situation in which keeping moving is a painful act of survival rather than a textual jouissance. In this respect, perhaps my difficult identification with his male characters is not only a vertiginous longing to be like a man, but simultaneously a register of K's racialized place "in-between": negotiating the pitfalls of dwelling *and* of wandering when both are conditioned by war-time - by dominant culture's control of the very question of habitation - who lives where, when, and how.¹⁸

becomings

When K lies in his dug-out on the Visagie farm, entering interminably long periods of sleep, physically wasted and yet ever more attuned to an alternative rhythm of his body in proximity to the land, he could be said to be involved in a series of becomings. He becomes, in relation to the men of South Africa, a woman. He becomes, in his odd hibernation, an animal, an insect. And he nears, through the proximity of his decomposing body (which no longer needs to eat) to the earth itself, a living death, or what Gilles

¹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, 49. Deleuze and Guattari also speak of a between, the only place where becomings occur. They write that one enters into becomings only by becoming *something else* than the molar entity that is identifiable: "Do not imitate a dog, but make your organism enter into composition with *something else* in such a way that the particles emitted from the aggregate thus composed will be canine as a function of the relation of movement and rest, or of molecular proximity, into which they enter" (274).

Deleuze and Felix Guattari might call a becoming-molecular. As a man *undergoing becomings*, K can be read not so much as a supplanter of women, but as a character in whom the potential feminism of Coetzee's novel is most invested.

It is indeed pastoral's very superficiality - its apparent frivolity and lack of deep meaning - that links it to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becomings. Becomings occur on flattened surfaces where subjects "are always made, not found" (Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 168). In other words, the body that Deleuze and Guattari imagine undergoing becomings is, as Elizabeth Grosz reads it, "disinvested of fantasy, images, projections, representations, a body without a psychical or secret interior, without internal cohesion and latent significance. Deleuze and Guattari speak of it as a surface of speeds and intensities before it is stratified, unified, organized, and hierarchized" (169). The incomprehensibility of K in *Life and Time of Michael K* seems to revolve around his refusal of a deep, essential or abiding, and self-same identity. His could be the body that Deleuze and Guattari call "without organs," a term slightly misleading in that what is displaced are not organs *per se*, but organisms - gelled organizations or congealed identities.

If one takes pastoral's most obvious quality seriously -- its superficiality -- one might read into it the philosophical potential of Nietzsche's gay science or Judith Butler's performative identities, and see in "arcadian affectation" (Poggioli, 35) a space where identity is constructed rather than given. As a terrain of surface desire, even ludicrous connections between entities need not be dismissed because they follow no deeper logic. The consequences of affecting identity (affectation presupposes the absence of given identity and the need to assume) could include being affected, superficiality as an infectious and arbitrary plane of being, and if arbitrary, perhaps not limited to human participants.

"There is no subject of the becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of the majority; there is no medium of becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of a minority" (Deleuze and Guattari, 292). For Deleuze and Guattari, to move from a "molar" (coherent, recognizable, human) to a "molecular" (always moving) identity consists in transmigrations from "majoritarian" to "minoritarian" places. All becomings, in other words, undo the

territorialized self protected by dominant members of culture. Significantly, then, "[t]here is no becoming-man," for

...man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular...the form under which man constitutes the majority, or rather the standard upon which the majority is based [is]: white, male, adult, 'rational', etc., in short, the average European, the subject of enunciation. Following the law of arborescence [the integrity of the family tree, which Deleuze and Guattari undermine with the line-of-flight disorder of rhizomes], it is this central Point that moves across all of space...and at every turn nourishes a certain distinctive opposition...: male-(female), adult-(child), white-(black, yellow, or red); rational-(animal).... (292)

Woman, as de-territorialized in relation to molar man, is for social reasons (rather than ontological, or reasons inherent to woman's "nature") always already a medium of becomings.¹⁹ Woman could be seen as a line of flight within a no-man's land. "It is perhaps the special situation of women in relation to the man-standard that accounts for the fact that becomings, becoming minoritarian, always pass through a becoming-woman" (Deleuze and Guattari, 291). Elizabeth Grosz importantly reiterates the problems feminisms might have with the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, in particular with the reduction of woman (girl) to a phase in man's becoming. Is this stage of becoming-woman not universalized in a way that annihilates women's specificity?²⁰ Like Grosz, however, I find that these problems are not "of the order that would make this work of no value to feminists" (182).

¹⁹I will henceforth be using the term "molar man" throughout my thesis as it is applied in this section. Let me simply qualify at this point, however, that I see molar man as an effect of power rather than as incontestable power itself, and as that which Judith Butler calls "performative" identity in *Bodies That Matter* (1). As with performative identity, when molar man suffers a fissure or a crack, becomings have an immediate foothold into an identity that must ever recite itself to appear substantial.

²⁰Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward A Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994). Grosz recites other feminists' and her own qualms about this privileged stage - "becoming-woman" - in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Besides its universalism, Grosz remarks how Deleuze and Guattari fail to explore how becoming-woman would occur differently for men and women (for, as she writes: "If one is a woman, it remains

Although it is a precarious position to uphold, I believe that women must inhabit bodies "without organs" (Deleuze and Guattari, 158). To put it differently, if the means we have for experiencing identity within patriarchal capitalism are to be transformed, women too must be constantly moving out of molar organizations and into different - temporary - conglomerations. To be critically envious of K's becoming-woman, -animal, and -earth, then, is a dangerous reaction implying the wish that women be, first of all, molar (gaining the coherence and recognition proffered to dominant members of culture), and secondly, heroically *undone* into the processes of becoming. This is a trap I would like to avoid, not just because becomings are never something that one would want to happen - ever - but because I am of the persuasion that feminisms must challenge their own desires to possess identities governed by visibility and coherence.

As a black in relation to white (South African) molar identity, K already inhabits a no-man's land, a realm of becoming that renders his pastoralism unfixed rather than settled; furthermore, by becoming then a woman to the men who flee into the hills, by becoming an insect with stick limbs to the ward doctor in an internment hospital (which is one of K's homes), and by becoming-molecular, changing the very speed of the particles that compose his being, K embodies a most extreme threat to molar man. K is excruciatingly *passive*.²¹ In terms of a feminist politics that might be

necessary to become-woman as a way of putting into question the coagulations, rigidifications, and impositions required by patriarchal...power relations" (176); yet "exactly what this means for women remains disturbingly unclear" (177); and how becoming-woman, as implicitly the first step in a "goal-oriented movement" (178) toward "the freeing of absolutely minuscule micro-intensities to the nth degree" (179) seems to partake in a sort of "quest of physics for the microscopic structures of matter" (179). The one criticism that Grosz perhaps fails to fully articulate regarding the seemingly universalist stage of becoming-woman, is that within women themselves, some will prove more minoritarian mediums than others by virtue of their increased social deterritorialization. So women of colour, if one is faithful to Deleuze and Guattari's scheme, would more readily be mediums of becoming than white women because they embody deterritorializations of the man-standard on the multiple grounds of sex, race, and class.

²¹Poggioli declares that "[a] pastoral of the Left is conceivable only in terms of a nonviolent resistance against an authority enforcing not so much conservatism and conformity as displacement and change, and it expresses almost always, as in the case of Tolstoy, the temper of a passive and ethical anarchism" (30). I would suggest that Poggioli's definition of passivity is not adequate to describe the likes of K. Needless to say, being involved in becomings is quite different from being a detached *flâneur*, set apart from society as an ambling critic. The (non-) description of passivity put forth by Maurice Blanchot in *The Writing of the*

associated with K's becomings, Deleuze and Guattari write: "Becoming-minoritarian is a political affair and necessitates a labor of power (*puissance*), an active micropolitics. This is the opposite of macropolitics, and even of History, in which it is a question of knowing how to win or obtain a majority...'how to win the majority' is a totally secondary problem in relation to the advances of the imperceptible" (292). History and macropolitics are organized to perpetuate a practice of identity that furthers themselves. If feminisms hope to expand the holding capacity of History and Politics, they may have to initiate practices of identity that transform what it means to be a self.

Another knot in Coetzee's writing that I will ply later concerns idleness, an activity equated with indigenous animality, and interestingly absent in the pastoralism of colonialists. As Thoreau's brand of civil disobedience makes clear, most pastoralism of the colonial epoch depends upon an economy of self-sufficiency, one that necessarily conceals the broader relations sustaining so-called honest labour: "...I earned my living by the labor of my hands only" (7). Nature's bower is situated within Eurocentric expansionism as a site of democratic cultivation and toil. Those without a Protestant work ethic won't earn and don't deserve the Arcadia that is a free market for all. Needless to say, both democracy and free markets are never impartial. And indolence becomes, in colonial narratives, a discredited pastoral excess threatening that modern productivity (expansion, extraction, capital accumulation, monetary exchange) on which the imperial subjection of "barbarian" cultures depends.²² Indolence, too, as a sign of animality, is the frightening possibility of becomings which might not only mean the fall of molar man into indigenous (feminine) habits, but more disastrously, his

Disaster would, I think, be more accurate. There passivity implies something similar, if beyond, abjectness: it implies inhabiting the unlivable, the unspeakable, the unintelligible environs of all that is repudiated by dominant culture. As Judith Butler writes of the abject in *Bodies That Matter; On the Discursive Limits of Sex*: "This is a repudiation which creates the valence of 'abjection' and its status for the subject as a threatening spectre" (3). This passive body frighteningly open to what befalls it would be a condition in which - a self being dispossessed of itself, as is K - becomings take root.

²²Mary Louis Pratt writes: "Spanish American society in general...is relentlessly indicted for backwardness, indolence, and above all, the 'failure' to exploit the resources surrounding it....The maximizing, extractive paradigm of capitalism is presupposed, making a mystery of subsistence and non-accumulative lifeways" (150-51).

dissolution into a molecular soup of potential assemblages and re-assemblages among *all* orders of beings.

idyllness

Let me grant my parents some immunity from the critique that I will bring to bear upon my habituated country/city antimony.

In his book *The Country and The City*, Williams tracks a class discourse of "the country" to that reified structure, the country house. The country house or estate is a place of communion with Nature and retreat from the rapacious productivity of city life. This pastoralism, Williams argues, erases negative realities such as hunger, cold seasons, and brutal labour to the point of eradicating all human presence in the countryside at all. At its best, pastoral maintains as implicit the contrast upon which its critical capacity turns, that is, the deliberate contrast with industrial inequities or capitalist greed. As Toliver writes of eighteenth-century pastoral, "[t]he poet's passivity before nature and his movement, once he has been beckoned forward, toward a spiritual and intellectual transcendence of definite localities, is more meaningful if we see it as a reaction to a quite different approach to nature, dynamically active, unspiritualized, and expressible as the power of industrial change and ownership" (226). At its worst, however, pastoral conceals that very contrast as a contradiction within itself.

The discourses of country estates that Williams studies cast themselves in absolute distinction to the city, where labour and production are oppressively *visible*. For Williams, the country retreat is a narrow elitist construction, a Nature felicitously depositing apples into baskets and flying fowl into kitchens without the appearance of work. The Marxist Williams rightly illustrates how labour is made an invisible element, cast into the unseeable environs of this historical definition of the country house. What is disguised by concealing labour is of course labour's exploitation - an urban inhumanity within the idyllic countryside.

My parents, I mean to say, did not exploit others' labour.²³ They followed rather a Waldenic economy, for better or for worse. Even more pertinent - my mother's labour was both exhaustingly and subversively masculine. Splitting shakes, peeling logs, staining wood. By using her hands in the way Thoreau describes, she infringed upon the manliness (self-sufficiency) of rural labour.

Williams' intervention into English pastoral with economic and class discourses fails to remark upon women's particularized labour as it is hidden in the country estate. "Williams shows how a deliberate polarising of, for instance, rural innocence and urban iniquity," writes Jane Miller, "or pastoral peace and beauty and cities sullied and blackened by industry and commerce, contributes to the invisibility, the ignoring of the lives of both the urban and the rural poor" (49). Yet the one great silent area that astonishes Miller is Williams' oversight concerning women. "[I]t is possible to feel that women too have somehow been erased and scratched out; that they are only vestigially present within the landscape Williams has redrawn for us as a replacement for the prettified one he has exposed and anatomized. Women lurk, we are presumably to suppose, behind - or perhaps alongside - their menfolk" (50). Unintentionally, then, Williams colludes with the very discourses he means to expose by casting women into the unseeable environs of the country estate rather than theorizing their labour. Women remain a gendered labour force that imperialist pastoral - as well as pastorals of resistance - continue to take as a given, and for granted.

Miller explores feminisms' attraction to thinkers such as Williams, whose intellectual work so often informs feminist critiques of patriarchal "hegemony" (a term Miller adopts from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of "institutions and strategies of control in a class society, through which those in power elicit and receive the consent of those they govern" 22), and yet whose own hegemony asserts itself in their dismissal of women as an economic and social group. "Why," demands Miller, "...is Gramsci's use of

²³The irony (within this 'late' stage of capitalism that we inhabit) is that my father's work as an engineer *seems* completely detached from the exploitation of labour, whereas in fact the concealment of the relations that sustain our economy might just be as subtle now as it was in eighteenth-century 'rural' England.

the word 'hegemony' at once so tantalisingly attractive to feminist analysis and yet so wholly undeveloped in its potential relevance to women?" (23).

When I start to decipher my own pastoral constructions of a city and country divide, I see myself ineluctably seduced by writers like Coetzee, Williams, and Heidegger, whose resistance to (albeit involvement in) the pastoral has the appeal of social authorization, sanctioned by their masculinity. Yet if I can call pastoral *any reality that conceals the relations sustaining it*, then the failure to think about women by all three constitutes a sheet of pastoral black-ice in their *oeuvres*. I cannot swallow Williams' critique of the country house whole, for it fails to explore women's roles during the economic usurpation of English rural commonlands that is his field of inquiry.

Were women a subversive element within the pastoral of country estates, rather than always assumed to be accomplices to it? Having little control over their choice of husband and hence their own settlement, weren't most English women in a similar situation to the commonland inhabitants Williams laments, commoners forced by inexorable industrialism out of rural subsistence? Eviction from their father's home and resettlement in their husband's - an economic and social regulation of women's habitation - protects patriarchal interests and glosses them with the pastoral portrayal of marriage as a choice, or love relationship.²⁴ And I still waver between the seduction of my father's life story, one which I inhabit only as a daughter, and the alternate seduction of critics such as Williams, whose social theory I am privy to only if I submerge my gender, my body, as I read.²⁵

²⁴ Jane Miller, "The One Great Silent Area," *Seductions; Studies in Reading and Culture* (Camden Town, London: Virago Press, 1990) 38-69. Miller exposes the economics of marriage overlooked by Raymond Williams in his book *The Country and the City*. Mary Louis Pratt, too, notes how the myth of reciprocity disguises rampant exploitation: "As an ideology, romantic love, like capitalist commerce, understands itself as reciprocal" (97).

²⁵ Still one of the best reader-response examinations of the problems of reading as a woman is Patrocínio Schweickart's essay "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading," in which she writes of women's immasculation in the reading act: "The process of immasculation does not impart virile power to the woman reader. On the contrary, it doubles her oppression. She suffers 'not simply the powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience articulated, clarified, and legitimized in art, but more significantly, the powerlessness which results from the endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to

The body that remains outside of these texts is my mother's. It lurks behind and alongside my father's, but it never stays just there. It is too sinewy and brown, too blown rose-red with giving, to be skirted for long. It is when I think of my mother's labour that I feel badly about my own generational excesses, my indolence. A pastoral indolence by which I refuse to operate within the terms molar man provides me...by which to all appearances I refuse to co-operate at all, might, despite all, be at her expense.

otium

J.M. Coetzee's essay on idleness in South African Hottentots undermines the emphasis that even radicals like Marx place on labour. In *White Writing*, Coetzee states that "Karl Marx is wholly a child of the Enlightenment when he writes, '[t]he entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labour'" (21). The glorification of labour outlaws indolence and any form of "Eden," as Coetzee suggests, the Hottentots may have once enjoyed. A Hottentot Eden would, at any rate, have been both incomprehensible and unacceptable due to its absence of Enlightenment ways of seeing and being. Donna Haraway likewise exposes a Marxist stereotyping of labour: "Labour is the pre-eminently privileged category enabling the Marxist to overcome illusion and find that point of view which is necessary for changing the world. Labour is the humanizing activity that makes man; labour is an ontological category permitting knowledge of a subject....[For feminisms] the essentializing move is in the ontological structure of labour or of its analogue, women's activity" (*Simians*, 158).

Coetzee's Michael K in *Life and Times of Michael K* returns to gardening and tending for the earth in an agri-pastoral gesture, i.e. he follows the seasons and cycles for sowing and harvesting; fowl do not fall from the heavens onto his dinner table. Yet K's labour is subversively minimal. He

identify as male while being reminded that to be male - to be universal - ...is to be *not female*" (130).

enters a profound idleness that Coetzee writes of in relation to hostile colonialist reports of Hottentot "laziness":²⁶

But most of all, as summer slanted to an end, he was learning to love idleness, idleness no longer as stretches of freedom reclaimed by stealth here and there from involuntary labour, surreptitious thefts to be enjoyed sitting on his heels before a flower-bed with the fork dangling from his fingers, but as a yielding up of himself to time, to a time flowing slowly like oil from horizon to horizon over the face of the world, washing over his body, circulating in his armpits and his groin, stirring his eyelids. (115)

Mary Louise Pratt, in her book *Imperial Eyes; Travel Writing and Transculturation*, attacks forms of naturalist (pastoral) narratives from South Africa that conceal both the cultures of Khoikhoi (Hottentots) and !Kung (Bushmen) within an idyllic landscape empty of everything save interesting plant and animal species. She reiterates Coetzee's deconstruction of reports of Khoikhoi idleness, an idleness which rubbed off onto some of the Boer (Afrikaner) population, to their disgrace in Europe. "Forgotten already," writes Pratt, responding to John Barrow's eighteenth-century comparison of Boers' contaminated lifestyle with the English hard-working class, "or never recognized at all, are the intense processes of indoctrination and coercion required to create the English working class and compel it to embrace upward mobility and the work ethic" (62). Deleuze and Guattari comment differently on forms of labour that are discredited by the State, which martial in a work force:

We know of the problems States have always had with journey-men's associations, or compagnonnages, the nomadic or itinerant bodies of the type formed by masons, carpenters, smiths, etc. Settling, sedentarizing labor power, regulating the movement of the flow of labor, assigning it channels and conduits, forming corporations in the

²⁶J.M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988).

sense of organisms, and for the rest, relying on forced manpower recruited on the spot (*corvée*) or among indigents (charity workshops) - this has always been one of the principle affairs of the State, which undertook to conquer both a band vagabondages and a body nomadism.... (368)

Pastoral writing is commonly regarded as reinstating a social hierarchy of noble prince and rustic goatherd, correcting a division of labour that threatens to be destabilized in the green wood.²⁷ However, I suggest that the discourses of pastoralism, rehabilitated by a woman (a labouring body that Deleuze and Guattari don't mention in this context), disrupt the production of a work force the way itinerant work improvises rather than settles the term of labour.

I would like to provoke a pastoralism wherein indolence signifies a stubborn boycott of the options delimited by dominant culture.²⁸ A

²⁷Poggioli makes pastoral politically impotent by his Freudian approach: "The function of pastoral poetry is to translate to the plane of imagination man's sentimental reaction against compulsory labor, social obligations, and ethical bonds; yet, while doing so, it acts as the catharsis of its own inner pathos, and sublimates the instinctual impulses to which it gives outlet. It therefore performs with especial intensity the role that Freud assigns to art in general: that of acting as a vicarious compensation for the renunciations imposed by the social order on its individual members, and of reconciling men to the sacrifice they have made in civilization's behalf" (31). I would contend with Poggioli's assumption that fantasy and aestheticism are not political, and merely compensatory modes. Instead of speaking of pastoral as a repression and escape, perhaps one could emphasize pastoral as return - as in the return of the repressed.

²⁸Maurice Blanchot writes of passivity in a way that supplements (though from the far more devastating and involuntary context of the disaster) what can be signified by indolence. In *The Writing of the Disaster*, transl. by Ann Smock (New Bison Book Edition, Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1995) he writes: "It is very difficult for us - and thus all the more important - to speak of passivity, for it does not belong to the world, and we know nothing which would be utterly passive (if we did, we would inevitably transform it). Passivity, the contrary of activity: such is the ever-restricted field of our reflections. We might coin a word for the absolute passiveness of total abjection - *le subissement*, which is [patterned on *subir*, 'to undergo', but is also *trans.* note] simply a variation of subitement ['suddenly' *trans.* note], or the same word crushed; we might invent that term, *le subissement*, in an attempt to name the inert immobility of certain states said to be psychotic, the *patior* in passion, servile obedience, the nocturnal receptivity of mystics - dispossession, that is, the self wrested from itself, the detachment whereby one is detached from detachment, or again the fall (neither chosen nor accepted) outside the self" (15). Blanchot's words coincide with (and then again, completely differ from) the way Deleuze and Guattari describe becomings, as a shattering experience which a subject never chooses, but which is inaugurated by an anomalous desire. Continues

temporary refusal to partake, a period of inactivity lodged in the intestines (interstices) of society rather than marginalized as an impossible eclogue. For by representing indolence (i.e. *difference at work*) as a detached pastoral aestheticism, dominant culture casts as outside an "outside" that nevertheless haunts society from within (as the negative on which its intelligibility depends). Downplaying the critical potential of pastoral indolence and anarchy, then, we contribute to the phantasm of power which disarms local communities and their potential agency by categorizing them as apolitical flights of fancy. As flights of fancy into other molecular speeds and slownesses of being, into other intensities, this pastoral would be a micropolitics to the nth degree.²⁹

By suggesting pastoral as a site for becomings which challenge the way culture produces itself, I am suggesting that as a genre it might accommodate identities that lean toward imperceptibility and even toward what Peggy Phelan calls vanishing - "an act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation" (148). Identity as constantly in flux, as an "assemblage" of a specific hour and place and of all the animate and inanimate things conspiring to make the self an event in that space - this identity cannot be reduced to or reproduced in the regulated economies of

Blanchot, "[t]o be sure, activity, development, coherence, presence of a whole - none of these characteristics are characteristic of passivity. But there is more to the infidelity: the discourse on passivity makes passivity appear. It presents and represents passivity, whereas passivity is, perhaps (perhaps), that 'inhuman' part of man which, destitute of power, separated from unity, could never accommodate anything able to appear or show itself. This part of man makes no sign or indication of itself and thus, through dispersion and defection, always falls short of what can be stated, even provisionally, about it" (16). I am using indolence to indicate a comparable degree of dispossession. Yet Blanchot's signalling toward the disaster possibly outstrips even that "outside" which catches the abject in its drift.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari write: "Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception" (281). And elsewhere: "You do not become a barking molar dog, but by barking, if it is done with enough feeling, with enough necessity and composition, you emit a molecular dog. Man does not become wolf, or vampire, as if he changed molar species; the vampire and werewolf are becomings of man, in other words, proximities between molecules of composition, relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between emitted particles...this is becoming-animal in action, the production of the molecular animal (whereas the 'real' animal is trapped in its molar form and subjectivity)" (275).

capitalism and patriarchy.³⁰ Phelan's "ontology of performance" corresponds, in many respects, to Deleuze and Guattari's becomings (-animal, -mineral, -molecular).³¹ Both are a dynamic vision of the dispersal, loss, or *between* of identity, rather than of its accumulation and cohesion. For what is the primary problem with molar man? That he inevitably makes the other molar too: definitive, immobile, reproducible, exploitable. In becomings, identity simply doesn't remain still long enough to impress a representative essence. Likewise, "[w]ithout a copy, live performance plunges into visibility - in a maniacally charged present - and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control" (Phelan, 148).

Phelan's embrace of the ephemerality of performance follows the argument that visibility, presence, appearance, and the (re)production of culture play into oppositional molars (think of teeth biting through) of self and other. "Gaining visibility for the politically under-represented without scrutinizing the power of who is required to display what to whom is an impoverished political agenda" (26). Phelan ties visibility to labour in a way that I will discuss reticence and indolence as jointly resistant to the marriage of visibility and work: "Visibility politics are compatible with capitalism's relentless appetite for new markets and with the most self-satisfying ideologies of the United States: you are welcome here as long as you are productive" (11).

rumplestiltskins

³⁰Elizabeth Grosz describes Deleuze and Guattari's "assemblages" as "the provisional linkages of elements, fragments, flows, of disparate status and substance: ideas, things - human, animate, and inanimate - all have the same ontological status" (167). How this ties in with my version of eco-feminism will, I hope, become increasingly clear.

³¹Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance: Representation without reproduction," *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993) 146-166.

If Williams interrogates that pastoral English estate which conceals the labour making it possible, Coetzee provides a less Eurocentric reading of work by reevaluating a Hottentot nomadism that neither depended on, and so never concealed, Western paradigms of productivity and labour. As a critique of discursive productions, I find Coetzee's figurations of idleness radically effective in arguing that we can transform models laid out for us by opting out of the terms by which they operate. Coetzee has been called to task for not taking an explicit political stance in his novels against apartheid. Yet through K's tenacious resistance not only to the production of war, meaning, children, food, and so on, but to the given of production and reproduction itself, Coetzee hints toward what I will suggest is politically effective in women's adoption of indolence and reticence. Reticence, when what kinds of bodies can be recognized forecloses the emancipatory promise in the disclosure of women's lives, refuses to be seduced by the persuasiveness of a *work force*: a demand that something be at work in women's lives from the perspective of molar man.

At the same time, I must not forget that as a white woman living within the "First World," I inhabit a privileged place where something as *otiose* as *otium*, or leisure, can be put forward; this is not unlike the generational gap between my mother and me, wherein my education is made possible by her labour.³² I cannot escape the global flows of capital by which I am always already indulging myself at the expense of other women.³³ My groceries, my clothes, my little knit baskets and rugs. So by indolence, I need to mean not just a resistance to (molar) productivity, but a resistance to (molar)

³²"While for all other people time is money, the shepherd," writes Poggioli, "always has time to waste or spare....This contrasts the shepherd with the merchant, the man who prefers *negotium* to *otium* and whose business is business" (7).

³³ The condition of global capital is best described by Frederic Jameson in *Postmodernism, or, the Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1991). "What 'late' generally conveys," writes Jameson of his adoption of the term for periodizing postmodernism, "is...the sense that something has changed, that things are different, that we have gone through a transformation of the life world which is somehow decisive but incomparable with the older convulsions of modernization and industrialization, less perceptible and dramatic, somehow, but more permanent precisely because more thorough-going and all-pervasive" (xxi). Jameson proposes a "cognitive mapping" that might capture "the deep constitutive relationships of all of this to a whole new technology, which is itself a figure for a whole new economic world system" (6).

consumption; furthermore, to take up indolence means taking up the consequences of indolence: poverty. "[T]he practice of poverty" (Poggioli, 7) is a pastoral value with which "literary shepherds [have freed themselves] from the compulsions of conspicuous consumption and ostentatious waste" (6). Many women in actual poverty may baulk at the thought of practicing poverty; yet I believe that theorizing the practice of poverty is not just another ruse to keep the poor in their place. For any consideration of who is wealthy, in North America at any rate, and who is not, would I think make it clear that those most threatened by the practice of poverty are those with the most to lose, in terms of financial, physical, and psychical identities. Molar man, in other words, has more to fear from the pastoral economy than a woman of colour. This encourages me to believe that indolence would be less at the expense of other women than at the expense of a molar "First World" culture that suppresses the unequal economic relations sustaining it.

One doesn't have to be in the countryside to live pastorally. One can live pastorally in the city, too. City dwellers can conceal the relations that make their dwelling possible (exploiting the displacement of First Nations land claims, class divisions, racial discrimination) just as the "First World" can inhabit a pastoral innocence only by sweeping undesirables under the carpet, depositing dirty work out of sight in Taiwan or Venezuela, where rumplestiltskins turn hay into gold for the passive maiden of consumption back home.

Do I really think I could boycott capitalism? Don't I realize that there are a thousand little ways that it reinforces itself, things I would like to eat, places I would like to sleep, a certain level of comfort I would like to keep, and that I *want* capitalism myself (hegemony); that there is not so much choice in the matter when it comes down to the options society so cunningly makes viable. But some.

reticent

Becoming-animal is only one becoming among others. A kind of order or apparent progression can be established for the segments of becoming in which we find ourselves; becoming-woman, becoming-child; becoming-animal, -vegetable, or -mineral; becomings-molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles. Fibers lead us from one to the other, transform one into the other as they pass through doors and across thresholds. Singing or composing, painting, writing have no other aim: to unleash these becomings. (Deleuze and Guattari, 272)

Coetzee has been accused of a certain reticence, just as his character K is reticent to the point of metamorphosis into mute earth. This reticence as an ontological de-categorization of what it might mean to be human is the potentially subversive hope of pastoral, which has otherwise serviced States so well. Pastoral, a superficial space where animate and inanimate things have equal surface value, becomes an itch or irritant to anthropological humanism(an ism for humans). Reticence, like what Deleuze and Guattari call becomings-animal, is a medium through which K turns insect, and even more, turns into molecules of soil and rain as he lies passively under his sheet of corrugated iron in a gulley on the Visagie property. Reticence is openness to a pastoral event in which identity ceases to be an isolated (human) entity and is criss-crossed with other beings, becoming an assemblage of multiplicitous things through protean "diagonal" alliances.³⁴ "Yes, all becomings are molecular: the animal, flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectivities, haecceities, not molar subjects, objects, or forms that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or habit" (Deleuze and Guattari, 275). K's reticence, then, can be read as a molecular restructuring of himself so that he falls outside of anthropological man, and becomes a body without organs.

"He is like a stone," ponders the ward doctor in part two of *Life and Times of Michael K*,

³⁴Deleuze and Guattari, 278.

a pebble that, having lain around quietly minding its own business since the dawn of time, is now suddenly picked up and tossed randomly from hand to hand. A hard little stone, barely aware of its surroundings, enveloped in itself and its interior life. He passes through these institutions and camps and hospitals and God knows what else like a stone. Through the intestines of war. An unbearing, unborn creature. I cannot really think of him as a man, though he is older than me by most reckonings. (135)

K's silence begins to erode categories of human being into an irreducible ontology. He embodies a negative dialectic: "Slowly, as your persistent *No*, day after day, gathered weight," thinks the ward doctor, whose own categories of human being are shaken by the arrival of K in the camp,

I began to feel that you were more than just another patient, another casualty of the war, another brick in the pyramid of sacrifice....You would lie on your bed under the window with only the nightlight shining, your eyes closed, perhaps sleeping...upon me the feeling would grow stronger and stronger that around one bed among all there was a thickening of the air, a concentration of darkness, a black whirlwind roaring in utter silence above your body. (164)

The possibility of a roaring silence transforming discourse, the molecular speeding up or slowing down of a re-constituting organism, is the possibility of K infecting the ward doctor with ideas of how a self can be involved in the world, "an *involution*, [being that] in which form is constantly being dissolved, freeing times and speeds" (Deleuze and Guattari, 267). It corresponds to my claim that feminisms might negotiate with patriarchal society by becoming reticent, a becoming that subverts the silence allotted women.³⁵ "The female subject," notes Sidonie Smith on women's

³⁵By suggesting that women can choose reticence only after the non-choice of historically being an object outside to dominant culture (what in terms of the disaster Blanchot depicts as "an abstention which has never had to be decided upon, which precedes all decisions and which is not so much a denial as, more than that, an abdication" 17), I mean that degree of choice by

autobiographical writing, "...enters the self-representational contract as an unrepresentable silence....Seemingly silent and repressed, woman comes to speak loudly as she intervenes in the phallic drive of masculine discourse with her alternative language of fluid, plural subjectivity" (*A Poetics...*, 13). For, as Deleuze and Guattari note, becomings are contagious, even epidemic:

...writing should produce a becoming-woman as atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming...The rise of women in English novel writing has spared no man: even those who pass for the most virile, the most phallogocratic, such as Lawrence and Miller, in their turn continually tap into and emit particles that enter the proximity or zone of indiscernibility of women. (276)

"How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production?....It is quite simple; everybody knows it, but it is discussed only in secret. We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity....Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes" (Deleuze and Guattari, 241). Pastoral *could* be (and has been) a landscape in which the time, place, speed and spore of the inhabitants contaminate and infect each other regardless of the boundaries of different species or filiations: "[a] fibre strung across borderlines constitutes a line of flight or of deterritorialization" (249). Pastoral flights of fancy might carry a virus into social bodies (think of the Family of Man) that deny involvements with "lesser" species. The vampire, the werewolf, have been associated with gothic horror rather than with pastoral (a domesticated scene). But the satyr, embodied gods, human trees and becomings-animal are assemblages that may be doors, or thresholds, that the State has padlocked *for fear* of rabid lines of flight, unauthorized and improper.³⁶

which one might commit oneself to the unspeakability of the outside, knowing that the outside can never enter terms of discourse without ceasing to be outside. The thinking of Luce Irigaray, who believes woman can only mime "woman" within patriarchal languages that have no words for her is an instance of claiming the unspeakable position of the feminine. So is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous claim that the subaltern cannot speak.

³⁶For perhaps some of the most infamous domesticated pastoral hybrids, see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

property

"[The] contestation of propriety and property is precisely the option open to the feminine when it has been constituted as an excluded impropriety, as the improper, the propertyless" (Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 38).

My family's country house is surely a colony that emulates, unconsciously perhaps, the British empire's tradition of country homes. But it is also very different, partaking as it does in a particular material history that is not the same as that of the British landowners noted by Williams. My parents, if they can be slotted into any description limited to England, would fall into what Williams calls intermediary groups: "...the most interesting use of the idea of a lost innocence comes not from the lordly or the landless, but from the shifting intermediate groups" (43). Less secure as landowners and classed citizens, such intermediaries tend to resist the shifting property rights manipulated by monopolies, or large and wealthy landowners. "An idealization, based on a temporary situation and on a deep desire for stability, served to cover and to evade the actual and bitter contradictions of the time," writes Williams (45).

My father, sensitive to a small landowner's vulnerability in the face of urban housing developments extending further and further into the country (destabilizing tight boundaries between town and country), idealized rural living because of a conventional desire for firm outlines and security. That his desire was constructed along lines that entrenched a fear of contamination by a multiplicity of things gathered under the rubric of "the city" is perhaps a more sinister consequence of this longing for stability.

I meant to immunize my parents by emphasizing the enormous labour that was necessary for, as it was often called, our "project," or "enterprise." I meant to show how our house differed from that inherited wealth marking the British aristocracy's lifestyle. However, I have en route cast doubt upon the value placed upon a certain kind of labour itself; what we called our project, then, no less upholds certain colonialist assumptions about dwelling. (I will treat of projection's relation to fascism as Rey Chow defines it later.

Enter-prise, pry open and enter, force an entry, forcible construction...this is a word that also relates to the technological danger of compelling unconcealedness in a way that Heidegger describes as violently against the way things would reveal themselves).

I will suggest that the adverse effects of my parents' enormous labour lies in the propensity that such physical, emotional, and financial investment will coalesce into an unshakeable edifice. In some ways our family structure has rigorously *othered* certain lifeways (not surprisingly, lifeways similar to the "lazy" population of South African Hottentots) to maintain the city/country split.

When I begin to deconstruct *my* privilege, however, I must remember that it is of a whole different order and generation than that of my parents, whom I cannot represent. In large part, as a child of parents who laboured for seven years to create a world, I profited from a labour that was at times invisible to me. I often saw the land as a bounty spilling naturally onto my table and into my life, blind to the intensive labour of my mother, in particular, who helped to build a house by hand, who bore five children, and whose incredible allegiance to a pastoral ideology led her to persist in that country house ideal of making everything else by hand as well...food, clothes, rugs. House designed by my father, foundations poured by him; shingles split by my mother. Stained by my mother. As my parent's child, by taking their labour - our house - for granted, I embodied a pastoral blindness toward the relations sustaining my reality.

But being middle-class allowed me this idleness only for a time. Suddenly I was expected to engage that productivity for which idleness is an excess lapped up only by the very rich or very young. My exit from Eden was not that of the Hottentots Coetzee describes; they were dumped into the paradigms of European economics (labour and exchange) without choice or warning. Furthermore, Mary Louise Pratt exposes the similarity of imperial travel narratives in South Africa to those in South America, writing: "In Spanish America, like everywhere else, the judgements of indolence remained quite compatible with the labor-intensive forms of servitude the travellers were concretely witnessing" (153). To glorify Hottentot indolence - or worse, to identify with it - is to erase the colonialist divide on my privileged side of which romanticization prolongs very real exploitation.

My Eden, as it were, was always predicated on a Canadian colonialist erasure of native Indian nomadism.³⁷ At eighteen, being from a certain class afforded me the luxury to decide if I wanted another Eden. Yet this luxury had strings attached, especially for a woman: to get my garden, I would have to work for it, or marry into it. Work, in the capitalist system, pays off. So does marriage. Poised between the innocence of the given and the villanous script of culture, I turned and twisted in a pastoralist dilemma. I didn't want to *purchase* Eden. I wanted it to be a state of nature; I wanted to remain in those childhood molecular possibilities of becoming-animal, -vegetable, -mineral ("for all children...it is as though, independent of the evolution carrying them toward adulthood, there were room in the child for other becomings, 'other contemporaneous possibilities'," Deleuze and Guattari, 273). I wanted it to be something none of us had left in the first place. Pastoral.

I was never, nor were my siblings, totally exempt from the labour of building an energy-conservationist house, roads, gardens, nor from inscribing myself, as we called it, on "the property." Ironically, it was our very participation in a rural project, this investment of labour, that contributed to my own unwieldy defense of a certain family mythos. Having in detailed ways constructed a world, it is extremely hard to see it nevertheless as a construction, that is, founded on certain discursive paradigms about self and other that motivate and sustain stable homes. Even now, a great deal of pride that I cannot conceal creeps into me as I write "energy-conservationist house." I feel a dangerous glow of difference that is not a difference *among* selves, but a difference *from* those who are not my family. Setting up an outside, creating the residue that like a moat submerges undesirables, a moat you never want to fall into, murk that could rear up and swallow you. The *enantiodromia* of fascism.

So my hope in thinking through a wood and stone-laid body, the house that manifests my discursive common-place, is that I will feel my way toward a feminist transformation of literary constructions and productivity; more

³⁷I use nomadism here both literally and in the way Deleuze and Guattari use it to describe how "[o]ne travels by intensity" (54).

broadly, toward a transformation of thinking, seeing, and dwelling that doesn't require castles *or* moats.

constructions

For anyone who has read Heidegger, the word "dwelling" is pivotal. The pastoral connotations in Heidegger's thinking could be said to perambulate his careful use of this word, one which indicates the way *Dasein* (Being-there, or the-being-there) is in-the-world and in language. "Poetry," writes Heidegger, "is what really lets us dwell....The more poetic a poet is - the freer (that is, the more open and ready for the unforeseen) his saying - the greater is the purity with which he submits what he says to an ever more painstaking listening" (*Poetry, Language, Thought*, 216). What Heidegger means by dwelling is perhaps best understood via Paul de Man's essay, "Heidegger's Exegeses of Holderlin."³⁸

For Heidegger, to dwell in language is to sustain immediate Being rather than to represent Being. Or at least Heidegger implies that under the pens of great poets like Holderlin, Being is not mediated, but *is* (exists in) the poem. For instance, in his essay on Holderlin, "...Poetically Man Dwells...", Heidegger writes: "...the poet, if he is a poet, does not describe the mere appearance of sky and earth. The poet calls, into the sights of the sky, that which in its very self-disclosure causes the appearance of that which conceals itself" (*Poetry*, 225). Heidegger's dilemma, recognizes Paul de Man, rests in the question of "how to preserve the moment of truth" (de Man, 252). For if indeed Being dwells in language, "the experience of Being must be sayable; in fact, it is in language that it is preserved" (de Man, 253).

³⁸ I read this essay of Paul de Man's naive to his own implication in fascism. Discovering later his participation in anti-semitism, I could not, however, as with Heidegger, throw his work out the window. To use de Man to read Heidegger is a double loss of innocence, if you will, since both of their thinking has become so bound up with extra-textual implications. However, I still find "Heidegger's Exegeses of Holderlin," *Blindness and Insight; Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983) one of the finest essays on Heidegger.

Heidegger's belief that Being is immediately experienced rather than necessarily lost through mediation is contrary to postmodern thinking such as Lacan's and Derrida's, which sees in the Symbolic (in writing) a system of signs referring back to each other in ways that reveal the absence rather than presence of any original transcendental signified (be that God, the Mother, original unity, what have you). For Heidegger, however, "language - Holderlin's language - is the immediate presence of Being" (de Man, 253).

What is pastoral about Heidegger's notion that Being resides, or dwells, in Language? The very desire for presence in poetry signals that Heidegger perceives in ordinary language the forgetfulness, or loss, of some original Being; this leads him to privilege Holderlin (and possibly Rilke and Trakl) as poets who *find* and *say* Being rather than merely *make* or *represent* it. The pastoral retreat, the experience of a Truth distinct from the secondariness of culture, the return to an original presence - these dichotomies of Nature and Culture rest intact within Heidegger's claim that *some* poetry *is* Being. Paul de Man believes that "Heidegger's proposed identification of language and the sacred fails...he keeps running into the very question he thought he had resolved, but which, for Holderlin, must remain without answer: if the poet has seen Being immediately, how is he to put it into language?" (255). This failure becomes rather monumental if one agrees with de Man that Heidegger has "staked his entire 'system' on the possibility of this experience" (255); that is, on the possibility of poetry that preserves Being in time.

Paul de Man presses home his point by arguing the incompatibility of Heidegger's reading of Holderlin with Holderlin's poetry itself, a poetry which vigilantly *prays* for the immediate saying of Being fully knowing that "[i]t cannot establish it for as soon as the word is uttered, it destroys the immediate and discovers instead of stating Being, it can only state mediation" (255). Heidegger's house of language claims to be manifest rather than constructed, immediate rather than mediated, and in this way it continues a distinction between city and country, between proximity and distance from Being, and between those rare few who near the pulpit of language, and

those who loiter superficially in idle talk and forgetfulness of Being ("the They").³⁹ Rather than valuing the possibility that our mediate being (writing) *is* our immediate, (that we make meaning rather than find it, as in the superficial plateaus of Deleuze and Guattari), Heidegger contradicts his return to everyday Dasein in *Being and Time* by questing for the pure, the secret, the deep precinct of Being.

To mince words: For Heidegger, language is a *house* (not a cave or a burrow or a nest). Dwelling is exclusively human, since animals don't have language or spirit. Heidegger's dwelling is pastoral proper, whereas the pastoralism I am suggesting for feminisms is certainly improper. For when only human beings dwell in language, the house of language grows dangerously molar. Language is a residence rather than a migratory or nomadic camp; it protects molar identities rather than becomings-woman, becomings-child, -animal, -molecular, etc. Heidegger's house of Language, not surprisingly, bears a lintel saying *especially for Germans*, and less conspicuous flags for women, children, foreigners, animals: *no trespassing*.

the sublime

Was it from texts that issued from my mother's and father's mouths, or was it from texts like newspapers and television, that I began to read the world to a large extent as one in which there were city mice, all of whom were basically the same (an indoctrinated herd), and country mice (doctrine-free, proud, and individualist)? Manipulative, pastoral categories infiltrated my life without my noticing it, hence seemed un-constructed or true, while the city was a place of ideological cultivation and brainwashing.

I must admit that even after years of experiencing subtle and ambiguous pleasure from Heidegger's thinking, a pastoral fable reactivates every time I

³⁹Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962). Heidegger writes that "the They" prescribe "one's state-of-mind, and determine what and how one 'sees'" (213).

return to his writing. I read "the They" as city mice dazzled by human discourse, what Heidegger calls "idle talk" (*Being and Time*, 211). I read authentic *Dasein* (human being) as country mice who depart from "the They" and move toward the uncanny call of language and of death (read "the country"). "We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*, transl. note] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find 'shocking'" (164). Being in the mode of "the They" means being "tranquilized and familiar" (234).⁴⁰

Language and death, on the contrary, exceed the human and situate an individual in a poetic event of truth. If this departure from "the They" for the uncanny precinct of language and death resonates with pastoral traditions by virtue of an anti-*polis* sentiment, it simultaneously takes pastoral out of a comfort and into a "contact zone" (Pratt, 138) by returning the uncanny and estranging to earth. Discourses of the sublime, to be sure - Wordsworthian craggy cliffs and eerie cataclysms - are easily associated with the notion of an estranging language and death. But they are not synonymous.

The sublime has been no less innocent than its domesticated sibling - the pastoral - in supplying imperialism with a lover-discoverer's excuse to invade "new" worlds. Mary Louise Pratt traces the infamous texts of the nineteenth-century Prussian explorer Alexander von Humboldt, the man who "reinvented South America first and foremost as nature" (120). His published travelogues, unintentional justifications of second and third wave colonialism in South America, depict the landscape above all as animated and sublime. Yet like the Linnaeans' naturalist invasion of the new world, itself innocently predicated on bloody conquest, in Humboldt's narratives of sublime nature, indigenous human presence is rarely noted. "What is shared

⁴⁰ Heidegger insists that he places no negative evaluation on the everyday "theyness" of *Dasein*, stressing that "[a]uthentic Being-one's-Self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the 'they'; it is rather an *existentiell* modification of the 'they' - of the 'they' as an *essential existentielle*" (*Being and Time*, 168). The very tenor of his descriptions of "the They," however, as in the one I footnoted earlier, belies this insistence. That I have read Heidegger in part to affirm my common-place city/country split, interpreting a solo retreat into the country as an authenticating mode of being, is perhaps some indication of the willingness of his work to lend itself to pastoral, despite his interjections to the contrary.

with scientific travel writing," argues Pratt, "...is the erasure of the human. The description [in Humboldt's "On Steppes and Deserts"]...presents a landscape imbued with social fantasies - of harmony, industry, liberty, unalienated *joie de vivre* - all projected onto the non-human world" (125). Colonies, in other words, became deep reserves that could be tapped by imperialists. The desire for original, residing meaning is perhaps how discourses of the sublime are complicitous with imperialism. "What held for Columbus held again for Humboldt: the state of primal nature is brought into being as a state in relation to the prospect of transformative intervention from Europe" (Pratt, 127). Writes Humboldt:

Scarcely is the surface of the earth moistened before the teeming Steppe becomes covered with *Kyllingiae*, with many-panicked *Paspalum*, and a variety of grasses. Excited by the power of light, the herbaceous *Mimosa* unfolds its dormant, drooping leaves, hailing, as it were, the rising sun in chorus with the matin song of the birds.... (*Imperial*, 125)

Humboldt's own liberalism and abolitionism failed to displace the colonialist dynamics embedded in his sublime descriptions of majestic peaks and desolate steppes, in the opposition of South American wilderness to Eurocentric culture. Nature (and the people it concealed) depended on their opposite term for realization. If this masculine sublime is fundamentally oppositional, fueling colonialist projects, I will pose later the possibility of what Patricia Yaeger calls a "female sublime," one that she affirms in the writings of French feminists Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. The female sublime, like feminist rehabilitations of the pastoral, might undermine the molar subject by reimagining identity as an assemblage, as a contagious and traversed event in time and space. The self becomes less an individual perceiver of the other than a locus of *affects* composed in tandem with it.

Yet perhaps only the pastoral can revoke the terrible deeds of pastoralism. Heidegger's admission of uncanny otherness alongside a recollection of humanity's dwelling-place in language is a first step towards de-familiarizing human categories of the other which pastoral ideologies have exploited. Heidegger will call human being to undergo the anxiety of not being able to master language and earth, which are uncanny: "Man acts as though he were

the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man" (*Poetry*, 215). Or again: "...*Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious*" (*Being and Time*, 232). This is an important intervention into the imperial lyricism of pastoral traditions. Yet it also lies dangerously close to sublimations of *primal otherness*, such as Humboldt's and company, which accompany the exoticization and exploitation of "untouched" reserves.

One of the traps I myself fall into as I read Humboldt's reinvention of South America is an assumption that *we* influence *them* while they never influence us. This is a one-way flow of ethnographizing power. One of Mary Louise Pratt's finest achievements in *Imperial Eyes* is her determination to show that in "the contact zone" the colonized culture determines the colonizer's as much as the colonizer's shapes the colonized. This is an ambivalent reading of cultures that avoids fascist oppositionality. Pratt suggests that European Romanticism itself, of which I am both so enamoured and so critical, arose out of a South American contact zone, a mutual construction of indigenous and European cultures that Europe later credited to itself alone. "Arguments about origins [of romanticism] are notoriously pointless. It is not pointless, however," declares Pratt,

to underscore the transcultural dimensions of what is canonically called European Romanticism. Westerners are accustomed to thinking of romantic projects of liberty, individualism, and liberalism as emanating *from* Europe *to* the colonial periphery, but less accustomed to thinking about emanations *from* the contact zones *back* into Europe. Surely Europe was as much influenced *by* as an influence *on* the tensions which in the 1780's produced the Indian uprising in the Andes, revolts in South Africa, the Tiradentes' rebellion in Brazil, the revolution that overthrew white rule in Santo Domingo, and other such events in the contact zones. Benedict Anderson has argued intriguingly that contrary to the usual diffusionist analysis, the model of the modern nation state was worked out largely in the Americas and imported to Europe during the nineteenth century. (140)

To treat the romantic and the sublime as a homogeneous cultural text that it is my privilege to project or my responsibility to withdraw recuperates a colonialist tendency to accredit self with unfettered agency, or to make oneself a villain-turned-saviour to the other.

When pastoral takes on qualities of the romantic or sublime, it loses much of its superficiality and begins to pursue experiences of depth, pursue the unattainable otherness of a secret or privileged language or Nature.⁴¹ This takes away from the potential of pastoral to provide plateaus, surfaces, on which the performativity of bodies and identities can take place - bodies and identities that are assembled according to pragmatic and anomalous encounters rather than sought for like holy grails. The kind of dwelling in the house of Language and Being that Heidegger proposes both invokes pastoral nostalgia for a golden age of German Being *and* a destruction of the metaphysical hierarchy that depicts humans as the ontological dominants of a given space. By making earth and language ontological entities in their own right - "man thinks he is the master of language, but language is the master of man" - he could be said to return to the other its agency at the interface, or contact zone, with human being. It nevertheless must be of concern that Heidegger's thinking does not revise a romanticist's distinctions between depth and superficiality, proximity to Being and distance from It. Ultimately, Heidegger reinforces pastoral as "a place of truant escape [i.e. from "the They"] and as a strategic reinforcement of the courtier's [Germany's] inherent superiority" (Toliver, 42).

not me

⁴¹Poggioli writes of the pastoral shepherd that "[h]e never confronts the true wild" (7), whereas "[t]hrough its 'call to the wilderness' romanticism served, almost as effectively as realism, the cause of the 'true,' although it preferred to call the 'true' by other names, such as the 'real' or the 'natural'" (32). His reading corresponds to my suggestion that pastoral is most radical in its superficiality, it's unabashed example that identity is fabricated, made rather than found. Pastoral loses this quality when it posits a sublime, natural world that holds experiences like a pre-existing secret.

What do I mean by "the other," a term, like "fascism," that might annihilate difference and specificity in its broad generosity? I have to admit that I think in generalities of this other - as a world of people and things. Everything that is not me. Thou.

Not me not me not me. A colonizing gesture. Although I will try not to speak *about* the other as something outside of me, reinscribing myself as the standard and measure, I will inevitably fall back into habit. As Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it: "...speaking about' only partakes in the conservation of systems of binary opposition (subject/object; I/It; We/They) on which territorialized knowledge depends" (*When the Moon*, 12). Recognizing a vulnerability in the difficulty of working through the ways I have been accustomed to (subject of and subjected to custom) thinking about the other, I can only anticipate working with and in the other by admitting in advance the certainty that I will betray such an ideal, fall into othering postures that are natural for me, tend to reassert familiar territory even as I awaken to the feminist consciousness that this thesis desires. Admitting this refuses the transparence of any attempt to make excursions out of a homely pastoralism that, though more and more porously, inevitably surrounds me.

omissions

"...[T]he forces of commoditization, as part and parcel of the 'process' of modernity, do not distinguish between things and people" (Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora*, 43).

When I grew out of my packaged Eden, I realized that I was a product of private property, and that I was in debt to the system that produced me. *You've had a taste of our rewards*, I seemed to hear, *and this is what you must do to get more of them. You've got a headstart*. This is when it first occurred to me that I would like to salvage idleness, even if that permanently disqualified me from capitalist conditions of ownership (and hence of Eden).

Idleness is a waste product, an excess, a reminder that the value of bodies

doesn't necessarily reside in labour, alone. In a pastoralism where bodies are eventualities made by constantly reconstituting self as one co-ordinate among other animate and inanimate points, indolence signifies an organism's looseness, its disjointedness and ability to diffuse and regroup differently, rather than signifying the torpor of a substantial body. As Peggy Phelan writes of performance art, so one could say of the indolent condition of becomings: "[p]erformance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends" (*Unmarked*, 148). Catching performances on video are one way that the elusiveness of performance art is reined back into a commodity culture that depends upon the reproduction of the product, and upon the reproduction of its consumption. Indolent bodies, likewise, must be shamed back into circulation.⁴²

At the same time as I want to reinfect indolence with a sense of its unpredictability (and hence its infelicitous message for organizations that depend on foreseeing the dependability of their labour), I must be careful not to erase women's work by imagining an idleness that has not been a historical option for most women. As J.M. Coetzee recalls in his essay "Idleness in South Africa" (in *White Writing*): "We might be more hesitant about calling an entire people lazy on the grounds that the men lie around while the women are busy (a fact that several early travellers noted)" (33). Indeed, idleness for women within patriarchal societies - as well as an ontological looseness that is bound to be interpreted as promiscuity - would more likely than not be met with punishment. "Looseness" is usually foreclosed by overdetermining women in their reproductive role.

Yet indolence as a mode of resistance to imperial or patriarchal oppression is not new to women. Hysteria could be read as a refusal to operate as a molar

⁴²Gloria Anzaldua writes, for instance: "No, it isn't enough that she is female - a second-class member of a conquered people who are taught to believe they are inferior because they have indigenous blood, believe in the supernatural and speak a deficient language. Now she beats herself over the head for her 'inactivity', a stage that is as vital as breathing. But that means being Mexican. All her life she's been told that Mexicans are lazy" (49). "La Herenzia de Coatlicue/ The Coatlicue State," *Borderlands: The New Mestiza/ La Frontera* (San Francisco: Spinsters, Aunt Lute, 1987). Anzaldua's words succinctly reveal how indolence is both gendered and racialized.

woman, or as "woman" is organized within patriarchal cultures.⁴³ And as Coetzee writes, "I hope that it is clear that I by no means add my voice to the chorus of moralizing disapproval. On the contrary, I hope that I have opened a way to the reading of idleness [in South Africa] since 1652 as an authentically native response to a foreign way of life, a response that has rarely been defended in writing" (*White*, 35). How much female Hottentots could resist enslavement with idleness as compared to males is less clear in Coetzee's analysis. However, the improvisational possibility of indolence - resisting where and when possible by refusing to congeal into Eurocentric categories of labour - remains, as Coetzee suggests, a scandalous and outlawed thought:

If the Hottentot did not absorb the ideology of work in a generation, we cannot expect the Western bourgeois to shed his allegiance to it in a day...The temptation to say that there is something *at work* when there is nothing is always strong...The challenge of idleness to work, its power to scandalize, is as radical today as it ever was. Indeed...we might wonder whether the challenge presented by idleness to the philosophical enterprise is any less powerful or subversive than the challenge presented by the erotic, in particular by the *silence* of eroticism. (*White*, 35)

Imagine, then, a cultural economy that is radically inaudible and invisible, that punches holes in capitalist modes of producing thought by incorporating

⁴³Think of novels such as Audrey Thomas's *Mrs. Blood* or Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, in which the female body bleeds or buries itself to opt out of the molar demand that women be reproductive. Think too of Margaret Atwood's female protagonist in *Surfacing*, who hides in the woods and grows fur. Although this is a topic too rich for me to do justice to here, the relation of hysteria to becomings, the disorganizing of speeds and slownesses in the body as an (unconscious?) resistance to static embodiment would be fascinating to explore, especially since, as Elizabeth Grosz notes, Deleuze and Guattari never explore what becoming-woman might mean for women. It seems to me that hysteria is the female body without organs *par excellence*. Also, the role that class plays in who performs hysteria (and likewise, indolence) deserves more attention. In terms of male indolence, I can think of two anecdotes: the first is Carl Jung's famous sand-castle building, the long periods of doing "nothing" that allowed the unconscious to surface in his conscious life. The second is Gilles Deleuze's eight-year academic gap, in which this prolific writer produced nothing, musing: "Perhaps it is in the holes that the movement takes place" (quoted in Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1993) xx.

the possibility of loss into knowledge acquisition. By this I mean choosing to lose one's status in the consumption-dom of thinking, choosing to miss items on intellectual book lists, to experience reading and writing in less reified and more performative ways. This would entail lines of flight from one organism (discipline) to another, a contagion or inter-disciplinarity that makes unlikely connections. It might involve questioning how we record, archivize, cite, and publish in order to validate thinking, substantialize it as presence, as permanent and visible.

Just like dissolving molar woman into molecular woman is a move wrought with danger (becoming-indiscernible when indiscernibility seems to have been a major strategy for oppressing women), so rethinking molar cultural production when it is women's history, her writing, painting, her SOS notes in bottles that were never picked up, seems an act of self-effacement that cannot be afforded by women. It is within this risk of invisibility that Peggy Phelan nevertheless emphasizes: "I am speaking here of an *active* vanishing, a deliberate and conscious refusal to take the payoff of visibility" (19). Because molar validations (museums, libraries, etc.) have been reserved for the privileged, to subvert them might not so much disenfranchise others from being acknowledged as question what this system of acknowledgment means and costs. Perhaps it is a matter of inquiring into how identities are cognized and re-cognized within the terms of dominant culture. Do we want the kind of subjectivity that devolves around these particular reifying practices?

Trinh T. Minh-ha questions the terms of identity before blindly striving for the place of Western, molar, man: "In a world where seeing is believing and the real is equated with the visible....Reality...is redefined in terms of visibility; and knowledge, in terms of techniques, informations, and evidences" (*When the Moon*, 192). The "Third World" will never catch up to the productivity of the "First World." More importantly: maybe this is because the "Third World" works differently.

I am exhausted by the intellectual realism that demands we *cover all of the ground*. Allowing "bold omissions" (Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon*, 155) into intellectual productions might interrupt the imperializing consciousness that oversees our subject matter with fissures into which we

fall from being bearers of knowledge to a more vulnerable compass point within and alongside that which we claim to know.

entering

Donna Haraway writes: "Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are a clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture" (*Simians*, 152).

Heidegger's alignment of earth with the uncanniness of Language is a sleeve in his thinking that might allow a human-centred world to be turned inside out. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak gestures towards a responsible dwelling that, even more than Heidegger, recalls *non-human* subalterns:

Long before the thought that we are culture
and not nature and all that kind of nonsense, we
are violating machines in space because the way
in which we are in space we are not, by definition,
in the real...I'm talking about longing to enter,
learning to enter, in the most time-bound way,
with compromised, embattled, politically mobilized
ways of thinking, making an incursion into
the possibility of animism in the broadest sense.
I'm not talking post-colonial blah blah blah but
it relates to my thinking about subaltern mindsets.
Learning to enter is the hardest possible thing.
But animism is the only way in which we can get
at all close to notions of meaning, alterity, and
space. (75)

Allow me to make an absurd connection between the title of the architectural journal in which Spivak was interviewed - *assemblage* - and the subjectivity that Deleuze and Guattari call in *A Thousand Plateaus* a "desiring machine," or assemblage (399). To revision identity in terms of assemblage is to regard the subject as a series of temporary events rather than as a fixed entity. As Elizabeth Grosz writes: "Assemblages are the provisional linkages of elements, fragments, flows, of disparate status and substance: ideas, things -

human, animate, inanimate - all have the same ontological status" (167). The bad aura around "superficiality" might be somewhat dispelled if we take the superficial to be a condition and an effect of assemblages, of a world in which humans have no more weight, depth, or significance than other co-ordinates on a plane. In this sense, superficiality frees up other things to be co-ordinates rather than subordinates to molar man.

animism

When I speak of animism, I want to avoid anthropological discourses in which animal, tree, stone - all things - are said to have spirit or spiritual powers, for these discourses situate animism as a primitive belief held by others which we can study as if set apart. I would liken animism, rather, to a contact zone in which I am assimilated into the other as much as the other is assimilated into me. Becoming. This situation is very simple: no matter how removed or colonized or unknowable other things may appear, we negotiate with them in the everyday.

There is, in other words, no spiritual life of human, animal, plant, or stone that is totally isolated in mystifying otherness, but only an animism of being-with other things all of the time in different molecular engagements (no matter how discourse is organized to represent beings as solidities).

"We seek to hunt down objects, to accumulate and confiscate by categorizing, unitizing, and controlling them," writes David Napier in a book on symbolic anthropology. "We argue that our focus is on relations and connectedness, while simultaneously arguing for independence" (65). In terms of other human cultures, naming and categorizing their difference perpetuates a nostalgic pastoralism by which we commoditize the other, package that nostalgia to sell back into our own culture of alienation. "The ongoing emulation of the North American Indian's connection to the land is often a mere ruse for what is," remarks Napier, "...an unwillingness to permit a group that we recognize as another culture to be adaptive; here, cultural autonomy is a part of our attaching a name, a label, a 'thingness' to others"

(51). In terms of non-human cultures such as animals, plants, and stones, an absolute alienation from their in-itselfness similarly allows for their simultaneous mystification and exploitation by human subjects, whose ontological separatism severs an implication and response-ability.

I would like language, instituted as *the* hallmark of human consciousness and human spirit, to take on broader connotations. Within language might be the discernment of overlapping beings rather than the cerning, or circumscribing, of a singularly human trait. By animism, I mean above all a re-evaluation of that trait which has been said to distinguish humans from animals across the centuries - language.⁴⁴ The language-privileged human creates a false sense of the inaccessibility of other worlds, and so paradoxically fosters anthropocentrism and imperialism. I would like to reimagine language as "communicative or contagious", as not only human signage, but as emissions of intensities to which we are prone (Deleuze and Guattari, 238). Perhaps the best word for the phenomena that has been repudiated by rational language (but that will surely return to haunt it, eating away at its rigid outline) is *affect*.⁴⁵

When I think of phenomenology, I think of sloughing off all preconceptions of "the thing" so that I can indeed arrive at some essential thingness. I do not think of letting the thing affect me as is, without my importing to it human meanings. The cup shining at me as I type, participating in the arborite table, the skin of my arm, the smudgy window. Letting the superficial be meaningful; not trying to decode the other qua an anthropologist looking for the contents of a clay vessel that never contained any message for our civilization anyway.

⁴⁴Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, transl. by John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1991) write, for instance: "The idea of man in European history is expressed in the way in which he is distinguished from the animal. Animal irrationality is adduced as proof of human dignity. This contrast has been reiterated with such persistence and unanimity by all the predecessors of bourgeois thought...that few ideas have taken such a hold on Western anthropology" (245). This quote is taken from a fragment called "Man and Animal," a text pock-marked with such ambivalence toward women (i.e. "[f]or rational beings...to feel concern about an irrational creature is a futile occupation. Western civilization has left this to women," 247) as well as toward animals, it is in itself a fascinating example of the masculinist equation of the marginalized with "mute savagery" (247).

⁴⁵Affect is defined by Deleuze and Guattari as "the active discharge of emotion" (400). Another word almost interchangeable with "affects" is "intensities."

Towards mutual. Mute withal. With drawing.

haecceities

Seeing strangers, or the "foreign," as an other constitutive of the self is not an unusual way of combatting oppositional paradigms that pit self and other against each other. Julia Kristeva's book *Strangers to Ourselves* is an instance of some of the most recent thinking in this respect. "Living with the other, with the foreign," she writes, "confronts me with the possibility or not of *being an other*. It is not simply - humanistically - a matter of our being able to accept the other, but of *being in his [her] place*, and this means to imagine and make oneself other for oneself" (13). However strange and foreign other humans may be, however, it is easier to be in their place than it is, say, to be in place of a stone. Yet this assumption might be due to an ontological hierarchy - an ascension from rock to plant to animal to human being - so thoroughly established that to challenge it verges on the ridiculous. It is precisely the fantastic and fabulous that I would like to take as a register of the phantasmatic quality, not just of the fabulous, but of the "real."

Donna Haraway writes, "[e]cofeminists have perhaps been most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as resource to be mapped and appropriated in bourgeois, Marxist, or masculinist projects" (*Simians*, 199). She recalls the American Southwest Indian accounts of the world as Coyote or Trickster, a world that is never the paralyzed victim of human activity, but rather one that continuously hoodwinks the master. "Feminist objectivity," Haraway suggests, "makes room for surprises and ironies at the heart of all knowledge production; we are not in charge of the world. We just live here and try to strike up non-innocent conversations by means of our prosthetic devices" (199). The prosthetic devices that Haraway tries to reclaim in this essay are those connected with vision, with sight. Considering the feminist avalanche of critical writing *contra* visibility, including my own effort here, Haraway is taking a brave risk in reconsidering its affirmative possibilities; certainly if anyone is well-equipped to do so within feminist

theory, it is Donna Haraway. However, in terms of my discussion of animism, her wariness of ontological in favour of visual identification is pertinent.

Unlike Kristeva, who proposes that we "be" in the place of another, Haraway writes: "One cannot 'be' either a cell or molecule - or a woman, colonized person, labourer, and so on - if one intends to see and see from these positions critically. 'Being' is much more problematic and contingent" (192). Strangely, Haraway fails to see how the sort of ontological overlap Kristeva suggests can be allegorical for non-visual senses of the other in relation to the self, rather than an invasive and anyways impossible inhabitation of the other's identity (for as Deleuze and Guattari note of becomings, one never becomes the molar animal, i.e. the dog *per se*, but only the becoming-animal, a state of transit between molar entities). Why would Haraway privilege vision above our other senses, ones which might avoid some of "the violence implicit in our visualizing practices" (192)? Is it a whiff of fear that makes her keep the colonized person, the woman, and the labourer stereotyped in their molar identities rather than admitting the possibility of becomings?

Only from a molar body can one have objective perspective, the loss of which worries Haraway. Despite her brilliant defense of partiality in this essay, Haraway's subject constrains herself from that undergoing, that passivity, which becoming-animal, -plant, -molecule initiate. "The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity," declares Haraway (193).

Her desire that we 'see together' without claiming to 'be together' differs from my adoption of Deleuze and Guattari's becomings-animal, -plant, -mineral, -molecule, etc. The boundaries of Haraway's seeing subject do not undergo the upheaval, the metamorphosis, that becoming augurs (without claiming to ever 'be in the place' of another, which would signal the termination rather than beginning of becomings). Still, an illicit fibre can be thrown across the works of Haraway and Deleuze and Guattari, providing a point for conversation.

The fibre is spun from this statement in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "For you will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that" (262). (Haecceities, if you'll recall, are very similar to the notion of assemblage, or self as event). The fibre latches on to Haraway's words, in her essay "Situated Knowledges": "...bodies as objects of knowledge are material-semiotic generative nodes. Their boundaries materialize in social interaction. Boundaries are drawn by mapping practices; 'objects' do not pre-exist as such" (201). For both Deleuze and Guattari and Haraway, then, the subject (for lack of a better term) is a cartographical longitude and latitude, a superficial actor who makes rather than finds meaning, "a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles" (Deleuze and Guattari, 262). For Deleuze and Guattari, this means that a person - a haecceity - is composed of an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life: "The street enters into composition with the horse, just as the dying rat enters into composition with the air, and the beast and the full moon enter into composition with each other" (262). As the two French philosophers suggest, "[i]t is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate that is a haecceity" (262).

For Haraway, however, the cartographical encounters that give rise to a situated subject are constrained by human objectivity; she censors the loss impending human identity in becomings. "Five o'clock is this animal! This animal is this place!" exclaim Deleuze and Guattari (263). "One cannot 'be' either a cell or molecule...if one intends to see and see from these positions critically," Haraway counters in my fabricated exchange (192). She resists becomings because a critical perspective presupposes some degree of molar selfhood, some autonomy. Being articulate, critical, takes precedence over being involved, which threatens to dislodge more of the human than Haraway seems willing to let go.

By holding onto a critical - visual - reserve, Haraway in fact recentres the human player within the roles that the road, the hour, the air, play in the composition of situated knowledges; she hierarchizes critical (human) perspective over *affect*. Haraway upholds a distinction between self and other, inside and outside. In haecceity, by contrast, "[p]erception will confront its own limit; it will be in the midst of things, throughout its own proximity, as the presence of one haecceity in another" (Deleuze and Guattari, 282).

Although Haraway qualifies her use of "the rational" (as well as of objectivity and vision, claiming they are always embodied) by suggesting that it can mean a "splitting of senses, a confusion of voice and sight, rather than clear and distinct ideas" (196), the disdain that "the rational" automatically confers upon the irrational threatens to cast a non-rational involvement with others as mystically ineffectual.

When I speak of animism, I use it as a substitute for haecceity, for pools of affects in which humans are awash. Perhaps I should say animism is metonymic for haecceity. If metaphor makes two into one through a process of resemblance, for the becomings-heterogeneous, the endless diffusions and casting of fibres between unrelated species and things that I am sketching here, metonymy is perhaps more adequate a term. "Metaphor works to secure a vertical hierarchy of value and is reproductive; it works by erasing dissimilarity and negating difference; it turns two into one. Metonymy is additive and associative; it works to secure a horizontal axis of contiguity and displacement" (Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked*, 150).

Indeed, metonymic for the difference between Deleuze and Guattari's becomings and Haraway's situated knowledges is the former's declaration that metaphor is not adequate to describe the upheaval of identity wreaked in becomings, whereas Haraway, while recognizing that it is "time to switch metaphors" (188), remains within the metaphorical relation.

language

I understand the later Heidegger as opening us up to the ancient and discredited tradition that figures poetry in terms of the darkness of speech, that is, the 'ainigma' of dark saying that reduces us to bewilderment and wonder and exposes us to the uncontrollable....One cannot dispel the darkness of enigmas. One can only enter into it as into a mystery. (Gerald LeBruns, 9)

When Heidegger declares that *Dasein* is Being-in-the-world, he conceals the limits of this generous existentials. Being-in-the-world is always, like Haraway's, a situated knowledge. Humans cannot extract themselves from their environment. However, like Haraway, Heidegger makes sure that language is a human cell-wall making it possible to be alongside, while never becoming, things. If Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world (in *Being and Time*, at least) is comparable to Deleuze and Guattari's plateaus in the sense that they both return to Being as the pre-conceptual practice of moving in the world, Heidegger differs from the latter in that *Dasein's* pragmatics of Being-in-the-world rests in knowing things through *using* them (as tools). In this sense things always remain subordinate to human culture. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of haecceity could be said to be more Heideggerian than Heidegger ever allows himself, since for them knowing things involves the possibility of becoming something else. "Haecceity. *Philosophy*. something that makes an object unique. Compare **quiddity**. [c17]: from Medieval Latin *haecceitas*, literally: thisness..." (*Collins English Dictionary*, 657). Where Haraway and Heidegger see language and perception as the essence of human being, Deleuze and Guattari see the "entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate" as unique.

Heidegger's distinction between Language and logos seems to promise that the rational boundaries of language will expand to involve ("freeing times and speeds") its discredited underbelly - women's worlds, animate and inanimate affects. "[P]oetry shows that language is not logos," interprets Gerald LeBruns in his book on Heidegger, "that is, not wholly identifiable or reducible to it, rather [that language] is excessive and uncontainable" (118). Heidegger aligns logos with scientific and academic discourses that impose an organization on the thinking of Being. Notes LeBruns, "[t]he logos is the way *Dasein* brings the overpowering and the strange (that which is shattering) under control" (110). Heidegger intimates that "the danger of poetry, or of language, is that it turns thinking into wandering" (LeBruns, 4).

For feminists, this distinction could be immensely helpful in validating a body of language - women's - that logos has consistently scorned and exorcised, finding it indeed disorganizing and strange. As Anne Carson writes in her essay, "The Gender of Sound: Description, Definition and

Mistrust of the Female Voice in Western Culture": "Putting a door on the female mouth has been an important project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to the present day. Its chief tactic is an ideological association of female sound with monstrosity, disorder, and death" (24). Carson's most vital point, in terms of Heidegger's differentiation between Language and logos, arrives via an anecdote of Alexander Graham Bell (the inventor) and his deaf wife.

Bell never allowed his wife to learn sign language, finding it pernicious. "To a husband like Alexander Graham Bell, as to a patriarchal social order like that of classical Greece," writes Carson, "there is something disturbing or abnormal about the use of signs to transcribe upon the outside of the body a meaning from inside the body which does not pass through the control point of *logos*, a meaning which is not subject to the mechanism of dissociation that the Greeks called *sophrosyne* or self-control" (27). Carson argues that "what is pernicious about sign language is that it permits a direct continuity between inside and outside....The masculine virtue of *sophrosyne* or self-control aims to obstruct this continuity....Man breaks continuity by interposing *logos* - whose most important censor is the rational articulation of sound" (27).

Now although Carson argues in particular against the extradition of women's voices, it is easy to see that a great deal falls outside of logos, outside of "the rational articulation of sound." Not just voice, or sound, but also some writing, and silence; not just human sound, but animal; not just speaking, but communication without speech (such as sign language, or an immense world of affects). "WE SHOULD NOT STAMMER, so goes the reasoning, for we only make our way successfully in life when we speak in a continuous articulate flow" (Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon*, 206). When Heidegger validates language as something beyond logos, he almost opens this Pandora's Box. But stops short. Like Haraway, Heidegger is unwilling to let go of the ontological value invested in humans as against animals or other animate and inanimate entities. He calls "man" to abandon himself to a Language which "he" should not claim to master. He concedes to an inarticulateness, or non-control, belied by the mastery of logos. But Heidegger is wary to have Being-in-the-world become haecceity, or to have Language disintegrate into affect.

I use a capital "L" to remark upon Heidegger's theological bent, his tendency to connote that non-human language is a greater Being, and the call of Language an appeal from God. However, Heidegger also aligns the call of Language with that un-conceptualizable force, Earth, which comes forward and withdraws. This urges me to take permissions with his thinking, to challenge his notion of non-human language to include those intensities emitted from our material companions in this world -- be they animate or inanimate.

eth(n)ics

In trying to think of the other as a subaltern earth which is not necessarily the Natur(al) that I have imaged it to be, I risk replicating what many European thinkers (like Jurgen Habermas) view as a fatal flaw creating the propensity for Nazism in Heidegger's thought: that of viewing Language as something other than the *humanly* social, or ethical. Keep in mind the tendency, however, of philosophy to isolate human being from its habitat. "Concrete history," writes Habermas,

remained for Heidegger a mere 'ontical' happening, social contexts of life a dimension of the inauthentic, propositional truth a derivative phenomenon, and morality merely another way of expressing reified values.... (439)

Editor of a special symposium on Heidegger in *Critical Inquiry* from which I quote Habermas, Arnold Davidson connects this de-humanizing stress on ontology to a country/city split: "Levinas places ethics before ontology by beginning with our experience of the human face; and, in clear reference to Heidegger's idolatry of the village life of peasants, he associates himself with Socrates, who preferred the city where he encountered men to the country with its trees" (425).

Davidson in this statement repeats Socrates' dictum that "men" are at the (humanist) core of ethics, and that trees, because not-human, lie outside a

bear-with-me

There is a bear in the hills. This information travels around the farms in the area. Some people would say a real bear. Only part ideological construct. I have seen bears here before. Although what I saw slipped away from me, I do remember a sense of disjunction between the name and the something I saw. The warm breathing body are the remains, outside of language and never accessible to memory. "Bear" is a big clawy hindleggy threat to my smooth-skinned self; what I saw, though, was something small, black, focused on the grubs it was following up the side of a hill. It didn't even look at me.

Apparently, all the rocks around the pond and along the ridge are overturned. Rewriting the territory, punctuating differently this time. Changing the whole text. I cannot read bear language, and trust the neighbor who tells me to watch out. "Whooooooooo," I yell before every rise, to let it know I'm coming. Not knowing what *it* means.

refrain

Heidegger's passionate return to Being as that which has not been thought in the history of philosophy - is this passion possible because he is a man? For women, "Being" is more probably experienced as "Would-be." Partial inclusion in a masculinist existentials.⁴⁷

⁴⁷When Heidegger speaks of "the They," turning his analysis of Being away from the abstract and toward the everyday, he nevertheless fails to remark on gender difference within "the They." Especially considering the everyday (lived) material differences between men and women, this is striking. Furthermore, in his analysis of idle talk, something that implies the female gender by virtue of a history of discrediting women's discourse as gossip (see for instance Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip*, Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1985), this lack of a gender analysis, from the point of view of the 1990's, is glaring.

Yet Heidegger's reminder that *listening* is a mode of discourse as vital as talking should not be overlooked by feminists who want to inhabit the blur between speaking and hearing, visibility and invisibility. Language speaks, Heidegger writes, as a "peal of stillness" (*Poetry*, 136). Critic after critic finds these words confoundingly cryptic. Within a tradition that has metaphysically favoured presence, absence is equated with a lack, a privation of meaning. But what about "[s]ilence as a will not to say or a will to unsay, a language of its own" (Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon*, 151)? "Retreat" appeals to me. No penetrating remarks. A withdrawal, a pause. Restraint.

Once, in Greece, I watched a young boy jab a fork into a small wire fishnet and grind it into the fish's eyes. Bodies convulsed, lips gaped, but there was no sound. The boy smiled at me provocatively and defiantly.

To refrain. Musical return of the other recovering?

clearing

Walking up the ridge has become intricately bound up with Heidegger's poetics. I localise, concretize, an "event of Language," what Heidegger calls *Das Ereignis*, in the dread encounter with a bear. There are several connections between the ridge-walk and *Das Ereignis*.

It is not a linear narrative.

How many times have I walked along the same cow paths, beside twisted trees in different degrees of light and weather. Repetition becomes adventure, becomes difference, returning to the same is simultaneously a stepping into subjective flux.

Heidegger writes:

That which is can only be, as a being, if it stands within and stands out within what is lighted in this clearing. Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are. Thanks to this clearing, beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees. And yet a

being can be concealed, too, only within the sphere of what is lighted. Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presence in that it always withholds itself at the same time in a concealedness. (*Poetry*, 48)

Central to *Das Ereignis*, an event of language, is this clearing, which makes a space for earth to come forward and withdraw. Yet for Heidegger, this clearing and this event continue to be overseen by a human player.

Usually I'm very afraid. When there is a bear, I am advised not to walk alone. Even when there isn't a bear, my fear sometimes comes to the surface, roused by a creaking tree or the growling wind. Fear, however, makes me go forward, towards the bear. "Anxiously anticipating," in Heidegger's words, the possibility of my own death (*Being*, 307)?

For Heidegger, "the They" avoids the thought of death, (as Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it), by "evading cleverly all radical reflection upon itself; and tolerating no single moment of undecisiveness, blankness, or pause for fear of having to face its own void" (*When the Moon*, 196). Is death the molar turning molecular, the loss of identity (conventional self-contours), the sensing of something re-covering itself? Language, in Heidegger's sense, initiates the loss of reality as it is framed by logos, and calls us to enter into our potential absence (our death).

Earth, never fully free of our pastoral descriptions and secure comprehensions, our aesthetic projections and romantic impositions, can still terrify with a moment of uncanniness, a moment that speaks to our essential inability to contain what is other. If, on the ridge in my wind-tunnel of language, I look out of the corner of my eye, or if I put on my hood so that the nerves in the back of my neck go blind, I have brief moments of unreasonable fear in which I feel surrounded by trees and rock-outcroppings that are unrecognizable, strange. Usually these moments are like sun-spots on the mind, opals of shadow and shape-changing that I quickly focus out. Fear of camouflage, of losing distinction, I work hard at keeping things in their place. But sometimes the other slips out from under its signification, a snake/stick on the road at dusk.

For a moment last night, as I worried my way along the established route, I felt that my walks were being completely ruined by this bear. No longer was I insulated in my own thoughts. I had to consider the existence of something outside of myself. The walk ceased to be a personal meditation, and became the ground of other being's paths through life and death. In its own way, this is a blow to class, and to the romantic gloss Nature assumes within a lake district mentality. Nature can be both a social "medallion" and a textual disruption.⁴⁸ A homely pastoralism spawns at the same time the unhomely. The latter, ruining my contemplative pose, will be experienced as an unpleasurable interruption of a certain kind of narrative.

I walk to the highest point on the ridge, turn around and retrace my steps home. Fear drew me forward. I really didn't want or expect to meet a bear (or language). Before cresting every swell, every rise, I made a lot of noise that would scare it away. "Hello!" sounds very colonizing: hoping to warn, placate, civilize the unknown. "Whooooo!" This sort of language tends to prevent an encounter with bears, as well as all other living things. The grass cringes, the words echo with hollow intimidation, and I stride forward. Of course, part of me wants to encounter the bear, I am chasing my own fear before me, lured by something that I want to appear even as I force it into hiding. I am afraid that encounters of this sort could be *overbearing*, that I would not be the master of the situation, controlling what happens.

Strangely enough, at the end of the ridge where I turn around, I always feel that I have passed through the rituals of dread and longing. I never expect the bear to appear on the way back, to come from behind. The possibility of an encounter with a predator stronger than myself dies under my feet as I return. But I feel aroused. I feel like human fear has changed into the beginnings of animal confidence. My eyes and ears begin to pick up external stimuli, fight or flight material. I can suddenly smell patches of musk, and heady plants. My body isn't working as hard, it is moving economically, even gracefully. I'm warming up. I don't shout at the bear, I

⁴⁸ Christa Wolf, "Reading and Writing," *The Author's Dimension: Selected Essays*, ed. Alexander Stephan, transl. by Jan Van Heurck (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993) 20-48. In this essay Wolf writes: "These medallions are to memory what ossified lung tissue is to a tubercular patient...once there was life there, activity, but now they are encapsulated, shut down" (31).

have forgotten that it could appear at any moment. I would dare to speculate, however, that on my return that bear roots in the bushes ten feet from where I pass, or that it traverses a point on the path just before or after I cross it. That language is closer to me now, because I have the first inklings of a(n animal) body. What Heidegger excludes from language? (Bear-with-me).

open

"All art," stresses Heidegger, "as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is, as such, *essentially poetry*" (*Poetry*, 72). I feel that I must return to his text and remember. "Language alone brings what is, as something that is, into the Open for the first time. Where there is no language, as in the being of stone, plant, and animal, there is also no openness of what is, and consequently no openness either of that which is not and of the empty" (73).

Animals, Heidegger asserts, have no "world"; they cannot consciously set things before them as that which they are not. They cannot preserve a history, or a work of art. In other words, their being is not originally and essentially one of *aletheia*.⁴⁹ The animal, the plant, the stone, is too much *in* the world (i.e. earth) to have a world.

Humans, evidently, are not in the world like that, but always set before it as interiority's outside. This "evidently" - is it not in fact a repudiation of ontology as haecceity? Women, who I argue are in Coetzee's fiction as elsewhere always already represented as indistinct from nature (i.e. "thought without communication") are along with animals, infants, and barbarians, *in* the world and becomings. A famous trio. All those cultures that have under imperial colonialist representation been branded the bestial, the effeminate,

⁴⁹In *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971) Heidegger writes: "The Greeks called the unconcealedness of beings *aletheia*....If there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work" (36).

or the infantilized native Other, are never the *disclosers* of being, since they are unrefined being itself.⁵⁰

This boundary of language, fixed along the axis of human and non-human being, is virtually impossible to think otherwise. The German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte's "Addresses to the German Nation," in Etienne Balibar's analysis, is remarkable for the "internal border" it installs.⁵¹ It is the German *language* that delineates insiders and outsiders, a spiritual rather than a biological racism; a censor point and customs guard. "This expression ['internal border'] thus brings to the fore all the classical aporias of interiority and exteriority," writes Balibar. "...[I]n the context of a reflection on the identity of a people...it necessarily refers to a problematic of purity, or better, of purification, which is to say that it indicates the uncertainty of this identity, the way in which the 'inside' can be penetrated or adulterated by its relation with the 'outside,' which here we will call the foreign, or simply, thought without communication" (63).

Heidegger's separation of human world from animal continues Fichte's logo-specific legacy. As Derrida remarks, "the animal has no spirit since...every world is spiritual. Animality is not *of spirit*" (*Of Spirit*, 47). Animal culture would be Fichte's "thought without communication," a realm of affects and therefore foreign. To claim that language is essentially *aletheia*, or disclosure, is to make (male) humans the unveilers of all other beings. Heidegger's discussion of animal being "respects a difference of structure while avoiding anthropocentrism," Derrida concedes. But "it remains bound to reintroduce the measure of man" (49). Molar (German) man. For Heidegger, whose project is to root culture and identity firmly in the ground of a distinct and pure German etymology, non-human being is necessarily the foreign that language cannot include. For if language includes

⁵⁰ Laura E. Donaldson, *DeColonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire-Building* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992) illustrates how child, animal, and woman are intermingled in the 'picaninny' figure: "...early cartoons...often portrayed 'picaninnies' as partially naked, dirty, and unkempt victims of nonhuman predators such as alligators and wolves," (76). The picaninny becomes a "colonialist and paternalistic marker of a childish and less developed, therefore unequal, person" (77).

⁵¹ Etienne Balibar, "Fichte and the Internal Border; On *Addresses to the German Nation*," *Masses, Classes, Ideas; Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx*, transl. by James Swenson (New York: Routledge, 1994) 61-84.

affect, it ceases to be the epistemological medium reserved for human perspectives.

earth

Heidegger distinguishes between "Earth" and "World" in a way intimate to his distinction between Language and Logos. *World* is the fully apparent historical conditions of knowing; I think I can align it with the sense we have today of historical contexts that necessarily constitute the boundaries of our being, seeing and knowing, and that we supposedly can never transcend. *Earth* can only be known via a human world, but although it is always appropriated into world, it remains ever partially concealed. "Earth," suggests Gerald LeBruns, "sounds the note of estrangement, whereas world means solidarity, homeland, and nationhood" (29). *Earth* is ultimately erotic, belonging to truth (un-covering, appearance, visibility) as well as to un-truth (dissembling, retreating, concealing). Filtered through my pastoral common-places, I associate the country with a Heideggerian *Earth*, and the city with *World*.

appropriation

Yet Language, for Heidegger, straddles these two regions *World* and *Earth*, which are not separate but that belong to each other in their conflicting difference. "The intimacy of world and thing is present in the separation of the between; it is present in the dif-ference" (*Poetry*, 202). This is the *riss* - rift, or dif-ference - that Derrida has so productively picked up from Heidegger.

In *Of Spirit* he calls it "the *trait* itself, *Riss*."⁵² Albert Hofstadter, in the introduction to *Poetry, Language, Thought*, writes of a Heideggerian event of language: "*Das Ereignis* is not just the lighting, clearing space in which language happens, it is 'the disclosure of appropriation'" (xxi). Primal language (Earth) can *only* manifest within a World, wherein everything is always already appropriated, i.e. given over to the fallenness of Dasein.⁵³ World and Earth are given over to each other in the constant conflict of belonging together. "The difference for world and thing [Earth] *disclosingly appropriates* things into bearing a world; it *disclosingly appropriates* world into the granting of things" (Heidegger, *Poetry*, 203). Heidegger elucidates *riss*: "Pain rends. It is the rift. But it does not tear apart into dispersive fragments. Pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself" (204).

Any ontological essentialism attributed to Heidegger should be tempered with the subtlety of his notion of this belonging together in difference called *riss*. The notion has profound resonances with feminist explorations of difference beyond binary oppositions.⁵⁴ As Luce Irigaray writes of woman: "*She is neither one nor two*" (26). Some admixture of this thinking leads one away from an omnipresent view of appropriation within cultural studies. Instead of being an oppressive theft of another culture (a view which persists in binary and purist distinctions between self and other), appropriation as belonging together in difference opens up the far more ambiguous manner in which cultures are implicated and involved in each other, without being the

⁵² Jaques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, transl. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989) 104. Derrida plays with a translation of *riss* as "trait" a little later on in the book by calling it a "retreat [*retraite*]" or "an advance towards the most originary" (112), which highlights the metaphysics that returns to haunt Heidegger's thinking.

⁵³In *Being and Time* Heidegger describes Dasein as fallen into "theyness," by which he means that Dasein cannot transcend its existential situation. The word "fallen," however, has unavoidable associations with a Christian "fall of man," exile from Paradise into a lesser state of being.

⁵⁴Trinh T. Minh-ha's notion of "difference" is one example. As she writes: "Difference is not otherness. And while otherness has its laws and interdictions, difference always implies the interdependency of these two-sided feminist gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you' while pointing insistently to the difference; and that of reminding 'I am different' while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at." *When the Moon*, 74.

same. As Albert Hofstadter writes: "But instead of 'appropriate' in the sense of one's own appropriating of something for oneself...Heidegger wants to speak of an activity or process by which nothing 'selfish' occurs, but rather by which different members of the world are brought into belonging to and with one another and are helped to realize themselves and each other in realizing this belonging" (xx).

conversion

In her essay "Toward a Female Sublime," Patricia Yaeger writes: "The claim of the sublime is that we can - in words or feelings - transcend the normative, the human" (192). She argues that such moments of "joining the great," usually reserved for the male poet, take on radical significance when it is a woman who writes (194). In Elizabeth Bishop's two poems "The Fish" and "The Moose," Yaeger reads an experience of difference that resists the ultimate internalization within a poetic ego typical of masculine sublimity. I will read "The Fish" as a piscatory pastoral, as a convergence of human and animal being in the space between their molar identities, as a textual event wherein the human subject is decomposed into an assemblage, into an hour, an atmosphere, a boat, a fish, spilt oil (to parody Deleuze and Guattari).⁵⁵

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth.
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,

⁵⁵Deleuze and Guattari write: "It is the wolf itself, and the horse, and the child, that cease to be subjects to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life..." (262).

and its pattern of darker brown
was like wallpaper:
shapes like full-blown roses
stained and lost through the age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
fine rosettes of lime,
and infested
with tiny white sea-lice,
and underneath two or three
rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
- and frightened gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that cut so badly -
I thought of the coarse white flesh
packed in like feathers,
the big bones and the little bones,
the dramatic reds and blacks
of his shiny entrails,
and the pink swim-bladder
like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
which were far larger than mine
but shallower, and yellowed,
the irises backed and packed
with tarnished tinfoil
seen through the lenses
of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
to return my stare.
- It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
the mechanism of his jaw,
and then I saw
that from his lower lip
- if you could call it a lip -
grim, wet, and weaponlike,
hung five old pieces of fish-line,
or four and a wire leader
with the swivel still attached,
with all their five big hooks
grown firmly in his mouth.
A green line, frayed at the end

where he broke it, two heavier lines,
 and a fine black thread
 still crimped from the strain and snap
 when it broke and he got away.
 Like medals with their ribbons
 frayed and wavering,
 a five-haired beard of wisdom
 trailing from his aching jaw.
 I stared and stared
 and victory filled up
 the little rented boat,
 from the pool of bilge
 where oil had spread a rainbow
 around the rusted engine
 to the bailer rusted orange,
 the sun-cracked thwarts,
 the oarlocks on their strings,
 the gunnels - until everything
 was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
 And I let the fish go. (from
The Complete Poems, 48-50)

[H]is brown skin hung in strips/ like ancient wallpaper: the fish is imported out of its strangeness into an economy of human consumption, capitalist acquiring ego, in which wallpaper and animal heads hang alike as ornamentation in human dwellings. *[T]he irises backed and packed/ with tarnished tinfoil:* like wallpaper, a modern material like tinfoil in which we wrap food for the barbecue reduces the other to something seen only in the light of consumption, subsumption to human desire or appetite. Bishop's imaginary dissection of the fish panoptically invades the animal body in minute detail, a routine of gutting and canning: *the coarse white flesh/ packed in like feathers...the dramatic reds and blacks/ of his shiny entrails:* The fish is being turned inside out of its uncanny body and into the canning, or packaging, that marks capitalist productions of the other.

A *conversion*, however, takes place in the poem. "Assuming that a turn still remains open for this destitute time at all," declares Heidegger in his essay "What are Poets For?," "it can come some day only if the world turns about fundamentally" (*Poetry*, 92). Only then can our modern technological paradigms give way to an understanding that converses with rather than

"stockpiles" the other.⁵⁶ In Bishop's poem, a turning begins with the discovery that, just as human hunters accumulate medallions that mark their sportsmanship, so the fish has accumulated *medals* (metals) in the war of oppositionality that plots human beings against other beings. *Like medals with their ribbons/ frayed and wavering,/ a five-haired beard of wisdom/ trailing from his aching jaw.* Unlike human medallions, however, the fish's are wounded signs of successful *evasions* of the technological standing-reserve.

But if animal heads adorn human dwellings, and human hooks 'adorn' the fish's lip, we might say that signs of the other are embedded in each culture. This is the beginning of a conversion, one in which the fish is not simply viewed as an extension of human being (i.e. there solely to fulfill human appetite), but recognized as different. Difference is recognized, paradoxically, at the very site where it is usually erased - in the experience both fish and humans share, in the overlapping realm of their mutual appropriation. *[U]ntil everything/ was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!/ And I let the fish go:* a new covenant is made possible, a turning or conversion away from the assumption of consumption with which human beings have incorporated others for their own purposes, toward a contract in which human is as much assembled with bits of fish as fish is assembled with human bits.

As with many of Bishop's poems, the notion of a coherent human subject mastering the readability of an event is undermined in "The Fish."⁵⁷ "Bishop rejects," writes Victoria Harrison, "the powerful romantic consciousness as a poetic center....Recognizing her intimacy with - and not her centrality amid -

⁵⁶Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, transl. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row, 1977) 15. When "[e]verything everywhere is ordered to stand by....We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*, transl. note]" (17).

⁵⁷See, for instance, Lee Edelman, "The Geography of Gender: Elizabeth Bishop's *In the Waiting Room*," *Elizabeth Bishop: The Geography of Gender*, ed. Marilyn May Lombardi (Charlottesville: U of Virginia Press, 1993) 91-107. In this landmark essay Edelman regards the poem as Bishop's reading of reading, one in which the seven-year old "Elizabeth" discovers that she cannot control the *National Geographic* in her hands, cannot ensure the readability of texts, nor tame the subject within the yellow frames of the front cover; all of this leading to the confusion between her aunt's and her own cry of pain - "oh"!

an interesting world, Bishop listens to the unlikely connections and mutual discoveries of the subjects of her writing" (3). In this sense, Bishop situates human being as one subject within an assemblage, and even as the *effect* of an encounter between human and non-human, animate and inanimate players.

Comparing Bishop's portrayal of the self as an assemblage with the pastoral imperialism ironized in J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Dusklands*, might further textually support Yaeger's argument for the "female sublime." Yaeger proposes that the male sublime is oedipal; the poet's fear yet desire for intimacy leads him to assimilate the other into his ego. The female sublime, as pre-oedipal, has not been effectively severed from others, and so neither fears merging with the world, nor desires it as something detached.

Dusklands is composed of two novellas. The first is entitled "The Vietnam Project," the second, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee." The fictional correlation that Coetzee draws between the American war in Vietnam and his own Boer ancestor's pastoral exploration of Hottentot territory in the Cape of South Africa turns on a masculine, imperial "It's" binary perception of self and other. The symbol for the self/other relationship chosen by Eugene Dawn in his war study for Vietnam *and* by Jacobus Coetzee in his travels to the interior, is the gun. Coetzee's Eugene Dawn, driven to insanity by the Vietnam Project, paradoxically embodies the common sense unconsciousness of American imperialism:

Why could they not accept us? We could have loved them: our hatred for them grew only out of broken hopes. We brought with us weapons, the gun and its metaphors, the only copulas we knew of between ourselves and our objects...Our nightmare was that since whatever we reached for slipped like smoke through our fingers, we did not exist; that since whatever we embraced wilted, we were all that existed. We landed on the shores of Vietnam clutching our arms and pleading for someone to stand up without flinching to these probes of reality. (17)

Jacobus Coetzee, like Eugene Dawn, has insight into the metaphors of the gun in a liminal state, not that of madness, but that of an extreme fever contracted on the banks of a Hottentot camp. Coetzee's analysis of the two men's methodology via their own warped insights is equally the analysis of whole nations' discoveries and colonizations of other worlds. Feverish, Jacobus talks aloud:

The gun stands for the hope that there exists that which is other than oneself. The gun is our last defense against isolation within the travelling sphere. The gun is our mediator with the world and therefore our saviour. The tidings of the gun: such-and-such is outside, have no fear. The gun saves us from the fear that all life is within us. It does so by laying at our feet all the evidence we need of a dying and therefore a living world. (79-80)

The need to distinguish oneself not only from other human cultures, but from animals, plants, and the earth itself, leads to Coetzee's irony around Jacobus's obsessive itemization of the other:

It is my life work, my incessant proclamation of the otherness of the dead and therefore the otherness of life. A bush, too, no doubt, is alive. From a practical point of view, however, a gun is useless against it. There are other extensions of the self that might be efficacious against bushes and trees and turn their death into a hymn of life, a flame-throwing device for example. (79)

Not only intertextually foreseeing the napalm bombs that were used in the Vietnam project (and that were in fact "efficacious against bushes and trees"), Coetzee shows to what degree Cartesian selfhood is haunted by the anxiety of blurred boundaries, of the belonging together in difference of human and fish that I read into Bishop's poem. Shooting a hare, Jacobus declares, "[t]he hare dies to keep my soul from merging with the world" (80).

"Should the poet kill the fish, eat him, absorb him?" asks Yaeger (195). "If she refuses she may relinquish the possibility of internalizing this

venerability, and relinquish as well the enactment of a ritual moment of empowerment, of making herself greater than she was before by absorbing his *tremendum*" (195). The rub, however, lies in that having to kill the fish before eating him must result in the consumption of a dead thing, an object without life or vital power. Novalis elucidates a possible covenant between poet and fish that avoids the profound ironic justice of the master/slave relationship. "[W]e consume the genius of nature every day, and so every meal becomes a commemorative one [communion, *transl. note*], one which nourishes the soul as well as preserving the body, a mysterious means to a revelation and deification on earth, an animating intercourse with the absolutely alive" (11).

The colonizing, panoptic gaze in Bishop's poem that begins by dissecting the fish turns into a *stare*, a wide-eyed wonder at the being of the other that alters visibility as a totalizing representation of other worlds. *I stared and I stared*: a condition that is at a loss how to perceive, at a loss for words. "What do I make of this?" and the poet undergoes a momentary suspension of imperial eyeing and acquiring egoism.

In my reading of "The Fish," the difference between fish and human is recognized, paradoxically, at the site of their appropriation by each other, in their mutual assimilation and belonging together. Heidegger's thinking is perhaps most radical in his description of *riss*, the rift or fold in which world and earth, destined to infinite difference, engage. Frederic Jameson writes: "The force of Heidegger's description [of the rift] lies in the way in which the gap between these two dimensions is maintained; the implication is that we all live in both dimensions at once, in some irreconcilable simultaneity" (*Heidegger and Criticism*, 249). Jameson says of the work of art what I would like to borrow as indicative of the feminist poetics gestured toward by Bishop in her poem: "The work of art can therefore never heal this fundamental 'distance'; but it can do something else, and something better - it can stage the very tension between the two dimensions in such a way that we are made to live *within* that tension and to affirm its reality" (249).

Let me detour back to Yaeger, who examines how Bishop maintains this tension between self and other, breaking down the binary oppositions upheld in the imperialist pastoral characterized in *Dusklands*: "As she lowers the fish back into the water, she also signals her ability to stage a scene of

empowerment in which the other is not obliterated or repressed. In place of this incorporation, [Bishop] begins to invent a new kind of self-other dialectic that allows the object - the fish - to remain something other than the perceiving subject's conception of it, and allows that perceiving subject, in turn, to become something other than a unified ego" (196). Finally, I would like to intone Yaeger's words with the superficiality of a pastoralism in which assemblages are both fabulous and everyday: "... the 'feminine' sublime is neither old-fashioned nor outmoded - but addresses our most pressing modern concerns. How do we move away from our Western allegiance to an imperial, Cartesian, Adamic self who is supposed to act as its own triumvirate and tribunal - toward a model of the self that permits both a saving maintenance of ego boundaries and an exploration of the pleasures of intersubjectivity?" (205).⁵⁸

This question cannot be answered. The best answer, as Heidegger often remarked, is another question.

metamorphe

Aesop's fable of the country mouse and the city mouse famously instantiates a human morality tale acted out by animals. Why animals, I might ask? Is there not a strange metonymy in substituting animals for humans? Pastoral literature, too, teems with hybrid beings, humans turning into trees, gods into animals. The satyr, lusty goat from the waist down, man from the waist up, could be taken as representative of a modern mind-body

⁵⁸Patricia Yaeger, "Toward a Female Sublime," *Gender and Theory; Dialogues on a Feminist Criticism*, ed. Linda Kaufman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell) 191-212. Yaeger's desire for "a saving maintenance of ego boundaries" would seem to align her with Haraway, in that she wants to maintain some outline of identity as against the upheaval of becomings, against losing the last vestige of a molar self.

split, an animal biology and a spiritual humanity coming together only in the monitored fantasy of pastoral. Yet in the satyr is less a division between mind and body, animal and human, than an panic of the two within a hybrid morphology that threatens generic distinctions.⁵⁹

Outlawed to the pastoral imaginary is a glimmer of the ontological implicatedness I suggested in my description of animism. Still, the possibility of humans to become animal, plant, or stone is often allayed through the adoption of an anthropomorphizing consciousness. Any serious threat to the containment and superiority of human identity is allayed by making the other speak in a (controlled) human voice. This prevents language from being anything but a human trait. To pretend to give others a purely non-human language, however, would not be much of a departure from this sort of anthropology. Discursive responsibility can all too easily shift away from a human subject who lets language speak as if it had a life of its own. Heidegger is in danger of this. I will try to locate myself somewhere in between Heidegger's view that language is not anything human, and those who claim that language is an exclusively human trait. If things can "speak," it must certainly be predicated upon a turn in logos toward listening for what could not be (re)cognized.

I turn to literature that I will read as desiring a mutual trait (treaty) between animal and human. I have spoken at some length about J.M. Coetzee's character, K. An obvious intertext to *Life and Times of Michael K* is Franz Kafka's K. in *The Castle*. Both K's are subject to terms of existence in large part dictated by a ghostly social structure. Yet where Kafka's K. submits to the Castle as if intimidatingly real rather than as a construct, Coetzee's K exerts a *No*, a negative dialectic which forces dominant culture, in the figure of the ward doctor, to recognize how phantasmatic the regime really is.

Another link with Kafka is more aligned with my present concerns, however. K's emaciation and evacuation of the category of anthropological man resonates not only with Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs," but on a more intentionally intertextual level with Gregor Samsa's

⁵⁹Pan is of course the Dionysus of wild Arcadias.

metamorphosis into a beetle in Kafka's short story "The Metamorphosis."⁶⁰ Both K and Gregor have not obviously *chosen* this path of mutation and abjection. Becomings are never a choice. Yet both could be said to gravitate toward the anomalous and the animal in passive resistance to the molar man of the times.

Think of other liminal bodies made abject by transgressing the healthy boundaries of what is deemed human being. Nietzsche's madness descended, it is said, upon witnessing a horse being flogged to death by its owner. He became, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, an assemblage (a composition of the street, the horse, the hour), a becoming that cast him from the ranks of molar identity. And Dostoevsky, in *Crime and Punishment*, validates Raskolnikov's sensitivity through a memory of a horse being flogged; the murder of the old pawnbroker cannot be said, then, to be occasioned by lack of sensitivity toward other beings. Salman Rushdie in *The Satanic Verses*, too, has Saladin Chamcha return to London as a goat; the satyr, it seems, re-emerges in the ambivalent negotiation between colonial and postcolonial thinking. There are in these anecdotes communications between animal and human, metonymies of flesh intuitively protecting itself from blows inflicted on another. Parts unable to disassociate from wholes.

David Malouf, in his novel *An Imaginary Life*, recreates the story of Ovid's life along the theme of metamorphosis that so prevails in the Roman's poetry. Exiled from Rome to Tomis, Malouf's Ovid provides a wonderful example of a poet's slow implication into the foreignness of the village people, into the otherness of language, and finally into the hybrid ontology of a wild boy. "[N]o one in Tomis speaks my tongue, and for nearly a year now," relates the character of Ovid, "I have heard no word of my own language; I am rendered dumb" (17). Abjected like K and Gregor Samsa, Ovid's attempts to communicate puncture the rational definition of language as articulate sound, to include such things as "grunts and signs" (17). The threat posed to a category and *species* of being protected in language censored by logos is the threat of becoming-animal:

⁶⁰J.M. Coetzee has read and written about Kafka.

I have never had much contact with the creatures before this, not even with cats and dogs. Now I find something oddly companionable about them. Like me, they too cannot speak....Do they have a language of their own, I wonder? If so, I might try to learn it. As easy do that as master the barbarous guttural tongue my neighbors speak. (20)

An Imaginary Life is about crossing all sorts of boundaries - between animal and human, speech and speechlessness, home and homelessness, dream and wakefulness. Philip Neilsen notes its postcoloniality by recalling that "...Malouf has created a symbolic fable with mythical reverberations for Australian readers, particularly of the Antipodes myth of exile and otherness (23). I am most interested in the desire for assimilation into molecular animal that Malouf depicts in a novel that takes the realm of becoming between two molar beings - human and animal - seriously. Ovid's own metamorphosis is readied with dreams he has in Tomis:

...a horde of forms came thundering towards me - men, yes, horses, yes, and I thought of what I do not believe in and know belongs only to our world of fables, which is where I found myself: the centaurs. But these were not the tamed creatures of our pastoral myths. They were gigantic, and their power, the breath of their nostrils, the crash of their hooves, the rippling light of their flanks, was terrible. (24)

Malouf's novel is about the uncertain, dreaming confines of ourselves in relation to those we relegate as *not me*:

It is as if each creature had the power to dream itself out of one existence into a new one, a step higher on the ladder of things. Having conceived in our sleep the idea of a further being, our bodies find, slowly, painfully, the physical process that will allow them to break their own bonds and leap up to it. So that the stone sleeping in the sun has once been molten fire and became stone when the fire was able to say, in its liquid form: 'I would be solid, I would be stone'; and the stone dreams now that the veins of ore in its nature might become liquid

again and move, but within its shape as stone, so that slowly, through long centuries of aching for such a condition, for softness, for a pulse, it feels one day that the transformation has begun to occur.
(29)

Throughout most of *An Imaginary Life*, however, a hierarchy of beings - a ladder - is maintained. The stone wants to move "upward." Ovid longs to initiate the wild boy into his kin and his kind, to take him up into the world of human being and language. Ovid convinces the village men to hunt down and capture the wild boy, who is trussed back to Tomis after a terrible chase. The imperialist necessity of forcing the child to come into his humanity is doubted only momentarily, when Ovid thinks "What have I done?" (73). He soon resumes the paternal colonization of a "barbaric" being. "What is it," Ovid asks, "...that I can lead him to imagine and then to become?" (92). Again: "Does he dream? If only I could be certain he was dreaming I would know that what I have to contact, what I have slowly to lead up through the ladders of being in him, is still there" (74).

Only at the end of the book, with small glimpses along the way, does Ovid abandon the ladder of being and allow the child to be equally his teacher, to initiate a now old man into forms of being that he had deemed inferior. Once, on "a turfey island covered with scrub and a few stalks of wild oats" (90), a pastoral place in which suspension of categories, hence metamorphosis, becomes possible, Ovid's desire to teach the child to speak falters in the face of the affect-language of the child:

I have long since discovered on our expeditions together that he can imitate any of the birds or animals we come across....He stands with his feet apart, hands on hips, head held back to the light, and his lips contort, his features strain to become those of the bird he is mimicking, to become beak, crest, wattles, as out of his body he produces the absolute voice of the creature, and surely, in entering into the mysterious life of its language, becomes, for a moment, the creature itself, so that to my eyes he seems miraculously transformed.
(90)

Who is assimilating who into what culture? "In imitating the birds," marvels Ovid, "he is not, like our mimics, copying something that is outside him and revealing the accuracy of his ear or the virtuosity of his speech organs. He is being the bird" (92). It is more the animal in Ovid than the man in the child that is being imagined and gradually exerted in the story. Like K and Gregor, Ovid's downward mobility, falling as he does away from the superior humanity of Rome to the inferior human society at Tomis to, finally, the brink of the animal kingdom, is surprisingly his expansion into a radical revisioning of ontology. Human being comes to include the fluidity of becomings. "There are times when it comes strongly upon me that *he* is the teacher, and that whatever comes new to the occasion is being led slowly, painfully, out of me" (95). An imperial I allows the other in.

The child's ability to "enter into the other" (Spivak, 75) by becoming rather than simply mimicking the bird is indeed what Ovid will be called to undergo. As Malouf writes in his afterword to the book, "[m]y purpose was to make this glib fabulist of 'the changes' live out in reality what had been, in his previous existence, merely the occasion for dazzling literary display" (154). The ontological boundaries which defined Ovid in Rome (the dominant culture *par excellence*) are preyed upon not only by a potential for fable and dream to become as real as so-called "reality," but by that satyr-like creature who incorporates both human and animal in irreducible connexion - the wild child in the woods outside of Tomis, possibly the same child that visited Ovid when he was a boy in Rome.

Ovid desires the wild boy, desires to capture and know him (master him), to transform *but also* to be transformed by him. He is recalled to his own strangeness by him, by the potential of becoming-child as much as by the possibility of becoming-animal.⁶¹ "But he, in fact, is the more patient teacher. He shows me the bird," writes Ovid,

whose cry I am trying to imitate....I am to imagine
myself into its life. As the small, soft creature beats
its warmth into me, I close my human mind and

⁶¹As Deleuze and Guattari write: "there is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child, that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities (although it is possible - only possible - for the woman or child to occupy privileged positions in relation to these becomings)" (275).

try to grow a beak, try to leap up out of myself....The true language, I know now, is that speech in silence in which we first communicated, the child and I, in the forest, when I was asleep. (97)

Like the belonging together in difference, the *riss* of Heidegger's, Ovid realizes that the "language I am speaking of now, that I am almost speaking, is a language whose every syllable is a gesture of reconciliation. We knew that language once. I spoke it in my childhood. We must discover it again" (98).

Unlike Malouf, who allows the boundaries of human being to molt in flux, Heidegger, I have tried to show, keeps human and animal spirit-worlds carefully distinct. As Jacques Derrida notes in his book *Heidegger and the Question Of Spirit*, for Heidegger "[i]t is always a matter of marking an absolute limit between the living creature and the human *Dasein*" (54). For although Heidegger, like Malouf, tries to undermine an anthropological ladder of being, he nevertheless refuses to let *Geist*, or Spirit, be anything but a human attribute.

always already

I am wary to interject a commentary into *An Imaginary Life*, a text that rewrites ontology in a way I hope might attenuate spirit (and language) beyond being solely a human attribute. But there are two points in Malouf's text that might be foregrounded. The first, as in Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*, is an absence of women in the exile of critical pastoral. The second, again as in Coetzee's writing, is a de-historicized surrealism of place and time, Malouf's decision to locate the micropolitics of metamorphosis outside of the chronological arena of history.

The women in *An Imaginary Life* consist of Ovid's absent and virtually unmentionned wife back in Rome, of the village women of Tomis, and of the women of Sulmo whom Ovid recalls in an idyllic scene. Save for the Sulmo idyll (in which young Ovid, turned over to women to be bathed and put to bed, senses a healthy irreverence) women are depicted as carriers of social

conventions. They are not, as are Ovid and the wild boy, given the power of metamorphosis, nor allowed to imagine a molecular recomposition of their human bodies toward animal, earth, and plant worlds. Malouf makes the village women into a breed of social guarddogs on watch for foreign bodies attempting entry into a proscribed world. In this role, "[t]he shaman and the women, of course, are in league" (76). (Of course?)

Unknown to Ovid, and probably to Malouf, whose mention of a shaman-female affinity is never ironized, becoming-woman could be read as a necessary phase of Ovid's own metamorphosis, a stage that Malouf seems to intuitively if not deliberately set up in the novel. Just as Coetzee's K becomes woman in relation to the molar man of wartime, Malouf's Ovid must be exposed to becoming-woman before he is ready for becoming-animal. Although Malouf directs our sympathies away from the women, positioning us through Ovid's first-person narrative to resent the women's superstitious antagonism toward both himself and the wolf-child, a feminist might willfully mistake Ovid's distrust of the women as resistance to losing his molar identity as a man in their proximity. However, *An Imaginary Life* remains devoted to Ovid's fascination for what Deleuze and Guattari call the "'anomalous" member of an animal pack - for the wolf-boy - and the women in the text are positioned as more of an obstacle to Ovid's becomings than as a primary movement toward them (243).

For instance, Ovid's care for the child is met, Malouf writes, with "the hostility of the women" (77). Living with Ryzak the horse tamer and with Ryzak's wife, son, and mother, Ovid never quite lives down his capture of the wild boy. Ryzak's mother, in particular, is depicted as "a worker of enchantments" (101), indeed as a formidable power who protects against any disorder among spirit worlds. Her daughter-in-law, initially friendly toward Ovid and the child, aligns herself more and more with the old crone as the dangers of transformation are whiffed within their household. When the wild boy passes a fever to Lullo, the son, the women's vigil over village and religious mores reaches a pitch. Mind you, we are privy to the scenario only through Ovid's (Malouf's) perspective:

The old woman immediately begins wailing over him, cursing the younger woman who has deserted her own child to care for an interloper, and in

nursing him up to the crisis has made it possible for the demon to steal, if only for a moment, her son's spirit. The younger woman is speechless with fear. (119)

Ovid regards the scare as superstitious, yet the women (superficially linking the transmission of the wolf's spirit with the transmission of fever and disease) scent what Deleuze and Guattari analyze in relation to becoming-animal: "The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism" (241-2). In other words, Ovid scorns communication as *affect*, while the women respect and fear it.

Malouf hints at the possibility that women, unlike men, already know a potential for metamorphosis within them, and unlike men sustain a connection with plants, animals, earth, planets. The dominant old mother, for instance, is a gatherer of herbs and a worshiper of Hecate. "From the window," relates Ovid:

I watch the old woman's party pass along the narrow lane, gathering adherents as it goes. All of the women will assemble at last in the grove. No man is permitted to see their rites....When the women come back they are silent, still wrapped in whatever power it is that the moon has over them, plucking as it does monthly at the tides of their bodies, swelling in them, waning, brooding over the darkness and transmuting all those things that we know by daylight in its softer, vaguer light. (128)

Women's communication with the otherness of earth, however, serves in the novel to buttress the fortress of their known world, whereas Ovid's relationship with the boy will take him to "the end of the known world" (137). If the old woman and her sister villagers are allowed rituals of becoming, they are nevertheless prevented from the molecular upheavals that becomings portend. This is because they remain molar women; their moonlit ritual - their connection with Nature - is portrayed as something inherent to woman, *defining* them in a way that prevents rather than unleashes becomings-woman. Deleuze and Guattari are right to emphasize

that women "occupy privileged positions in relation to...becomings" (275) not because of something inherent to them, but because of a social deterritorialization in relation to "the man-standard" (291). Malouf, when he does attribute the power of becomings to women, attributes it to a molar - an essential - fact of women's being.

So while Ovid "goes molecular," the women in the novel remain tightly harnessed to the identity of the village. About to die, death being a becoming-molecular symbolic of that dispersal of identity which every becoming entails, Ovid lowers himself "grain by grain" into the "point on the earth's surface where I disappear" (150).

Slowly I begin the final metamorphosis. I must drive out my old self and let the universe in. The creatures will come creeping back - not as gods transmogrified, but as themselves. Beaked, furry, fanged, tusked, clawed, hooved, snouted, they will settle in us, re-entering their old lives deep in our consciousness. And after them, the plants, also themselves. Then we shall be able to take back into ourselves the lakes, the rivers, the oceans of the earth, its plains, its crags with their leaps of snow. Then little by little, the firmament. The spirit of things will migrate back into us....Only then will we have some vision of our true body as men [sic]. (96)

As for the idyllic scene back in Sulmo, "a scene of golden beauty and cleanliness" (84) full of the animal sensuality and robust good-humour of rural women, it is, for Ovid, "another world" (85). Ontologically, Malouf continues to imply with this scene, women are already in that liminal state of becoming hybrids of animal, earth, and human; unlike men, they have never left a state of nature behind them. "I went some other way," recalls Ovid wistfully, "into a man's world, into the city, into the state" (86).

This is a problematic depiction, one which fuels anti-feminist traditions by colonizing women, children, and animals as inferior species, i.e. keeping them out of the decision-making realm of the social. Malouf's Ovid, secure in a category of universal humankind that women don't belong to, can make the radical gesture of throwing away his molar membership. For a woman, only partially included in mankind in the first place (and this because of an

inherent inferiority, rather than a social marginalization - which is how Malouf gets dangerously embroiled in the issue), the gesture would not be dramatic nor meaningful (i.e. she would not have to travel so far down the ladder of being).

Malouf's idyllic scene, like J.M. Coetzee's elision of earth and women in *Life and Times of Michael K*, situates women as *always already* closer to nature, and so disempowers them from the heroism of social critique that depends upon possessing - then disavowing - set boundaries of human being. Sidonie Smith elucidates the heroism I mean:

This valorization of autonomous selfhood demands the individual's willingness to challenge cultural expectations and to pursue uniqueness at the price of social ostracism. Yet even the rebel whose text projects a hostile society against which he struggles to define himself, if he is male, takes himself seriously because he and his public assume his significance within the dominant order: Only in the fullness of that membership can the fullness of his rebellion unfold. (9)

Yet as I suggested in relation to Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*, heroic cultural criticism is not at all what I am proposing for women. Indolence and reticence are certainly not heroic; they are, rather, an abdication of selfhood held to be definitive, representative, a model with which to identify.

It may seem paradoxical that while I regard Malouf's representations of women alike in kind to pastoral colonizations of other worlds, I nevertheless find his emphasis on place rather than history an important postcolonial manoeuvre. Place allows for simultaneous difference across space; this is in distinction to the homogeneous stratification, or molar organization, of chronological time. Pastoral place is an occasion for metamorphosis, for involutions of the ladder of being (freeing up speeds and times), precisely because it evades that teleology of history in which beings are organized according to their level of development, their evolutionary progression.

An Imaginary Life charts the dissolution of Ovid's historical consciousness into the different tempos of exile, into those minoritarian mediums presented in the bodies of the village people and the wolf-boy. Rome, marked by history and the clock, is replaced by barbarous territory,

where identity and consciousness is terrifyingly free of teleology, terrifyingly open to the tempo of death. In this regard, Tomis and beyond relocate Ovid in a Heideggerian existentials, a being-towards-death that involves molecular speeds and slownesses that decompose the partitioning of time (years, months, days, or hours) into crumbs and particles of time (time as affect, or felt time).

Ovid at first assumes the constructs of time in his "kindness" toward the wild boy, in his desire to uplift him into a *developmental* paradigm of human maturation. I can only read the following passage of Malouf's as ironic, since Ovid's comparison of a child's progress with civilization's is later displaced by the poet's journey out of the village and into the packs and swarms of the wolf-boy's territory:

There is something in our humanity, in the slow initiation of the creatures of our kind into all that we have discovered and made - in ourselves and in the world around us - that is always touching...one feels it in the first efforts of the child to push itself upright, to push that one step up that it must have taken our ancestors centuries to imagine....How much more moving then to see my Child make the discoveries that will lead him, after so many years of exile, into his inheritance, into the society of his kind. (81)

The potential of pastoral writing to respatialize time - to make of it a superficial tempo of combinations rather than a deep structure in which past and future stand as proof of progress - is suggested in *An Imaginary Life*. Concepts of development - constructs of History - have marginalized and inferiorized some histories in light of the superior feats of others. Again, the historical distinction between "First" and "Third Worlds," forged from a standard of technological and capitalist progress, imposes upon a multiplicity of ways of being occurring contemporaneously in the world an evaluation that bodes ill for the "Third World."⁶² Furthermore, as Rita Bernard writes

⁶²Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993). Chow writes: "Technology is that collectivized goal to which East Asian cultures, as part of the non-Western world that survives in the backwash of imperialism, have no choice but to adopt" (158).

in relation to J.M. Coetzee's similar emphasis on place, "the marginalization of the spatial by the historical discourse" usually serves to conceal

the degree to which the erasure of the conditions of labor in today's world depends on the geography of late capitalism...[on] the fact that the impoverished workers who produce our glossy commodities live far out of sight, in Mexico, in the Philippines, or in a South African township, and that their invisibility perpetuates the illusion of historical progress in the economic centers.... (34)

distress

It is vital to imagine language not as a human acquisition, nor as the quintessential condition of human meaning, but as something in which humans along with other beings are ever making connections. How can I speak of language as a trait not only of human, but of animal, stone, plant? An entreaty.

Only as these writers have done. Perhaps the other inhabits language as we know it only through the fantastic juxtapositions of goat and man, the fabulous sympathy of word bodies that flinch from the blow falling from a human hand onto an animal hide, the blow that dis-tresses our braided beings.

When one thinks of postmodern genres such as collage, pastiche, *bricolage*, even the essay (which makes individual idiosyncrasies lines of flights into other subjects⁶³), one can see in them the sort of spatialization of time that the place of pastoral improvises. Fantastic juxtapositions of words, images, ideas - irreverent disorderings of chronological periodization for the temporary assemblages of disparate things - these genres are perhaps the joint

⁶³ See Graham Good, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (London: Routledge, 1988).

creatures that populate pastoral tableaux. They confuse a hierarchical modernist historicity that stacks cultures and ages in pyramid formations to evince how white imperialist culture has topped them all, temporally and developmentally. The possibility of disordered tempos is the possibility of haecceity, of events that revolve around more than the measure of man.

erotic

Earth is in a way like Desire. It evades any attempt to (totalizingly) know it by hiding, slipping into the un-truth that Heidegger sees as concealment, an absence of disclosure which provides all grounds for *aletheia*, a Greek word meaning that uncoveredness of beings which Heidegger regards as *poiesis* and truth. Desire is sustained, is created, when a totalizing comprehension of ourselves and others is infinitely deferred.

Coetzee may have seen the imperialism in white South African pastoral that claims to listen to the silent stone or ground, knowing that there will be no retort. Yet Coetzee also realizes that the threat of silence (and indolence) is the threat of the erotic, of what doesn't enter into our picture, of what isn't at work according to our frames of reference. Heidegger's *Language*, which can never fully be given over to *Logos* (logical understanding) is a body that cannot be viewed in its nakedness, that always tantalizes with slips of flesh which are re-covered before we can glut ourselves. Heidegger's essays in *Poetry, Language, Thought* are erotic, similarly, by refusing to come into the visibility of the logos, the panoptic gaze of literal understanding.

For Heidegger, technology is also a revealing (into truth). However, modern technology presents the greatest danger to a *poiesis* of revealing in that it can forcibly maintain beings in their unconcealedness. "The coming to presence of technology threatens revealing, threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealedness of standing-reserve" (Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology," 33). Modern technology eradicates the erotic movement in and out of truth, in and out of visibility. Martialled into

total exposure, others become a standing-reserve and humanity, as in the Hegelian master-slave dynamic, grows bereft of the recognition of mutual subjects.⁶⁴ Humanity (the master) becomes the living dead:

As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather, exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. ("Question," 27)

Forcibly maintaining unconcealedness concerns women and other minorities in particular. For, as Rey Chow puts it, "[o]ne of the chief sources of the oppression of women lies in the way they have been consigned to visibility" (*Writing Diaspora*, 105). Women's bodies have become a standing-reserve for image industries. Theories of resistance perhaps depend on a negative dialectic of withholding, burrowing holes within the demand for presence and participation, undermining the arena so determined to display the molar female body and overlook the mutable woman. Women are kept molar, in part, by making them visually definitive, defining them as visuals. As Judith Butler asks: "Can sexuality even remain sexuality once it submits to a criterion of transparency and disclosure, or does it perhaps cease to be sexuality precisely when the semblance of full explicitness is achieved?" (*inside/out*, 15).

Heidegger's helpful words (for feminisms) must, however, be problematically re-contextualized within a retrospective knowledge of his fascism. In the Holocaust human beings were treated, precisely, as standing-reserve. Could Heidegger's analysis of the technological danger of rendering humans into "standing-reserves" constitute some sort of private post-war analysis of that most technological of standing-reserves -- the death camp?

⁶⁴G.W.F.Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, transl. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977). In mutual recognition, writes Hegel, two subjects "recognize themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another" (112).

cyborgs

One of the pastoral tendencies of the discourses myself and those around me knew as I grew up was a sweeping dismissal of technology. Technology was something that belonged in the city, the rat-race, far from the intimacy with earth that country dwelling afforded. The most glaring contradictions disappeared within this discourse: the fact that we all had electric lights and running water, the fact that my family had two cars and drove back and forth from city to country with loads of groceries (humans inside of cars are cyborgs-supreme), textbooks, calculators, hammers and nails, machine-sewn jeans. But our ethos of country living compelled us to disdain technological progress even while our father's occupation -- a structural engineer designing bridges and towers and parking lots for the contemptible automobile - financed a home in the country.

A *carte blanche* commandment against technology concealed also a conservative fear of change, of crossing boundaries, a fear that human beings would be redefined by what came to constitute their environment, and that change would certainly be for the worse (was there ever technological change for the better?) Now I can poke fun at myself and my family, yet this outlook is still firmly entrenched in me. It is not that there may not be some serious critical mileage that can be gained from a look at technology's affiliations with imperialism and "First World" prowess. I think there is. But for me, at any rate, talk of technology will be coloured with a pastoralist prejudice, one expressed through terms like "rat-race," jargon that inadvertently exposes the racism and hierarchization of species latent in anti-*polis* sentiment. When I engage technology, then, I will try to ironically rather than earnestly weave this insinuating pastoralism through my discussion; I will try to insinuate my impartiality.

desuetude

Charles Bernstein writes: "meaning is nowhere bound to the orbit of purpose, intention, or utility" (13).

A well-rehearsed quality of pastoral is that it performs "a modernist bias...against any contamination of literature...by an explicit political or ideological purpose" (Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 21). Pastoral has been criticized for being impractical, not of (social) use. Anabel Patterson argues, however, that in the longevity of Virgil's eclogues lies the perennial politics of pastoral: the question of art's relation to society.

Pastoral is most criticized for not having a use-value, a social function. The problem of looking for what is at work within other cultures, and the desire that something be at work from a certain perspective, might be a figure for how we read. How does what we look for in texts relate to an imperialist culture's hopes that it can use (exploit) what is at work elsewhere? Rey Chow quotes Jacques Attali's reading of labour, one that suggests that it is in the most primary imposition of use-value that the alienation of labour occurs:

Political economy wants to believe, and make others believe, that it is only possible to rearrange the organization of production, that the exteriority of man from his labor is a function of property and is eliminated if one eliminates the master of production. It is necessary to go much further than that. Alienation is not born of production and exchange, nor of property, but of usage: the moment labor has a goal, an aim, a program set out in advance in a code...the producer becomes a stranger to what he produces. (*Writing*, 154)

To distinguish between pastoral as aesthetically useless *or* politically useful, then, overlooks what differences are at work in the aesthetics of pastoral; culture is looking only for what signs are squeezed through the grid of legible use-value.

I would suggest that precisely when pastoral seems most useless its micropolitics are at work; in discursive productions that orbit around a commoditist emphasis on use, product, exchange value, etc., the uselessness of pastoral is a belligerent *doile*, fanciful but unwieldy. Pastoral can refuse to

function according to the program or social code laid out for working bodies; to put it differently, pastoral can be adopted by certain bodies as a discourse that rebels against the fundamental frame of use-value through which all living matter is determined.

Pastoral disrupts the use-value of bodies by altering their tempo, rendering them out of date within a world that requires ever more efficient and speedy transmissions of material. Textually, changing tempo could mean obstructing language that facilitates the (facile) production and consumption of meaning. Rey Chow locates in Russian Formalism, for instance, a poetics whose "involvement with speed lies in their attention to language - to language, moreover, as a way to arrest speed" (*Writing*, 172). The language poets - and writing communities such as the Kootenay School of Writing influenced by the language poets - likewise focus on the materiality of language in a way that obstructs an easy (and sometimes, it seems, virtually any) reading of a poem. Later, I will look at Lisa Robertson's poetry, poetry that challenges use-value by the pastoral indolence of its language, which is difficult to translate into coherent meaning (determinable meaning being the use-value most readers expect from texts).

Indolence frustrates ethnographic missions that seek, more than anything else, evidence for their studies or matter for capitalist conversion. And language services the capitalist stress on use-value when it facilitates the rapid consumption of meaning. As a conscious strategy, unusual (useless) language, like indolence, can intervene in the speeds and efficiencies signaled by the word "facilitation." I am, I suppose, making the bodies that have lounged in pastoral texts into possible modes of textuality.

granpa's level

Earth, in my interpretation of Heidegger, is Language which calls "those who wander on dark courses" (Heidegger, *Poetry*, 200). *World* is Language ordered into logos; a solidarity of discourse.

Solidarities of discourse; "the They." Common sense. The natural. Milan Kundera, in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, says through the character of Tereza that "a concentration camp was nothing exceptional or startling but something very basic, a given into which we are born and from which we can escape only with the greatest of efforts" (137). At another point in the novel, a magazine editor rebukes Tereza's modesty: "There's nothing wrong with the naked body....It's normal. And everything normal is beautiful" (69).

In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Kundera similarly regards a nudist beach as the great levelling field of visibility: "Listening to them fulminate against tops and bras, Jan thought of the small wooden object called a level that his grandfather, who had been a bricklayer, would routinely set on the surface of a wall as it went up" (201). The nudist beach could be the "more-visible-than-visible," or "obscene," of Baudrillard's, in which nothing is hidden, everything is given over to a view or a scene:

The obscene is what does away with every mirror, every look, every image. The obscene puts an end to every representation....It is no longer then the traditional obscenity of what is hidden, repressed, forbidden or obscure; on the contrary, it is the obscenity of the visible, of the all-too-visible, of the more-visible-than-visible. (30)

In obscenity the body has no erotic concealment. Representation as visibility has become a discourse of solidarity. Join in the march.

Nothing left, nothing *remaining* to be seen, thought, read. Any critique of "the They," of solidarities, worlds, ideologies, usually starts by asking: "What remains to be thought? What is the rem(a)inder?"

Heidegger's later thinking is considered obtuse, difficult, etc. I would just call it erotic. *Nothing* is explicit. Yet his silence after the war, his inability to own up to the Jewish holocaust, would seem to contradict this eroticism by staying faithful to a German world unwilling to admit the return of the concealed.

speaking

To theorize myself as silent and dissembled would be an utopian project if I didn't recognize that I will always also be talking and speaking from a privileged position that registers me in the visible and the audible even while I argue against molar productions.

I agree with Rey Chow's adoption of Gayatri Spivak's declaration that the subaltern cannot speak in the essay "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" (*Writing Diaspora*): "It is only when we acknowledge that the subaltern cannot speak that we can begin to plot a different kind of process of identification for the native" (35). The way I have been couching it, the subaltern cannot speak because speaking demands that one gains permit to a molar body, or identity. For as Chow argues, "speaking itself belongs to an already well-defined structure and history of domination" (36).

I would modulate Chow's statement slightly, however, in order to place some onus on dominant culture to bend an ear toward that which does not speak, or in Coetzee's words, to that which is not at work in other cultures. Even while "speaking," then, I might enact a reticence within molar vocals by trying to listen to what does not sound in the structures I inhabit, listening to silence and to the unintelligible in the hope that a transformation of listening is inseparable from a transformation of speaking.

Identifying with the symbolic discourses of Chinese painting, which Trinh T. Minh-ha sees as embodying "the ability to imply, rather than to expose something in its entirety," subverts the demand that thinking be explicit (*When the Moon*, 162). Trinh T. Minh-ha's appeal for bold omissions and minute depictions in Chinese paintings supplements Heidegger's analysis of the danger of modern technology as that which orders everything into the picture (the visible), leaving nothing implicit. Trinh T. Minh-ha affirms a discourse capable of those silences or blank spaces that the West in its realism has tended to repudiate as absence and nothingness. "In working with the sense of the unknown instead of repressing it," writes Trinh T. Minh-ha, "in bringing infinity within sight, traditional Chinese arts choose to suggest always more than what they represent" (165).

Incorporating a blind listening into discourse, we might empty into our inherited structures of representations an interval that speaks more than anything else to being *at a loss* for words. "Man [sic] first speaks when, and only when, he responds to language by listening to its appeal" (Heidegger, *Poetry*, 216).

country walk

This morning it is cold. I leave my books on the table, I leave John Edward sleeping in his crib, and I try to summon up enough energy to walk up the ridge. *Wildcat Hills*, it says on a green sign five miles down the valley. When I leave the house, the frame falls away from the country, and I am encompassed in eerie swaths of sight and sound, sleeping cougars and royal grouse and ground swells segues into bush, air, crisp heights.

"But there is a more permanent interest in the way in which the neo-pastoral metaphor tries to authenticate itself in observed nature. The court toy and the hyperbole of feeling are returned, with some loss and some gain, to the country walk" (Raymond Williams, 23). Raymond William's critique of the pastoral is both horribly pertinent to my situation, and simultaneously unwilling to register the uncanny other that *is* a potential of the country walk. The Contact Zone.

The existential privilege that my parent's country home provided me was that of a repetition of walks along a ridge on my brother-in-law's land, behind our house, that I walked almost every day for seventeen years. The land as an other that I feared sometimes broke through the narratives I brought to our walks, which tended to be either collective athletic sprees or, if alone, contemplative strolls borrowed from all the masculinist literature I had imbibed. But there was also always the unpredictability of that contact zone between myself and nature.

reservations

When is my body attuned to the other, open to it as far as I'm able? In what particular ways does my body know the other implicitly? A sense of being *in* the world in a way that provides felt knowledge of the belonging together of self and other? Implicit knowledge, nearing an understanding of how one is implicated in another's being and *visa versa*, might diminish the danger in the idea that things are unknowable in themselves, for this idea spawns an "aura of authenticity" around entities, a hallowed light that acts like a quarantine, an isolation ward.⁶⁵ And so we have *reservations* about things.

Went out to the country for a family dinner. First things I saw on the doormat: dead weasel, dead rabbit. Country cats seem to be fiercer than city cats, perhaps a consequence of the proud and difficult country mouse?

What of the animal remains in our human being, which has relegated that (animal) body to a reservation where things-in-themselves live apart from us? What interests are served in our keeping animal being an authentic, uncontaminated environmental field of study? "[D]ifference' is essentially 'division' in the understanding of many" (Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 82).

Trinh T. Minh-ha examines those dominant discourses that confine all cultures not their own in (filmic) "frames" or "reservations," sites of simultaneous subjection and exoticization (*Woman*, 95). "Those who run around yelling that X is not X and that X *can* be Y usually land in a hospital, a 'rehabilitation' center, a concentration camp, or a res-er-va-tion," she writes (95). Animal, mineral, bacterial cultures can then be, as Heidegger puts it, a standing-reserve for human technological use and recreation.

Mystification of the other ensures that it will be exploited and at the same time returned to as an originary, hence curative, power. This is done with human cultures; as Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it: "Today, planned authenticity is rife" in the distinction that has set up the Third World (*Woman*, 89). "Third

⁶⁵Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora*, 44.

World," writes Trinh T. Minh-ha, "...belongs to a category apart, a 'special' one that is meant to be both complimentary and complementary, for First and Second went out of fashion, leaving a serious Lack behind to be filled" (97). Non-human cultures have been exoticized and exploited too. I do not want to pretend to speak on their behalf (half of their being). I want to learn how to be affected.

What (someone might ask) would I hear if I tried to listen to a rock, a fish, a plant? Is this a way of avoiding listening to something that could retort, that might reflect back to me my pastoral projections? Or is it something else?

Walter Benjamin:

It is a metaphysical truth that all nature would begin to lament if it were endowed with language....This proposition has a double meaning. It means, first: she would lament language itself. Speechlessness: the great sorrow of nature (and for the sake of her redemption the life and language of man - not only, as is supposed, of the poet - are in nature). This proposition means, secondly: she would lament. Lament, however, is the most undifferentiated, impotent expression of language; it contains scarcely more than the sensuous breath; and even where there is only a rustling of plants, nature mourns. Yet the inversion of this proposition leads even further into the essence of nature; the sadness of nature makes her mute. In all mourning there is the deepest inclination to speechlessness, which is infinitely more than inability or disinclination to communicate.... (329)

akimbo

Don't let it be known that a woman is shuffling ideas around in her body during the day, tucking the baby under one arm and then the other. Appending the history of ideas, limbs *akimbo*. I try to locate my body as I play

with J.E. With trepidation I limn the private into Heidegger, into thesis, intimidated again and again by the masculine shrug, the hard jaw of ideas that naturally expects us to keep what is implicit in thinking *out*.

murmuring

Country mouse contemplative finds it hard to find an hour of uninterrupted time on retreat. Its baby is not only present, but teething.

And why should I pretend otherwise?

Hans Kaufmann, in an interview with the (formerly) East German writer Christa Wolf, says: "Let's talk about prose. Allow me to indulge in a little crude philology. Citing Thomas Mann, you call the 'prose author' the one who 'murmures the spell of the imperfect'...."⁶⁶

I can organize my thesis around teeth and teething, around moods and weather. I'm not sad to give up the smooth space of criticism for itinerant work. Murmuring the spell of the imperfect? I won't always try to pick up where I left off, hide my traces, disguise the seams, make process transparent. Let it be clear that today I had this much attention with my subject, the weather was good, and it will all be completely different when I sit down to write tomorrow.

perforce

From Baudrillard's essay "The Ecstasy of Communication": "...[T]oday there is a whole pornography of information and communication" (130). Today, if you don't plunge into the steaming compost of information,

⁶⁶ Christa Wolf, "Subjective Authenticity: A Conversation with Hans Kaufmann," *The Fourth Dimension: Interviews with Christa Wolf*, transl. Hilary Pilkington (New York: Verso, 1988) 28.

hostility tracks you. If you resist being a producer, a manufacturer, an integral sense of value - goodness - is insulted. Modern technology as a demand to *enter into the picture*.

I listen (it's Sunday) to campus radio, CJSW. I'm in the bathtub, soaking. They play a song that I like. Waiting to hear who the artist is, what album it's on, etc., I dunk under the water to rinse my hair, quickly. When I surface, the d.j.'s finished naming the set, and saying "up next...." I have missed my artist, my album, my chance to go out and buy that album like an avid consumer and listen to it again and again and again. I'm soaking in the bath, thinking about this and what it might possibly augur for my thesis (all roads lead to Rome). That's not so difficult: I decide that I am seduced by consumerism, lured into overlooking the immediacy of the (radio) performance in the certainty that it can be acquired and made to perform again (i.e. played). I couldn't imagine an ephemeral, non-reproducible experience; letting the performance go, letting it pass by and possibly be forgotten. Montaigne's lovely words were, in my bathtub, very symbolic: "...though I am a man of some reading, I am one who retains nothing" (159). His words suggest the possibility of feminist incorporations of bold omissions into the essay, and into intellectual production.

"Values about reproduction," notes Peggy Phelan, "govern ideas about representation and inflect the negative values associated with the nonreproductive and the unrepresentable" ("White Men," 389). Phelan suggests that the NEA defunding of four performers in the United States in 1991 was not only a result of the performers' lesbian or homosexual "content," but a result of the ephemeral medium of performance art, which cannot be disciplined as easily as more reified forms. "Attacking performance art precisely because it cannot be reproduced, the ontological claims of performance dovetailed with the nonreproductive ontology of homosexuality" (Phelan, 389). It is in certain capitalist interests to undermine that Montaignian confidence in losing or forgetting what a discipline thinks you should remember, in allowing gaps in thinking, imperfections in water-tight theories so that the vicissitudes of life make thinking not an uniform practice, but a mangy coat of itinerancy. A riff. We are all mangy dogs, to some degree. But we try to conceal this in the production of thinking because seeming to know one's subject *perfectly* has more product value. Polish,

format, frame...unless these qualities of thinking are questioned, different productions of thinking will be deferred. To inhabit a subject imperfectly, in a capitalist economy of production and products, will seldom arouse the conviction that thinking has taken place.

en - lighten - ment

Into the light. Physical fitness (appropriateness), straight hair, bleached skin, caucasian nose. Enlightenment is prejudiced against darker embodiments of language.

"While the technology of seeing, or seeing-as-technology has become an inalienable part of the operation of militarism and fascist propaganda," writes Rey Chow, "[certain feminists are beginning to show] how it has also come to dominate our thinking about identity, so much so that visibility and luminosity are the conditions toward which accounts of difference and alternative histories derived from "personal experience" now aspire" ("Fascist Longings," 19).

It is another contradiction in Heidegger's thinking that while he specifies that humans are superior to animals because they know language as *aletheia* - in other words, because they can disclose being that others can only inhabit - he on the whole does not regard language as an enlightening matter. By reserving *aletheia* in a special sense for the German *volk* he does "colour" language with a deep-seated nationalism. Yet his notion of language challenges enlightenment demands for (rational) clarification; he imagines language as "dark wandering" in an economy of getting lost, as losing one's compass points, being *given over* to something else, to an elsewhere.⁶⁷ For Heidegger, truth is a matter of language, which is a matter of *poesis*, whose essential movement is in and out of truth as unconcealedness. Truth is in un-truth, in an inevitable withdrawing into the cover of dark ambiguity

⁶⁷Gerald LeBruns, *Heidegger's Estrangements; Language, Truth, and Poetry in the Later Writings* (Yale UP: New Haven, 1989) 136.

where language recovers from the trials of exposure: "Truth is un-truth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-uncovered" (Heidegger, *Poetry*, 60). Maintaining this reservoir is what I am interested in.

In a fragment called "Violence, Evidence, Nature," Roland Barthes writes:

He could not get away from that grim notion that true violence is that of the self-evident: what is evident is violent, even if this evidence is gently, liberally, democratically represented...a tyrant who promulgated preposterous laws would all in all be less violent than the masses which were content to utter what is self-evident, what follows of itself: the 'natural' is, in short, the ultimate outrage. (85)

In the same spirit, Rey Chow traces fascism to paradigms of enlightenment and decency.⁶⁸ Just as she considers the danger of images arising from an illusion that they stand as self-evident, so she warns against "an aspiration toward the *self-evidence of the self's* (personal) experience" (20). Chow continues: "The self as evidence: this means that the self, like the Stalin myth in Soviet cinema, is so transparent, so shone through with light, that it simply *is*" (20).

Enlightenment, like whiteness, is an unmarked, invisible standard and goal. Everything must be brought to light.

germane

Heidegger never precisely places his hermeneutics of being in relation to the (foreign) other, but more often in relation to a Being or Language whose othered self is at bottom a forgotten *German* identity and culture. At times, Heidegger's language doesn't stand in relation to anything unfamil(y)iar or *unheimlich*. A family, nation, species of Germans had only to see that they were estranged from their being, and regain the roots of German identity in

⁶⁸Rey Chow, "The Fascist Longings In Our Midst," unpublished draft.

the etymology of their language. This is a simplified version of what could be called the nationalistic vision that at times reduces Heidegger's post-humanism to a protection of the germane Self, and forecloses the metamorphic mingling of beings possible in the no-man's land of pastoral.

This evening lightning forces me inside. Warns me off the ridge. At the sound of thunder, J.E., fourteen months old, sits down as if in a dream, reclines slowly into the grass until his head touches earth.

The city.

Much as I declare that I am renegotiating the stifling garden of my common-places, part of my project is to catch myself in my own self-ambushes. By not taking account of what Jung calls the "enantiodromia" of my conscious expectations and the unconscious fears and habits secreted in my unconscious, I could replicate the great psychic swings that turn the desire for liberation into the need for fascist definition. The energy of oppositionality demands careful attention to be overcome.

lyric

The first thing I usually do when I come back from a weekend or week "out at the house," is bemoan my miserable state. A pall of nostalgia for the good life hangs over me for days; I look at the city around me with the hooded eyes of a paranoiac, sure that everything is bad bad bad, displaced as I am from the physical manifestation of pastoral in our family property. The first thing I do, in other words, is dwell and brood in the rutted values of oppositional thinking: good versus bad, city versus country, us versus them.

Then I realize that this city/ country neurosis must be metaph(m)or(ph)ized if I am to move on. Like two Ovidian creatures, their skin must grow porous, their organs intermingle. Discursively, of course.

harrowing

"The cyborg appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. Far from signalling a walling off of people from other living beings, cyborgs signal disturbingly and pleasurably tight coupling" (Donna Haraway, *Simians*, 152).

Pastoral as an old-world genre, if it is as a genre to metamorphose, may find itself merging with science fiction and virtual reality. (My everyday experience can no longer deny that I enjoy a science fictive as well as a pastoral body. Even as I'm typing on this computer and transferring my "organic" creation from chip to chip, drive to drive, memory to memory, I am "a hybrid of machine and organism": a cyborg.⁶⁹ More, not only can I contract a virus, but *my disc* can too! Filiation gives way to contagion).

Haraway has caused somewhat of an uproar with her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto." It seems to me that this uproar is fueled simultaneously by 1) the fear many must feel toward thinking that calls women to embrace themselves as assemblages rather than as subjects, *and* 2) (for those who have no problem with that move, *per se*) by the fear that to become an event (assemblage) of *technology* is something else again. Some difficult questions are raised when Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the self as assemblage is situated within the technological state. Would the cyborg really constitute a dissolution from molar into molecular identity? Is technology a majoritarian or minoritarian *medium*?⁷⁰ For depending on whether technology is perceived as a potentially liberating medium of dispersal, or as just another way patriarchy tries to pervade every digit of our bodies, the cyborg will be seen either as a minoritarian medium of becomings, or as a majoritarian extension of molar man.

Elizabeth Grosz worries that Deleuze and Guattari do not imagine what a "body without organs" might mean for a woman.⁷¹ I would suggest that Haraway's cyborg manifesto is one vision of the female body without organs, or in other words, one vision of what not having an essential nature could augur for women. "By the late twentieth century in United States scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted if not turned into

⁶⁹Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *Simians*, 149.

⁷⁰I emphasize *medium* here with Deleuze and Guattari's words in mind: "There is no subject of becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of the majority; there is no medium of becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of a minority" (292).

⁷¹Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 177.

amusement parks - language, tool use, social behaviour, mental events, nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal" (Haraway, 152). Haraway links this "leaky distinction" to the related threat of the cyborg, another creature that is never convincingly separate from women when they become bodies without organs, bodies open to repeated reorganization. I am eager for becomings between human and animal/plant/stone, yet reluctant to imagine becomings-machine. The harrowing cyborg. Why?

I have mentioned the way that becomings involve - or free times and speeds in- bodies undergoing metamorphosis; indeed, I have suggested that indolence, both textually and corporeally, is one way that women resist the molar demand that their bodies appear, work, in a word *be* cognizable (a cog in the machine). Technology, it could be argued, operates within a molar demand for acceleration. As Rey Chow suggests, from at least the industrial revolution on "[p]olitical power was to be increasingly invested in acceleration; politics became pro-motion" (*Writing*, 165). If technology banks on making its media ever speedier, then it could be crudely posited that speeding up partakes in majoritarian politics, whereas slowing down would constitute minoritarian micropolitics. The cyborg, as a hybrid ontology made possible and *determined* by the fast medium of technology, should be considered more of a molar entity than an assemblage. If Haraway imagines the cyborg to be a body without organs, then, or a body that evades essentializing organization, I would suggest that the uniform speeding up of technology confines the cyborg within molar enterprises after all.

Deleuze and Guattari often call an assemblage a "desiring machine."⁷² By "machine," they stress the performative aspect of a body's constitution: "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects" (257). The fact that desiring machines follow an implicit trajectory of becomings toward the ever more atomic and indiscernible makes me wonder how Deleuze and Guattari would think of technology. For as Haraway notes, technology is itself a pervasive system of increasingly tiny - increasingly

⁷²Deleuze and Guattari, 399.

invisible - power centres.⁷³ Would disappearing into technology be compatible with Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-imperceptible, with the ultimate unmooring of molar identity?

Deleuze and Guattari never mention cyborgs in their chapter on becomings. They do, however, speak of rats and mice and wolves and witches and horses and dogs and flowers: they implicitly speak of becomings in relation to organic (which is not necessarily to say molar) multiplicities. But in their chapter "Apparatus of Capture," Deleuze and Guattari write: "...cybernetic and informational machines form a third age that reconstructs a generalized regime of subjection" (458). Perhaps this is the only response I can glean to my own question of whether becomings are possible within the state of technology.

prosthesis

The fabulous pastoralism of Ovidian metamorphoses as it shatters human identity with becoming-animal, -tree, -rock is perhaps not so alien to the fabulous simulacrum of technological pastoral. If Deleuze and Guattari talk of becoming-animal as a deterritorializing line of flight out of family or state groupings and into the pack (the ever re-assembling composition of affects where no species is sacrosanct), then as they note, "...no one, not even God, can say in advance whether two borderlines will string together or form a fiber, whether a given multiplicity will or will not cross over into another given multiplicity....No one can say where the line of flight will pass..." (250). A hybridity detached from any commitments to notions of what is natural and therefore to what is taboo, pastoral cybernetics enter into the multiplicitous possibilities of becomings.

⁷³ In "A Cyborg Manifesto," Haraway writes: "Miniaturization has turned out to be about power; small is not so much beautiful as pre-eminently dangerous, as in cruise missiles....The ubiquity and invisibility of cyborgs is precisely why these sunshine-belt machines are so deadly. They are as hard to see politically as materially" (153).

Donna Haraway's hearty embrace of cybernetics "is an effort to contribute to socialist-feminist culture and theory in a postmodernist, non-naturalist mode and in the utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender [bodies without organs?], which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end" (150). Her cyborgianism, like Deleuze and Guattari's becomings-animal, removes us from the realm of Oedipal psychoanalysis by disassociating humans from the "family of man" and resituating them within unpredictable assemblages of animate and inanimate consciousness.⁷⁴ Enter fable.

Haraway's cyborg manifesto perches itself precariously between the need for utopian metaphors of possible futures for women, and the danger of promising a neutered technology that underestimates technology's masculinist genealogy. For Donna Haraway, the cyborg is at least a metaphor that women must consider if they are to re-imagine realities for themselves within a postmodern world that no longer banks on pastoral distinctions between nature and culture. "This [boundaryless] experience," writes Haraway, "is a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind" (149).

Lisa Robertson, a contemporary Canadian poet affiliated with the Kootenay School of Writing, has written a book of ten pastoral eclogues which enact the very cyborgian pastoralism I have been avoiding. *XEclogue* reminds me, in title at any rate, of the black leader Malcolm X, who put an X behind his proper name to remark the unknown subject that was named for purposes of slavery alone. Robertson's "X" in front of "Eclogue" seems to preface the pastoral convention with a similar unknown - i.e. the female body that has always been elided with Nature in pastoral ideology. Or the "X" could be seen as an act of cancelling and annulling the preconceptions that accompany pastoral, a foreword to reinhabiting the genre. For Robertson, as

⁷⁴In an interview with Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, Haraway says: "[I'm interested in questions like] can you come up with an unconscious that escapes the familial [oedipal] narratives; or that exceeds the familial narratives; or that poses the familial narratives as local stories, while recognizing that there are other histories to be told about the structuring of the unconscious...", from "Cyborgs At Large: Interview with Donna Haraway," *Technoculture*, ed. Constance Penley and Andrew Ross (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991) 9. As for Deleuze and Guattari, by preferring a notion of the self as a combination of exterior affects rather than as an interiority composed of layers, they question psychoanalysis as a study of the psychic body that tries to elicit suppressed desires, rather than looking at the body as a series of desirous engagements on a superficial plane, as "*machinic assemblages*" (7).

for J. M. Coetzee, pastoral traditions are saturated with imperialism and concealed brutality, but like Coetzee, Robertson does not disavow the genre to critique it. In "How Pastoral: A Prologue," she writes:

I needed a genre for the times that I go phantom. I needed a genre to rampage Liberty....I needed to pry loose liberty from an impacted marriage with the soil. I needed a genre to gloss my ancestress' complicity with a socially expedient code; to invade my own illusions of historical innocence [sic].

The "X" before "Eclogue" prefaces pastoral without effacing it. In the translator's preface to *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak writes that Heidegger and Derrida agree that in crossing out inherited concepts while allowing them to remain legible is a gesture showing that the history of metaphysics and language can never simply be tossed out and replaced with something better.⁷⁵ This history demands, rather, a difficult negotiation from within. In crossing out the word "Being" rather than foregoing it altogether, "Heidegger is working with the resources of the old language, the language we already possess, and which possesses us. To make a new word is to run the risk of forgetting the problem or believing it solved" (Spivak, xv). Robertson's "X," like Derrida's crossing out, differs from Heidegger's in that what is crossed out is not a "master-word" or primal presence, as Spivak puts it, but always already a trace or mark of absence (xv). Unlike Heidegger, then, Spivak reads Derrida as allowing "no nostalgia for a lost presence" (xvi). If for Spivak this crossing out without erasing "the trace" is performed in the relationship of her preface to Derrida's text, for Robertson the word "prosthesis" (embedded in the middle eclogue, the fifth), suggests a way of reading the prefixing of pastoral with an "X":

We invented power. Power is a pink prosthesis hidden in the forest. Between black pines we strap it on and dip our pink prosthesis in the pool. The plastic glitters with clips and buckles beneath the surface of the pool. Breasts are a buttoned wedge held by buckled straps. Freedom is this extra size.

⁷⁵Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, intro. to *Of Grammatology*, transl. by Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976) xv.

We display it to the creaking forest. Also ride
horses between our giant new limbs. Our pink
bodies are giant and they own us for playing.
(Eclogue Five: Phantasie)

I looked in my *Collin's English Dictionary* and found another word because I was spelling it wrong. I found "prothesis: a process in the development of a language by which a phoneme or syllable is prefixed to a word to aid pronunciation" (1174). "X": the articulation of a critical language that can never delete what history has pronounced, but that can change the emphasis? Robertson is searching for a language that can move beyond what pastoral language has been accustomed to signifying: "A vocabulary is no longer adequate to the precisions of our desires" (Eclogue Ten: Utopia).

Then I found the right word: "prosthesis: 1.a. the replacement of a missing bodily part with an artificial substitute. b. an artificial part such as a limb, eye, or tooth. 2. *Linguistics*. Another word for prothesis" (1173).

Robertson revamps pastoral by incorporating the plasticity, the simulacra, of artifice into the pastoral scene, defusing the culture/nature divide. In a very real sense, she deconstructs the use value of pastoral, one generated by the opposition of culture and nature. The utility of pastoralism has made it an accomplice to imperialist regimes that work by harnessing the energy produced in this split, just like nuclear science seeks to harness the energy produced by splitting the atom. One term is always hierarchically reigned in by the other. In eclogue number eight, "Romance," Robertson writes:

A slick whisper weaves across the commodities:
'Are you looking for fragrance?' There is no sea and
no forest and no boats passing. This is the convex
world. It's eight o'clock. The glass world arrives
into history leaving a bare pronoun to bask on the
roof of a promise. Read them...those banal
enchantments of antiquity and authority and
consent, read them as mere excitation, puling
products of neglect. Nancy straps the audible sulk
of a method to her hips and presses bitter lips
against an image....

Robertson's prosthetic "method" never replaces a real limb, but only the artifice of pastoral ideology which like a phantom limb feels like it exists; her

version only ever replaces another prosthesis, or trace. This holds exultant and fearsome consequences for those who have been taught to regard Nature and Women through pastoral signification. Simply put, Robertson shows that these bodies seem real only when their method (fictiveness or constructedness) is concealed and made inaudible. "Nancy straps the audible sulk of a method to her hips" and exposes the *grammatology* rather than *ontology* of woman and nature, shows them to be applied mechanics (assemblages) rather than organic givens. The affinity the passage above has to the strapping on of a dildo not only represents woman's ability to be masculine by putting on the appropriate discursive apparatus, it not only exposes masculinity itself to be an application rather than a reality, it also foregrounds the role that the phallus has played in the relegation of woman and nature to fixed matter that man and culture can inscribe again and again. Robertson's "giantesses," relieved of pastoral fixations, leap into the plasticity of identity, into identity as grammar, into bodies without organs.

"Together shall we discover those conventions that, by giving or selling what has belonged to us, having known such green and felicitous hours, we renounce as we turn to the imagined lives of our polished rosewood dolls?"(Eclogue Four). Here Nancy addresses Lady M (modelled after Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, author of the satirical *Court Eclogs*), whose letters to Nancy comprise many of the eclogues.⁷⁶ The "rosewood dolls" become part of a spatialized pastoral; juxtaposed with the doll-like bodies of what Rey Chow calls "postmodern automatons," Robertson positions them as possible contemporaries, associating what chronological time disassociates.⁷⁷ A chorus of Roaring Boys (mistranslations of anonymous, fourth-century Latin songs to Venus) further the postmodern anachronization in Robertson's

⁷⁶Robert Halsband, ed. *Court Eclogs Written in the Year, 1716; Alexander Pope's autograph manuscript of poems by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations: New York, 1977) writes: "The town eclogue was a newly developed sub-genre, invented by either Gay or Swift (the honour is disputed); it simply adapts Virgil's pastorals to London's beau-monde, drawing witty parallels between the rivalries and complaints of Virgil's shepherds and shepherdesses and those of the beaux and belles of cosmopolitan polite society" (viii).

⁷⁷Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora*, 136.

feminist pastoral. Her textuality is in this sense an assemblage. The Roaring Boys sing to the luxuriant cyborgian revels from the anonymity of a crowd.

I do not want to reduce Robertson's eclogues to Haraway's vision of the feminist cyborg; her poetry is far more elusive and inconclusive. Unparaphrasable, *XEclogue* resists becoming a critical tool in my hands; I cannot put the poems to use as I might Haraway's more accessible writing. Nor do I want to. In tandem, the two urge me to overcome moral evaluations bound up with fears of merging with technology. *XEclogue*, just as it defies the split between culture and nature, artifice and organicism, by which we tend to order and evaluate beings, frustrates my own habituation to heirarchize some natural body over that "Cthonic Machine!" (Eclogue Four: Cathexis) which Robertson touts. Auras of good and bad that accompany oppositional sets such as nature/culture are confused in this text, which refuses the pastoral tendency to devalue cultural artifacts as mere mediations of an original, real, or natural entities. Robertson's Nature literally becomes Language, and visa versa: "We see the cradling flowers as taunting apostrophes" (Eclogue Nine: History), and "[a] timorous wordling flushes and buckles into secrecy" (Eclogue Ten: Utopia). *All* is discursive construct: "All the flowers are glass flowers and looking into them the senses would vibrate in a gelatinous thrum" (Eclogue Four: Cathexis).

Carrying the erotic and sensual anarchy reserved for the vegetative world into a city of machines, images, plastic or glass products, and "pink dolls," Robertson overwhelms wholesome definitions of humanity with an excess of joyful impurities. She derails privileged pastoralist distinctions between culture and nature, the dual ruts of a trailblazing history that Haraway sees leading humankind "to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name the Enemy" (151).

Yet if Nancy becomes a woman merely by strapping on the social signifiers of "woman," the discourse of breasts rather than breasts themselves, her grammatological ease perhaps exposes phallic constraints on women at the expense of women's ambivalent experience. One may intellectually acknowledge the plasticity and performativity of gender while remaining, on a day to day basis, without a plasticity of *choice* in taking off or putting on discursive equipment. Identity remains heavily invested in the phantasm of the real, remains surrounded by others who uphold molar categories of

female and male, culture and nature, hence by others who see only what is at work within these identity categories. To embrace identity as simulacra, then, as prosthesis and trace, may disregard the minute ways in which society exerts constructs as if they were real.

For Robertson, too, infusing pastoral with a liberating technological prowess presumes that technology is an androgynous phenomena. She "forgets" how pre-disposed technology is toward patriarchal capitalism. "Cyborgs," claims Haraway,

are not reverent; they do not re-member the cosmos. They are wary of holism, but needy for connection. The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential. (151)

My criticism of Robertson's cyborgianism matches my criticism of Haraway's. For both, the cyborg who flirts with the pleasure and danger of technology cannot be the woman for whom it is a workplace that consigns her to produce technology without paying her enough to access its pleasures. Indeed, access to the flirtatious game of technology remains a classed, racial, and gendered pursuit. Haraway's call for women to influence the way technology works from within a factory assembling microelectronic devices overlooks the fact that influencing technology may come down to being able to *work it* rather than *work for it*, down to a privilege as minor yet as vast, say, as being able to buy a home computer.

The indistinction of human and animal worlds that Haraway celebrates when she says that "the last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted if not turned into amusement parks" further condenses my concern. These blurred boundaries have not been a mutual movement, a proclivity in both agents to engage, but rather humanity's one-way environmental disaster. We pollute boundaries *sans* conversing with the entities that are brought into our synthetic embrace.

The comparison of human-animal hybridity with that of human and machine engages a similarity of dissolved boundaries without considering

the *differences* between the things we construct as machines, and the things we construct as animals. Haraway tries to make machines things-in-themselves by making them like animals, lively: "It is not clear who makes and who is made in the relation between human and machine" (177). "Our machines," she argues, "are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert" (152). Yet machines, even if they turn on their progenitors, have nevertheless been engendered by humans; animals, save in particular experiments, shouldn't have to grapple with questions of faithfulness or infidelity to human originators, for they simply don't descend from human values. It is important to remember that while man is the molar being *par excellence* in relation to human beings, human beings are molar entities *par excellence* in relation to other life forms on this planet. The cyborg, then, as admixture of human being and human-engendered machine, remains a medium dominated by anthropological man.

But without discussing animals, plants, and stones in terms of their molar conditions (the state in which we would recognize them as qualifying for a place in a biology textbook or hunter's manual) how, I would like to ask, can these beings be thought about by virtue of their assemblages with other things? Both Haraway and Robertson lapse into talking of animals and plants as if their identity consists solely in their relation to a human world, ignoring or forgetting the intricate relationships within other animated ecosystems.⁷⁸ "All the flowers are glass flowers" (Robertson, Eclogue Four: Cathexis). The meeting of animal and human worlds is, funnily enough, achieved by underestimating (literally not valuing what is at work in) the number and kind of players that compose an assemblage. In another essay, Haraway warns against a technoscience that enacts "the second-birthing of Man through the homogenizing of all the world's body into resource for his perverse projects" ("Situated," 198). I am worried that by rejoicing in the boundary-blurring performance of the cyborg, feminists might be endorsing a trespass of other

⁷⁸The problem I have with *all* being grammatology is perhaps best summed up for me by Heidegger, in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology": "...[man] exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only in so far as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself" (27).

worlds that has nothing to do with the anomalous undergoings of becoming, but rather with hybridities instrumented by their human originators.

This is not to set up animal-plant-stone ecosystems as pure constellations that are fixed and unadaptable, romanticizing a victim-status concealing expectations that non-human cultures will die before they adapt. The world is constantly fluctuating to accomodate humanity's tremendous demands. *But this cannot be taken for granted.*

This holds as well for the "Third World," whose degree of colonization by technology has forcibly drawn them into a cyborgian relationship with the "First World" that reduces any range of choices by monopolizing choice itself. Haraway is cognizant of this pre-and over-determination by technology, but makes a call for women to engage what they cannot escape in order to influence a field that will proceed with or without them: "'We' did not originally choose to be cyborgs" (176). But "[t]he actual situation of women," declares Haraway, "is their integration/exploitation into a world system of production/reproduction and communication called the informatics of domination....This is the self feminists must code" (163). Further on she writes: "[t]he only way to characterize the informatics of domination is as a massive intensification of insecurity and cultural impoverishment, with common failure of subsistence networks for the most vulnerable" (172).

Whether or not the jubilant cyborg can respond to the informatics of domination is hard to say. "[F]or those feminists who have lived outside the First World as 'natives' of 'indigenous cultures,'" writes Rey Chow, "...the defiance of a Cixous is always dubious, suggesting not only the subversiveness of woman, but also the more familiar, oppressive discursive prowess of the 'First World.' The 'postmodern' cultural situation in which non-Western feminists now find themselves is a difficult and cynical one" (*Writing*, 111).

Assemblages of animal and plant ecosystems as well as of certain humans *must* code themselves in relation to the informatics of domination? This doesn't sound like becoming, to me, but rather like molar coercion. This is not to suggest, either, that becomings occur in a field free of social determinants. Becomings do, however, gravitate toward the cracks and fissures in State systems (i.e. in the informatics of domination), thereby enacting a sort of anomalous agency that undermines any seemingly absolute

context. In Haraway's essay, the informatics of domination is empowered as an all-determining context that cannot include agency that doesn't conform to its basic conditions. The go-ahead of technology is no longer questioned by Haraway, having become a given; boycotts are drawn as self-victimizing resistances to an actual situation - a realism - that recruits us all whether we like it or not. Conceding to the totalizing bent of technology is, I would suggest, a lapse in Haraway's imagination and in her claim for radical metaphors. Technology might remain a partial rather than total event unless, like the discourses accumulated during the Gulf War, we begin to construct an inevitable situation in which there is no alternative but to launch all our weapons.

Perhaps I fall back into the pastoral oppositions both Robertson and Haraway know to be perpetuated in wishful thoughts of aborting the future of technology. Am I not myself denying the very tactics that I and Robertson take in relation to pastoral, never able to cancel it out, but able to preface its earlier pronouncements? This is certainly the sort of negotiation that Haraway calls for in relation to technology, albeit with a finalizing tone around the inevitable technocratization of every body (including animal, plant, stone) that belies the agency of the cyborg.

"From one perspective," notes Haraway,

a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, about the final abstraction embodied in a Star Wars apocalypse waged in the name of defense, about the final appropriation of women's bodies in a masculinist orgy of war....From another perspective, a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. (154)

Should all other beings merge with "man" only through the unequal agency implied in metaphors of pollution, the ability of the other to *affect* the composition of human being will remain benumbed. In her essay "Situated Knowledges," Haraway herself responds to and calms some of my concerns with a cyborg manifesto:

The world is not raw material for humanization....
 In some critical sense that is crudely hinted at by the
 clumsy category of the social or of agency, the world
 encountered in knowledge projects is an active
 entity....Perhaps our hopes for accountability, for
 politics, for ecofeminism, turn on revisioning the
 world as a coding trickster with whom we must
 learn to converse. (200-201)

In Eclogue Five: Phantasie, Lisa Robertson's pastoral glimpses a deer that has no substitute; for it is a deer not in its molar state (for the photograph that fixes molar identity is lost), but in that liminal condition of becoming that alone can draw humans out of molar determination and into the realm of affect. Robertson refrains from claiming human prostheses are final substitutes for missing limbs. For unless they take on the molar status of a phallus, claiming pronounced identity, prostheses must remain as partial as the body parts they stand in for. Bodies in the flux of becoming only ever know phantom limbs and temporary prosthetic replacements, ever taking on imaginary properties that feel real only to dissemble into the ghost of movement. If Robertson casts doubt on the totalizing ontology of pastoral (in which Nature and Women are givens), she also seems to cast doubt on a totalizing grammatology (where Jakobian shifters replace bodies). In Robertson's poetry, perhaps hybridity occurs only if humans remain affected by the deer that eludes apparatus of capture.⁷⁹

Never in rosedom would a seam, a cut, three
 shifters, and the hinged pink limbs of dolls replace
 that lost photograph: being in the dark forest and
 the deer glowing at the edge of it and the visual
 sense of quiet. (Eclogue Five: Phantasie)

*speeds and
 slownesses*

⁷⁹Deleuze and Guattari, 424.

The materiality of words, of letters, the thingness of language interrupts flows of meaning with its frustrating indolence.

If Lisa Robertson's *XEclogue* suggests that women be partial to technology, the language of her pastoral inversions resists easy consumption. Indolent, refusing clear sense for muddled affect, Robertson enacts a micropolitics of language use that undermines the molar addresses demanded by dominant culture: "[o]ur languorous technology unpleats the weeping politics of heroes" (Eclogue Ten: Utopia). Her language doesn't produce meaning - it doesn't work - the way I am narratively accustomed to "getting it." Unlike most machine utility - which facilitates Western living - Robertson's pastoral textuality has no obvious use-value, serving at best to irritate patterns of reading bent on devouring the "message." This makes *XEclogue* doubly transgressive: not only is Robertson molting woman with machine, but the machine-woman isn't doing anything productive. She appears to be simply taking pleasure from "these potent and taboo fusions" that teach her "how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos" (Haraway, *Simians*, 173).

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What is ominous about Heidegger's discussion of animals, their lack of language and hence "world"? It is the similarity animal privation has with the Nazi beurocracy that cast Jews on the outside of what Fichte called the "internal border" of language, making them the foreign that would try to penetrate a healthy body politic, making them disease and pestilence. "The lighting [in the gas vans] must be better protected than now...*it has been observed that when the doors are shut, the load always presses hard against them as soon as darkness sets in, which makes closing the doors difficult*" (document quoted in the film *Shoah*). Here is the technological representation of Jews as standing-reserve, a *load*, a mute and foreign mass that must be contained. Just like pigs off to slaughter.

In "What Are Poets For?," Heidegger reads Rilke's notion of "the Open" as the world that animals are nonobjectively *in* as opposed to the world that

human beings can disclose. There is a very subtle indication, however, that while Heidegger admires the love with which Rilke writes of the Open, he does not share Rilke's feeling estimation of animal interiority: "...what Rilke experiences as the Open is precisely what is closed up, unlightened, which draws on in boundlessness, so that it is incapable of encountering anything unusual, or indeed anything at all" (*Poetry*, 106).

Immediately after declaring that "those belong most readily within the Open which are by nature benumbed" (109), Heidegger qualifies his reading of Rilke's words ("As Nature gives the other creatures over/ to the venture of their dim delight") by claiming: "'Dim' is not meant in the negative sense of 'dull' or 'oppressive.' Rilke does not think of the dim delight as anything low and inferior" (109).

Very much a poet of affect, Rilke does not think of animal ontology as low and inferior, but Heidegger fails to involve himself in such clear terms. Although his very reading of Rilke would suggest an affinity with the poet's notion of the Open, in an essay that wields such sophistication with words and their etymologies, with their consonant bodies, Heidegger cannot play dumb when he presents us with a description of animal being as "benumbed." Ignoring the reverberations of this word when he is so attuned to others alerts me, as it has many, to a hierarchy that haunts Heidegger's work. For even as he criticizes the technological setting up of beings as objects for human use, Heidegger's thinking never quite retrieves non-human being from its relegation to a foreign outside, deprived of language.

Might the critique he launches upon modern technology be, then, not so much a critique of androcentricism as a *humanist's* limit? Heidegger's description of animal privation serves to fortify the boundaries of human being and of what is *specific* to humanity (enacting a species control, as the threat of the Jews was countered with discourses of pest control). His depiction of *techne* as something that is more than a tool for *Dasein* promises to overcome the partitioning that sets human being up in opposition to technology, yet he soon turns technology into a monstrous other that humans must combat. This philosophical *fuhrer* is perhaps homologous in refuting animal spirit at the same time as he lambasts a technology that makes everything "standing-reserve": in a sense, both animal and cyborg tincture German identity with the dyes of different species, contaminate the

purity of an essential spirit. They threaten Germany with indistinction. Xtinction?

agri-culture

In 1987, Victor Farias' book *Heidegger and Nazism* caused a scandal in Europe by unveiling Heidegger's alliance with Nazism, one that could not remain ignored. Despite the dubious quality of his study, Farias sparked a European discussion that spilled over into North America with Arnold Davidson's Winter 1989 issue of *Critical Inquiry* entitled "A Symposium on Heidegger and Nazism." William Spanos, former editor of *Boundary 2*, redebates the Heidegger scandal in his book *Heidegger and Criticism; Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction*. Arguing, among other things, that Heidegger's fascism is a site over which the hegemony of liberal humanism has been trying to regroup ever since Heidegger himself inaugurated a post-humanism scattering their forces, Spanos re-tells the American invasion of Vietnam to destruct the terms of the debate.

I will immediately contradict my earlier suggestion that Heidegger's critique of technology is homologous with his denial of animal spirit. (My reading of Heidegger is earmarked by contradiction). I am compelled by Spanos's argument. For Spanos, Vietnam provides an instance of the alternative cultural economies Heidegger, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Rey Chow point towards: economies of reticence and itinerancy that hoodwink regimes of presence.

Perhaps it is best to begin with the statement all involved have found most unforgivable. In a lecture given in 1949, Heidegger apparently remarked: "Agriculture is now a mechanized food industry. As for its essence, it is the same thing as the manufacture of corpses in the gas chambers or the death camps, the same thing as blockades and reduction of countries to famine, the same as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs."⁸⁰

⁸⁰William Spanos, *Heidegger and Criticism; Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993) 185.

The issue of *Critical Inquiry* that Spanos sets out to question showcases a host of European greats - Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthes, Levinas, and Habermas - discussing Heidegger's fascism *in light of* this "paradigmatic" pronouncement. For Spanos, however, the issue provides not so much a discussion as a framed debate that can only lead to a humanist retrenchment of sites of power that Heidegger tried to debunk - a retrenchment into humanist (enlightenment) reason.

How, Arnold Davidson asks in unison with his contributors, could Heidegger equate technologized agriculture with the Jewish *Holocaust*? From a feminist perspective, I understand this concern over the apparent erasure of *difference* that Heidegger displays in his thinking. Doesn't sexual difference suffer the same indifference? I want to remember this concern as I trace for you the way Spanos refutes this reaction. He does so by remonstrating the fatal division that humanisms make between *agri* and *culture*, so that agriculture is read as a neutral phenomenon while the burning of bodies in ovens is self-evidently not. This division disguises agriculture's complicity with economics, politics, and power: in other words, it disguises agriculture's complication in the humanistic social ethics Davidson is concerned to recuperate.

Spanos does not intend to defend Heidegger's "inhuman" postwar silence nor his participation in the Nazi state. Yet he believes, as do I, that even after Heidegger's fascism something remains to be thought. "Such a humanist [reading of Heidegger]...puts out of play a reading of the continuity of Heidegger's philosophical itinerary that would thematize the emancipatory possibilities of Heidegger's sustained critique of the repressiveness of reason: of the humanist problematic....I mean the emancipatory possibilities that, however underdeveloped or even unthought because of Heidegger's emphasis on the ontological question (*die Seinsfrage*), it has been the collective Heideggerian project of contemporary theory to think" (186). Spanos appends Heidegger's thinking by contextualizing it within the Vietnam war.

Ignoring Heidegger's claim that "as for its essence" technologized agriculture and the holocaust are one and the same, Davidson "facilitates an easy and misleading slide in rhetoric that obscures and minimizes Lacoue-Labarthe's gesture acknowledging the justness of Heidegger's equation"

(Spanos, 194). Writes Spanos: "[this] is a slide that focuses exclusively on Heidegger's insensitivity to the differences in order to advance an all too obvious perspective against Heidegger that for all practical purposes *absolutizes* the difference between the technologization of the material world, on the one hand, and the violent outrages against the human, on the other" (194). Even the partition "on the one hand" and "on the other" reflects an oppositionality that humanism has constructed to isolate humanity from other beings. I have accused Heidegger of this hierarchical distinction. Spanos draws upon Heidegger in ways that contradict my critique of him, a contradiction I am happy Heidegger's thinking accommodates.

As Spanos notes, "Davidson's criticism is determined by a disciplinary/moral perspective that tacitly reaffirms the privileged centrality of Man and his dominion over the earth" (194). Spanos exposes how misleading the humanist shock over Heidegger's scandalous statement can be:

For Davidson...'the mechanization of agriculture may be cause for worry; the production of hydrogen bombs is a reason for terror; the economic blockades of countries may be evil; *but* the production of corpses in the gas chambers and death camps brings *us* face to face with the experience of horror'. The threat to humanity of the first three practices...is in the future. The horror latent in these practices is merely potential and thus presumably avoidable. (195)

On this note, Spanos reminds us that the hydrogen bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were an experience of horror not reserved for the future, nor was the "agricultural" nightmare wreaked in Vietnam. "In privileging the Holocaust, to put it provisionally," he declares, "is not the judgmental discourse represented by Davidson...an instance of that Eurocentrism which it has been the purpose of the posthumanist project to expose?" (195). I follow Spanos into his reading of Vietnam, an agri-culture that failed (or succeeded, depending on your perspective) in making a distinction between human culture and the land, so that its blurred human and non-human populations suffered the wholesale technological frustration of a U.S. military whose final solutions depend on recognizable divisions between cultures.

When the United States began its project in Vietnam, it expected a regular war: two distinguishable sides, a beginning, an accelerating plot, an end. The "counterstrategy" of the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese Army, knowledgeable of this discursive paradigm, was to confuse expectations. This counterstrategy, writes Spanos, "could be said to constitute a deliberate refusal to accommodate the imperative of *presence* informing the cultural, political, and military practices of the United States" (200). In Heideggerian terms, American soldiers were frustrated by the "*uncanny invisibility*" (200) of the enemy; in a word, by their untotalizable otherness.

American military tactics and practice were determined by a 'technological' - an end-oriented (and ethnocentric) - mindset that perceived the differential complexities of Vietnamese life and the actual conditions of the war (the 'problem') in spatial or panoptic terms. It was a perspective that represented the dislocating otherness as a microcosmic 'world picture' or (tactical) map in which every resistant (differential) thing/event could be, in the term Heidegger employs to characterize the essence of technology, 'enframed'. (200)

The NLF and NVA's counterstrategy could be read in terms of a Heideggerian experience of language, one contrary to enlightenment views: "...[they] simply *obscured* this representational map, blurred the categorical distinctions necessary to the restrictive narrative economy of the panoptic gaze" (Spanos, 201). Spanos cites an American soldier's "existential experience" (201) of this counterstrategy:

Like camouflage, so where the paddies represented ripeness and age and depth, the hedgrows expressed the land's secret qualities: cut up, twisting, covert, chopped and mangled, blind corners leading to dead ends, short horizons always changing. (201)

Indistinction as micropolitics.

(I would like my thesis to be like hedgrows, "cut up, twisting, covert, chopped and mangled, blind corners leading to dead ends, short horizons

always changing." I would like to avoid solving the subject of my thesis. All solutions, unless their horizons are short-lived, risk being final solutions).

The Americans, confronted with a paradigm utterly foreign to them, one with which they had neither the desire nor ability to adapt, responded by simply augmenting the *evidence* of war with the intensification of a technological attack. As Spanos makes clear, this attack was not only directed on the human population (which, due to lack of distinction between communists and populace, suffered tremendously) but also on the land. Because of an uncanny sense of otherness, of not being able to map, locate, distinguish, and kill who they wanted to, the Vietnamese earth was assaulted with Agent Orange, thousands of acres of forest and rice fields (in which the enemy was hiding?) were set on fire, and villages like My Lai were indiscriminately levelled. Michael Herr is quoted by Spanos: "...[look] what they'd done to Ho Bo Woods, the vanished Ho Bo Woods, taken off by giant Rome plows and chemicals and long, slow fire, wasting hundreds of acres of cultivated plantation and wild forest alike, 'denying the enemy valuable resources and cover'" (205). Moral of the story: *You wanna be invisible, we'll erase you*. American rage was vented on culture as assemblage, as haecceity, culture that could not be con-cepted or forced into visibility.

The Americans could not "read" the Vietnamese outside of a certain production of war. They could not hear a certain discourse. Their problem was essentially one of listening. Perhaps I should re-form my desire for an economy of invisibility and silence. Do I want Vietnam, in this instance, to stand for invisibility and silence, thus valorizing tactics that won the war, yet destroyed them? Don't I want, rather, the American army to undergo a conversion toward listening, opening up the possibility of hearing different modes of discourse which *appear* (and so are taken to be) deaf and dumb? My invocation of silence, then, is predicated on response, on conditions of conversation.

Not only does Heidegger regard hearing as "an existential possibility [belonging] to talking itself" (*Being and Time*, 206), he importantly adds that "keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing....In that case one's reticence makes something manifest" (208). What does it make manifest? "As a mode of discoursing, reticence articulates the intelligibility of

Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another" (208).

In the case for Vietnam that Spanos makes, then, I must ask if silence and the invisibility of camouflage should be configured as heroic, for it is obvious that they took place outside of that "genuine discoursing" that alone allows reticence to manifest a potentiality-for-hearing and so a Being-with-one-another. The Vietnamese counterstrategy was a military countering, remember, and one that during and after the war remained masculinist. I must also ask if the receptivity necessary for silence to transform discourse exists in the cultural contexts that feminists such as Peggy Phelan and Rey Chow advocate silence within. Or will those who keep silence in contemporary situations suffer the wholesale frustration that Vietnam provoked?

Is some basis of dialogue or conversation a premise of my own theorizations of invisibility, silence, and indolence? If I answer yes, I defer them to, possibly, infinity. If I say no, the putting into practice of such tactics might have virtually no transformational effect on dominant discourse while even further dispossessing the dispossessed.

The fanatical destruction of Vietnamese culture may not have been as total had not the technologization of agriculture been "*essentially* complicitous" with horror "however *differential*," in Spanos's words, "the Vietnamese horrors were from the Jewish Holocaust" (194). He is unraveling the discourse that differentiates between benign activities like agriculture and malign ones like the burning of bodies in an oven, when benign technology has been instrumental in the imperialization and colonization of the "Third World," organizing its agri-culture, causing dislocation, famine, social upheaval, and enslavement to "First World" technological "advantages." Grass-roots hegemony.

After the war in Vietnam (when does a war end?) the Americans developed a strain of rice to feed a decimated country that could no longer feed or grow its own. The Vietnamese could not stand this imported rice, this *reparation*. Reparation belongs to discourses of separation. For the Vietnamese, rice - the earth - was not just agriculture, it was *culture*. "It must not be overlooked, as it callously was by those who directed the American intervention in Vietnam (and even those liberal humanists who protested

against the intervention as immoral), that for the Vietnamese peasantry the earth they cultivated was not, as it has become in the 'developed' Occident, simply a technologically exploitable space" (Spanos, 206). The agri-cultural costs of the war could not be balanced by an American gesture whose assumptions continued to divide a camouflage culture. Camouflage, a belonging together in difference of rice culture and human population, remains unseen in the act of reparation. Separation and war inhabit the same mentality as reparation, which is but a mode of discourse in which "what sustains the aesthetics of monstrosity is something eminently positive and decent" (Chow, "Fascist Longings," 4).

absenteeism

A scandalous thought: Heidegger's silence after the war. The silence that "we" cannot forgive, that is the ultimate sign of his inability to relent, to be held accountable: could it be a recognition on his part that within the obscene visibility of representation the holocaust cannot speak? Is it a tactical resistance to ways of thinking the holocaust that is not an abdication of thinking it through, but a move into another economy of discoursing? Like the Americans in Vietnam, I and others express intense frustration and enmity toward Heidegger's absenteeism, toward something we must read as *not* being since it refuses to participate in structures of speaking. This, perhaps more than the implied content of what he didn't say, is what we cannot forgive. I do and I do not want to defend Heidegger. But perhaps his appeal that we listen to a certain reticence as manifesting the potentiality-for-hearing can be applied to his own striking silence.

projection

Reading over this last section, in which ironically I find myself defending the reservations of a fascist rather than the Jews who disappeared into the enormity of the Holocaust, I think that I should delve a little deeper into the problems attached to my proposal of invisibility when it could be taken as endorsing the de-humanization and erasure of a people. Shoshana Felman's reading of Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, when positioned alongside Rey Chow's essay "The Fascist Longings In Our Midst," allows me to assemble variant views of fascism. For the former text - Felman's - depicts fascism as a deceitful regime, screened and invisible, while the latter - Chow's - explores fascism as a transparent projection of visibility.

A film that is ten hours long and by its very endurance resistant to models of production and consumption that regulate visibility, *Shoah* is clearly an alternative to Hollywood representations of the Holocaust. Shoshana Felman's reading of Lanzmann's film begins with her pronouncement that the film is concerned with a visual witnessing of the Holocaust: "It is a film about witnessing: about the witnessing of a catastrophe" (205). Witnessing as the necessity of making visible the experience of a subject before the public, *Shoah* would seem to partake in what Rey Chow calls "the New Fascism," or the "projectional production of luminosity-as-self-evidence," which she links to fascist and communist (not to mention most) filmmaking (18). Felman, coming from a perspective that regards the possibility and necessity of witnessing as vital to representing the Holocaust writes: "Film...is the art *par excellence* which, like the courtroom (although for different purposes), calls upon a *witnessing by seeing*. How does the film use its visual medium to reflect upon eyewitness testimony, both as the law of evidence of its own art and as the law of evidence of history?" (207). These two positions would seem to be at odds.

When I think of most representations of the Holocaust, I think of open graves mounded with incomprehensible masses of skeletons, and skulls stacked endlessly before a wide-angle lens. This sort of visual representation, I would argue, continues the fascist operation of rendering human beings inhuman, making them all the same before the levelling gaze of spectator/outsiders. Lanzmann's film is unique in that it refrains from making the Holocaust more-visible-than-visible, or obscene, to repeat Baudrillard's words. Seeing, in most films, is equated with believing; yet

ironically, such seeing prevents any recognition or illumination of the Holocaust because it partakes in the very modes of production which characterize the construction of disposable masses.

Felman nevertheless regards visibility as a necessary remedy to fascism. "[T]he essence of the Nazi Scheme," she writes, "is to make itself - and to make the Jews - essentially invisible" (207). In contradistinction to Chow's reading of fascism, Felman understands the Holocaust as "an historical assault on seeing" (207). She reinvokes the veiled and camouflaged operations marking the fascist desire to disguise what was taking place, operations that make Nazism essentially *deceitful*.

Rey Chow, although not always referring specifically to Nazism, differs from Felman by denying our usual response to fascism as a layered enterprise deliberately and deceitfully hiding evil intentions. "[R]ather than hatefulness and destructiveness," she writes, "fascism is about love and idealism" (4). Chow reworks the Freudian concept of projection in order to propose fascism not as an interiority - individual or group repression - that is out of an ability to face the unconscious projected outside of the self and manifested in tyrannies of horror, but rather as a filmic projection of grand, illuminating images, a superficial exteriority. Pulsing with belief in themselves, fascists promise a world-picture. This reversal around the notion of projection leads Chow to suggest that "not a convoluted search in the depths of our selves for the *ressentiment* imposed by our religion or family, but attention to fascism as projection, surface phenomena, everyday practice, which does away with the distinction between the 'inside' and the 'outside'" might elucidate fascism in ways that an attempt to unveil its evil intentions cannot (9). Not unlike the plane of pastoral where I suggested superficial rather than deep connections occur between beings, Chow urges us to examine how fascism is a *made* rather than *found* phenomenon.

To connect Chow's discussion more directly to the German situation Felman is tackling with her reading of *Shoah*, and to the tension between their readings of visual media, I will recite Chow's paraphrase of Thomas Elsaesser: "German fascism was based in the state of being-looked-at, which cinema's proclivity toward visual relations conveniently exemplifies" (10). The image as self-evident, idealistic, and projected in light, is what Chow suggests is the totalizing decency of fascisms.

If initially at odds, the variance between Felman's and Chow's reading of fascism moves towards a partial identification as I travel further into Felman's reading of *Shoah*. Ten hours of interviews with Nazis, eye-witnesses, and a survivor of Auschwitz, *Shoah* would seem to be a marathon attempt to coax some "real" evidence out of an event that has virtually no survivors who can testify to what happened. "[T]he necessity of testimony [*Shoah*] affirms in reality derives, paradoxically enough," writes Felman, "from the *impossibility of testimony* that the film at the same time dramatizes" (221). Perhaps unexpectedly, or despite itself, "at the frontiers of the necessity of speech, *Shoah* is a film about silence: the paradoxical articulation of a loss of voice" (224).

In *Writing Diaspora*, Rey Chow provides a way of thinking through loss of voice in subaltern - disaster - situations. Certain about the role dominant culture plays in "shaping *vocal* structures" (145), Chow locates in "inarticulateness...a way of combating the talking function of the state, the most *articulate* organ that speaks for everyone" (147). If the Holocaust belongs to 'the writing of the disaster', as Blanchot puts it, then it will inevitably fall away from voice structures, which belong to the organization of dominant - intelligible - culture. Neither an agential nor happy conclusion, being at a loss for words, not being able to find the words or the images with which to portray the inside of the Holocaust, results all the same in a potential for hearing (being-with) that successful representation forecloses. Shoshana Felman ends her reading of *Shoah* with the promising suggestion that as watchers of the film, what we must undergo is the hearing of this impossibility of representation, one which, to weave in Heidegger, has the potential of manifesting a "Being-with-one-another" that transforms discoursing (*Being and Time*, 208).

I cannot resist finally pulling the rug out from under Lanzmann, whose filmmaking I found at times disturbing. Felman affirmatively notes: "What the interviewer [Lanzmann] above all avoids is an alliance with the silence of the witness" (219). Indeed, what bothered me during some segments of *Shoah* was the indomitable persistence of Lanzmann in extracting testimonies from eye-witnesses, pulling eye-teeth. He seemed to be working under a self-evident law of visibility which assumes that eliciting vital information from a subject and depositing it into the public space of seeing

holds precedence over the profound reticence of his subjects. Again, Chow explains how molar identity is upheld as much by speaking as by being seen: "The question 'Who speaks?' [like the desire of many "First World" theorists that the subaltern be a molar identity] underlies the most brutal of political interrogations and exterminations" (*Writing*, 149). *You will be identified*.

Lanzmann's interviews are at times painful to watch because he demands of his interviewees an agonizing exposure, one which as Felman suggests asks them to stop deadening pain, but one which I cannot help feeling is resisted for other reasons important to articulate. The demand to make visible and vocal their experience (a demand that Lanzmann authoritatively embodies) is a powerful one that in some sense reinforces fascist strategies of making citizens part of a public en-lightenment. In this regard, Lanzmann might be said to perpetuate the "persistent foregrounding of being-looked-at" that Elsaesser sees as characterizing German fascism; perhaps the interviewees' resistance to his probing lies in an intuition that they are being asked to reenact, on some level, a familiar script.

A footnote in Felman's text alerts me to Lanzmann's complicity with fascism (as Chow defines it). There Felman notes: "[The Nazi] Suchomel agreed to be taped, but not filmed. Lanzmann filmed him...using a camera concealed in a bag of what Suchomel thought was sound equipment" (251). Here, in the great swinging into opposites whereby the exposure of one deceitful regime justifies the use of deceit in the cause to overthrow it, Lanzmann illustrates his utter devotion to the empire of visibility (needing to film rather than simply tape Suchomel).

By juxtaposing Felman and Chow's readings of fascism, who in some sense can be said to agree that it is the inability of the visual to represent that gives rise to an interstitial hearing or silence, I find myself where I started. In that dangerous position of deconstructing given representations of fascism, it could be implied that I am protecting the "bad" guys rather than defending the "good" guys. But a long and confusing process of identifying possible different modes of representation for those who don't in the long run benefit from current ones (which more often than not reproduce what they claim to debunk), is the sort of confusion that is perhaps necessary. It is very difficult

to know whether one is actually negotiating oppositional paradigms, or in blindness reactivating them. I could not say for certain what I am doing.

strike-strike

To avoid the strike-strike of fascism and anti-fascism, to murmur the spell of the imperfect or, as Judith Butler puts it in *Bodies That Matter*: "to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a 'pure' opposition, a "transcendence" of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labor of forging a future from resources inevitably impure" (241) - this is perhaps the task of feminisms.

Still, J.E. learns "no." After the umbilical cord dries up, after the waters recede, mother becomes other, others become, and then the first oppositional word. His body, compact, as if it never came from me, is splintered into two feet on dry ground, but he still latches to nipple for milk that he is my only memory of.

J.E.

"Da," J.E. garbled six months ago. His first word. "Da, da."

Dada! we shouted. He's saying "dad!"

And I had even read Freud. *Fort /da*. And after Freud I read Hegel. The This, Here, and Now that language can never immediately capture. And after Hegel, I read Heidegger, in good chronological order. *Dasein*. The Being-there. Being-the-there.

Text, body of our son. J.E. Two letters, curved, block, end-stopped. Fated to enter the Symbolic. Split into two periods. The text I cannot write. Cannot read. Small. Until he said "da."

And then the seas receded. Land. Two breasts instead of one.

A boy. Caucasian. I fear. *The mirrors, the mirrors*, I breathe. The passing through, the water closing like lips behind him, into the spoils of war, into magazines with semi-clad women at Safeway check-out counters, into skin, taut around separate things, into names and numbers and bookbinding. Into being not-one with me. Belly-button forgotten whorl, pinched still.

"Hot," he says one day. "Water." His third word. Receding. Splitting.

Some parents I know brag about how many words their precocious little ones are spitting out. Ontico-ontological, Heidegger calls *Dasein*. Both before the world and in it. J.E. straddles the ontical and the ontological - knowing and not knowing. He is a bundle of affects; perhaps he is the room, the hour, the air, the atmosphere, the fly. Haecceity.

Or maybe I am extending the undifferentiated world he might know much longer than it actually lasts. The animal, the being-in-the-world. The animal before production, small, insular, sucking, pulling a bit of my surface into a feeling that is a blur of identities, self-amnesia, rhythmically insistent that he is me and I am he. His animal. Tit, not breast.

da da da da da da da da da.

Don't. Not just as I am `membering.

Into a citizen of the world. Into molar man, think of the connotations. And all this, we are told, is absolutely necessary. No looking back. No mushy identities, like overripe bananas, who likes them? No indistinctions. Who, as Doctor Doolittle must have thought as he brought civilization to the dark heart of Africa, has ever heard of that animal with two heads but joined in the middle, a *Push-me-Pull-you*?⁸¹

Body to body, he's growing in my arms, rapid exaggerated growth, a huge fish wriggling wriggling until my arms burst, he leaps from mute embrace into language.

⁸¹ I have been unable to locate the book I read as a child in which Doctor Doolittle, colonialist-fashion, penetrated the heart of darkness and brought medicine to all the animals. I hope it isn't a product of my imagination, alone.

umbilical

Peggy Phelan, in her essay "White Men and Abortion," sees the abortion debate as doomed to oppositional swings since North American culture has no terms for identity that would represent the mother-fetus relationship: not one, not two either. Because the fetus and the mother are treated as separate individuals whose "rights" will be pitted against each other, a discourse of belonging together in difference, to again borrow Heidegger's notion of *riss*, is refused. The abortion debate encapsulates the paradigms of identity and culture that I have been taking to task. It operates by oppositional discourses that are bound to manifest a thousand varieties of fascism, if fascism, as Chow describes it, lies in the declaration that "we are not other."⁸²

The umbilical cord, a tensor connecting different beings, neither reducing them to one, nor cutting them up into two, is another rift, or *riss*, that women have long known, but that discourse continues to regard as an impossibility. As in the reading of Vietnam by William Spanos, where forms of ontological camouflage frustrated American expectations (and indeed an American way of reading that failed to adapt, or transform itself in response to difference), the ontological assemblage of mother and fetus is a form of being that frustrates paradigmatic ways of seeing, allocating rights, antinomies, etc. Like Vietnam, then, abortion is a field of battle in which both women and fetus suffer a wholesale assault by oppositional discourses that, because they cannot locate the enemy, destroy indiscriminately.

hands

As teenagers we girls (there are four of us) had mixed feelings about our hands. They were, for fourteen and fifteen year-olds, glaring idiosyncracies. If you turned over the hand to look at the palm - no smooth pad of pink, but an intricate map of haywire lines etched deeply into the skin. They looked like

⁸²Rey Chow, "The Fascist Longings In Our Midst," 3.

the hands of a male carpenter, brown, square-thumbed. We had two explanations for these hands that at some point became crossed in our memories. The one was that we born engraved, grave and riven with the history of pre-birth, former lives, marked with thousands of years of history. The second, and this we couldn't verify since we could not remember when we first noticed our man hands, was that they had become lined and wrinkled from building the family house. Our smooth young hands, after five years of peeling logs and splitting shakes and picking rocks for the rock walls, took on ineradicable signs of labour.

Both versions expressed the mixed horror and admiration we felt upon examining our hands. Horror because they were so terribly masculine, and perhaps we were not authentically female if they were a trait from birth; admiration because they were a testament to our hard work. Hanging by our sides in school, they were a virile detail that belied our middle-class privilege, flanked us with the minute evidence that would separate the curds from the whey, the tough from the cushy; they made us more than just pretty girls, they made us interesting girls. Our hands made it difficult to categorize us. They made me feel as though my body had been inscribed from the outside by weather, tools, wood, and that I had inestimable experience. I was fourteen.

virile

"Your mention of class," criticizes X, "is extremely shallow. At some point you are going to have to probe into it." Probe. Yes, I know, I haven't been making any penetrating remarks. Been burrowing, hiding.

Too often I founder on the romantic delusion that I am no longer middle-class but rather a more virile and virulent lower class woman, legitimate in pointing at the bourgeoisie and crying: look how exclusive and excluding you are! My fantasy of class-shifting is loaded, emulating as it does what Etienne Balibar calls "the 'self-racialization' of the working class" ("Class Racism," 213). Tangled up with my hands, wrinkly palms, is "the over-valorization of

work and consequently, the virility which it alone confers" (Balibar, 213). Tangled up with the virile, is the glorification of the working-class male. A gendered white middle-class female would-be working class male. Class credit, gender debit.

The class racism of my family takes an ironic twist within my life, which posed the virility of the working-class male as an empowering fantasy for a woman. So Etienne Balibar's description of class racism, while apt, becomes even more convoluted when women as a "class" become an additional factor: "...the modern notion of race, in so far as it is invested in a discourse of contempt and discrimination and serves to split humanity up into a 'super-humanity' and a 'sub-humanity,' did not initially have a national (or ethnic), but a class signification or rather (since the point is to represent the inequality of social classes as inequalities of nature) a caste signification" (207). My family's desire to believe that by living in the country we were somehow a different class of people than innocuous city dwellers glossed the real racial disparity in the city/country "caste," since those who could afford to live in the country implicitly excluded most immigrants, and since our disparagement of the city surely was on some level a disparagement of the influx of others, the racial *chaos* of the city.

Balibar traces class racism back to the preservation of an aristocracy: "From this point of view, it has a twofold origin: first, in aristocratic representation of the hereditary nobility as a superior 'race' (that is, in fact, the mythic narrative by which an aristocracy, whose domination is already coming under threat, assures itself of the legitimacy of its political privileges and idealizes the dubious continuity of its genealogy); and second, in the slave owner's representation of those populations subject to the slave trade as inferior 'races'" (207). City dwellers, assuming for the moment that they were a neutral population rather than sensed as a dangerously racial one, were regarded as biologically inferior for a host of reasons: because they worked nine-to-five enslaved to city schedules; because they sat in traffic for hours on end, becoming mindless automatons; because they weren't as healthy as we were, i.e. breathed polluted air twenty-four hours a day, didn't sprint up ridges; and because, ironically, they didn't use their hands in Thoreau's sense - "[I] earned my living by the labor of my hands only" (7) - and so were somehow effeminate. Their vague portrayal as a lower species of being was

connected, in my mind, at least, with an urban effeminacy (Oblonsky), so that I grew up glorifying the country mouse (Levin) who for me just so happened to be problematically masculinized. Class-gender-racism.

Sex, crime, promiscuity. Intellectually, physically, morally "underdeveloped" city people. Writes Balibar: "...those aspects typical of every procedure of racialization of a social group right down to our own day are condensed in a single discourse: material and spiritual poverty, criminality, congenital vice (alcoholism, drugs), physical and moral defects, dirtiness, sexual promiscuity" (209). When the self-preservation of an aristocracy "develops" into the self-preservation of a nation, class racism spreads into imperial colonialist projects that keep the undeveloped in their place; "nationalism necessarily takes the form of racism" (Balibar, 214). And as Raymond Williams writes, "one of the last models of 'city and country' is the system we now know as imperialism" (279). Threatened, my family knew itself as superior only by maintaining a discourse of the city as the negative outside and opposite to a specific lifestyle.

The idealization of a countrified working-class in both Williams' and Heidegger's thinking, as well as in my own experience, may have to do with a protection of the masculine real - our distinction between a feminized urban people and a masculinized country folk reinforces the split between masculine and feminine as still one of the most threatened and threatening identity boundaries. Surely, too, we regarded city people as effeminate in part because they were racialized. Indeed, the racial disparateness of the city population complicates the class racism Balibar defines when one asks how class racism is gendered. A racial *turmoil* for the universalist white human being whose outline dare not be contingent with it, for fear that a site of contact would initiate metamorphosis, the city's racial population was like a feminine trait that might insinuate itself into real men.

I started to become a woman when I became indolent, didn't match up to the virile male. For a long time this was shameful for me, to be considered lazy; it meant I was also considered female.

essay

"[T]he essayistic theme of 'the praise of idleness' is a critique of the bourgeois stress on the virtue of 'industry'" (Graham Good, 11).

Class. I try to displace myself, like Wittgenstein did, like Ghandhi did, in order to critique not only my middle-class origins, but also the imperialist, colonialist modes of production and consumption maintained by this class. In Graham Good's study of the essay, he suggests that the essayist "is middle-class or lower gentry" (10). Like Montaigne. To a lesser degree than the picaro, the essayist chooses to be indifferent to the bourgeois stress on productivity and status. S/he does so by taking up the "disinterested" genre of the essay, one which privileges no one material tie. "Certainly the essayist does not live in fear of hunger, homelessness, robbery, and violence, like the picaro. Nor are we usually conscious of him as having work to do...the ideal essayist should be disinterested, his outlook uncoloured by any particular trade or profession" (11).

Interesting choice of words: "...*his outlook uncoloured....*" Class gender racism. Jesus, Tolstoy, Thoreau are examples of a certain picaresque ascetism that I have envied, one that is glorious because they are, first of all, sons of the father - if not heirs of earthly riches, then heirs of a heavenly kingdom. They all *belong*, and then they make a marvellous gesture of throwing away their social membership, taking the hard road, setting out alone. Me too, I think. I will too. And I try. But I snag on all of the submerged shoals of class, I am too obvious, and part of my clumsy exit from bourgeois values can be explained by gender. I can't make that fatal dismissal because I never fully possessed a social to dismiss in the first place.

In my late teens I was still living at home, starting university, and confident in the assumption that everything would come easy to me. I was a prince, a cocky young nobleman. I walked in the door every day after classes, flung my coat from me, folded into a chair by the window and thought high thoughts. I was i-n-d-f-f-e-r-e-n-t. I was floating on my mother's labour. Plates of food came and went, clothes wafted on and off of my body, were washed somewhere, cars were at my disposal, everything functioned

naturally, from my perspective. I had discussions with the men before and after dinner rather than helping my mother in the kitchen with the dishes. Since becoming a wife and mother myself, I have been able to "read" my mother's body as I never could when it was an invisible support system. But despite my grateful recognition of her labour, I have never, in spite of the inevitably gendered forces in motherhood and marriage, fully replicated her production of selflessness. I still enjoy the essayist's class privilege of *critiquing* it.

It wasn't just during these precocious years that my mother (understandably), my father, and all of my siblings branded me "lazy." It had been determined far earlier, from repetitive behavior patterns that included retreating onto a hot-air register and sitting there for hours, or plucking away at my guitar in complete neglect of time (an unforgivable excess when time is money). During my princely period, this laziness was allowed to spread; university gave it some credibility (I had to read, and think). So although I see this laziness made possible by race and class privilege, I also take it as a latently subversive methodology whereby my body asserted a life of its own - better still, a body without organs that refused to be organized accordingly.

Now that I have to work, this laziness is only an intermittent rebellion. Yet I necessarily engage "the practice of poverty" (Poggioli, 7) that is a consequence of indolence in capitalist societies. My family continues to labour, industrious activities resulting in some product, or some capital, or some betterment, even when it can afford to relax. A sort of class distinction, separating the lazy from the hard-working, I have sometimes felt my family withdraw because I was not the same type as them; almost a different species. "Not very disciplined," used to be a statement that shamed me back into the male real.

"Willful indolence" (Novalis, 26).

Marxupial desire. I will call my desire to brood in the body, to hang in the marsupial pouch next to the beating of the heart and the heat of the skin, suckling, in post-natal, post-oedipal gestation, a "lazy economy." It proposes, for one, that alienation from the mother's body, from one's own body, being defined in terms of use-value, is not a given. The body has disorganizing tendencies, as a body without organs tends to be a loose and accommodating thing that might be constituted by wayward impulses.

I long to return my mother to a body without organization, and to return to her. Without being at all certain of my "diagnosis," I dare to say that my mother has been conscripted into a productive economy that has convinced her that it is good to labour sixteen hours a day for her family.

I found my body reacting with vertigo, stupor, fatigue, and sullen inactivity to the perfectionism of my family. As a graduate student, I discover it once again exerting a life of its own, so that when the pressure is greatest I go to sleep, get ill, find myself obstructed by the materiality of a body that won't always think according to regime. These lesions on the surface of proper behavior give me a site from which to critique academic landscapes, wherein "theory has become a commodity that helps determine whether we are hired or promoted in academic institutions - worse, whether we are heard at all. Due to this new orientation, works (a word that evokes labour) have become texts" (Barbara Christian, 67).

I want to cling to the discourse of my lazy body, the mutinies it organizes despite myself, the tactics with which it reminds me of the ways it is being stuffed into unsuitable texts, forced along lines of scholarly production, into certain sentences, certain ways of writing and thinking that deform it, make it sick! cramped! lonely! angry!

I want to write a marxupial manifesto.

alley

When country spills into city, and city into country, one gets *coiturny*, a non-word in most dictionaries.

My country walks surround me with an excessive alterity that holds the potential of puncturing any attempt to totally contain, define, and hence wield power over other beings. But I walk in the city, too, although I usually don't recognize it as "a walk" since my context of reference has for so long been the country. My walks in the city also initiate me into an excess that

overwhelms the productivity of capitalism and consumerism that would seem to dictate city life.

I walk down back alleys, always have when I'm in the city. I'm a scavenger; I peer into garbage bins when no one is looking, and rummage through interesting-looking piles of junk. I almost always return home with a "find": a piece of nice wood that has been discarded, a chunk of fine material, a table or a chair. The remnants of a capitalist, consumerist culture. The waste, the excess. I take these rejects home, and I "make do," a *bricolage* steeped in pleasure.⁸³ The pleasure of stealing and recycling, of rehabilitating the ruins of other people's households.

I will get myself into trouble by trying to say that streetpeople who eat disinherited donuts and seek free rent in doorways over hot air registers are the only moral city dwellers. By moral, I mean the only ones who embody responsibility for the relations that sustain city life. I will get into trouble because they are themselves remnants of a culture and haven't, in most cases, *chosen* (or accepted) wandering, freezing, starving, and scavenging the waste of a culture. Nevertheless, they *are* an excess that punctures seemingly pastoral scenes of city life, and that is why we ignore them, make them invisible.

They walk (forced out of cars, the molar influence on design in modern cities) and having to walk, wreak a transformation of a city's alleys and culverts. Rather than set above and against the city, the road, the alley, the exhaust fumes, the slush, the backyards leaking precious waste, the straggly trees (the way cars are, severing the implication human beings have with the land they inscribe) the homeless are not seen because they demonstrate a body in touch with its paths. Draped in plastic bags, shopping carts rattling with bottles, collectibles, recyclables, these fantastic amalgamations, these rustic goatherds of commodity culture, disclose the relations of capitalism.

assume control

⁸³Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. by Steven Randall (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984) 52.

Can I wrap up without packaging for market- can I list the ingredients in this soup without following strict government regulations?

I have tried to think of human identity as an event composed of mysterious things - things difficult to grasp like an air, a horse, an atmosphere, a road. These things are difficult to grasp because they are intensities, affects eluding rational control while nevertheless exerting themselves in our felt lives. Deleuze and Guattari have been invaluable in laying the groundwork for a notion of selfhood as a composition of this sort, as haecceity.

I have had to depart from them somewhat, however, in order to imagine what being as haecceity might mean for women, in particular. For women, being a haecceity means abdicating molar identity on three fronts: the visible, the vocal, and the productive. Rey Chow is a cultural critic invaluable for anyone challenging the demand that the subaltern speak, and that political expression must entail "voice." Trinh T. Minh-ha, too, has analyzed how the pre-determined fields of the visible and the vocal are bound to stereotype "Third World" identities. Peggy Phelan, finally, helped me to brave criticizing the primary categories of use-value and productivity that pre-form how bodies can be at work in society. I have responded to the "three molars" - the visible, the vocal, and the productive - by sketching possible inhabitations of in(di)visibility, reticence (often I used "silence"), and indolence, respectively.

Pastoral as a genre that both reinforces the three molars *and* that can sustain more invisibility, reticence, and indolence than many other genres, has been at issue in my study of feminist haecceity. Pastoral can certainly go both ways: it can buttress discourses of settlement, ones that create a population of abject others; or, it can haunt operative terms of habitation by becoming a reservoir for all that is discredited in the workings of culture - abject bodies, lazy bodies, female, animal, plant, mineral, and molecular bodies, unintelligible, leached, dissolute and loose bodies, etc. When disavowed identities take up pastoral, they necessarily preface it with a leading question, with an unknown "X" that is both its undoing and becoming.

I hope I haven't glorified an abject inhabitation of pastoral by making indolence appear more desirable than it is. By alluding to Maurice Blanchot's description of passionate passivity, I try to describe a condition which is not initially a matter of choice or acceptance, but one which - if met with a certain resignation - can at least refuse to recreate social orders that produce unlivable and unspeakable outsides in the first place.

One of the most promising qualities of pastoral, I suggest, is its superficiality. By engaging the notion of self as a series of co-ordinates on a surface plane, a performative assemblage constantly made and re-made as these co-ordinates disperse, reconvene, and disseminate again, I have had to consider Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs." When Donna Haraway and Lisa Robertson (*XEclogue*) compel me to consider just what a female body without organs might augur in a technological state - i.e. jubilant cyborgianism - I find my adoption of this body tested in the extreme. Without landing upon a declarative solution either way, I remain suspended between a concern that technology demands accelerations that draw the feminist cyborg into a molar medium, and a suspicion that my own pastoral commonplace of valuing a nature/culture distinction may be holding me back from admitting that becomings have no principles that could exclude technology.

Reading J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* and David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life* led me to question my own - and by extension, feminisms' - desire to be molar man. K and Ovid travel through becomings-woman as they leave the categories of anthropological man. I envied the narrative dissolution of their universalist membership in human being, angry that women were depicted as being always already outside of humanity proper. It became necessary to distinguish between Coetzee's elision of women with earth, or Malouf's suggestions that becomings are (biologically) inherent to women, and Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis that becoming-woman is a condition of all other becomings because of *social deterritorializations* enacted upon women within patriarchy. To say that becomings can only occur within minoritarian mediums is something very different than saying that minoritarian mediums are inherently inferior.

Heidegger became a locus of contradictions as I wrote. On one hand, he seemed to open up all sorts of avenues into identity as haecceity - with his

distinction between human logos and non-human language, and especially with his notion of belonging together in difference, *riss*. I read Elizabeth Bishop's poem as writing this belonging together in difference of human and fish. I bumped up against Heidegger's own limits in the critique of Western logocentrism, however, with his repudiation of animal spirit, language, and world. For me, this typifies Heidegger's disinclination to allow language to expand into affect, something that would involve the unlivable, unspeakable abject bodies that Germany's pastoral destiny didn't include in its design. I hope I at least implied how this repudiation of animal spirit is ominously bound up with Heidegger the historical subject of Nazism and anti-semitism.

Full of contradictions, however, I was soon reconvinced of Heidegger's continued importance in unraveling the guises of anthropological humanism. As William Spanos suggests, by comparing the gas chambers to technologized agriculture, Heidegger may be doing more than unforgivably abolishing the differences between them. He may be implicating humanity in an agri-culture, which is perhaps as far as Heidegger goes in revisioning ontology as haecceity. In giving earth and people, animate and inanimate entities equal ontological value, haecceity threatens humanism with the scandalous collapse of differences, differences which humans have evaluated according to how they might best profit.

By highlighting what I take to be Claude Lanzmann's tragic flaw in the making of *Shoah* - sneaking a camera into his interview with a Nazi - I show how the demand for visuals and vocals, the demand that something be at work in the perpetrators and survivors of the disaster, results in fascist enantiodromia. Lanzmann is my cautionary tale for feminisms seeking representation through visibility and voice. As enlightenment categories that pre-form what they seek to present, visibility and voice will make woman into a presence and an identity that recites and validates the methods of molar man.

Certainly if my thesis insists upon anything, it is that the terms of being, seeing, dwelling, knowing, working, and speaking that we have inherited from molar man must be questioned and metamorphosed rather than innocently inhabited. Perhaps the most important question facing molar man is how he has written his relationship to women, animals, plants,

stones, molecules. My entreaty that we begin to think of language as a mutual trait rather than as a hallmark of human being does not, however, ask that we treat others in their molar forms, which is perhaps how my ecofeminism departs from an "animal rights" approach. It is rather my belief that there will be survivors of the disaster of anthropological man only when we find terms to think of ourselves and others as affects in movement between intelligible bodies and articulate voices.

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