Shadow Feminism: Disavowed Feminized Labor in Postwar American Art

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With the images of Chantal Akerman's deliberately tedious film, *Jeanne Dielman* before her, Carol Mavor says that "slowness becomes a gift."[1] Mavor has a way of giving expression to ideas through language that is shared by her former student, and my advisor, Dr. Jane Blocker. As I have labored, very slowly, to find my way with ideas through language, I have been given the gift of time. I am thankful to the University of Minnesota's Department of Art History for the extended financial support that allowed me time not only to learn, but also to develop lasting and important relationships with fellow graduate students and faculty. As chair of the department during my tenure, Dr. Steven Ostrow provided invaluable leadership and made sustained efforts to encourage me in my work. He also freed up time for me by being such a self-sufficient professor during the semester I served as his teaching assistant. For his ongoing support, I am very grateful. Taking classes from Dr. Catherine Asher was a highlight of my years in graduate school. Not only is she terrifically smart, but she is humble, funny, and nice too. For the unwavering respect and commitment he has showed not only to me, but to all the art history graduate students, I extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Rick Asher. Given the topic of this dissertation, I cannot fail to thank him and Cathy for all the lovely parties they hosted for the department over the course of the many years I have been a part of it.

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[1] Carol Mavor, *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J.M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartique,*

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One

The Hostess: Crumbs and A Few Introductions

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.
For Lucy had her work cut out for her.
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

The texture of Mrs. Sorbel's abstract pictures seemed "compounded of marble, mother-of-pearl, multi-colored spider webs and a spatter of milk."
William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition," *Artforum*

Mrs. Dalloway

Like Virginia Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway, I am preparing for a party of sorts. The historian, it turns out, begins her work in much the same ways as the hostess. The hostess readies her house for friends and neighbors, while the historian readies her text for colleagues and scholars, but both work to bring a group of people and ideas together that we might not otherwise find assembled. In the case of the hostess, she gathers together guests who extend beyond the conventional nuclear family or household. The historian, constrained differently by time and space than the hostess, brings together people and ideas from across historical time periods and genres. Mrs. Dalloway is thus a suitable model for the historian because she brings disparate people together *and* is preoccupied with the workings of time. It is not only that she must keep track of the passing of the day into evening, when her party begins, in order to be prepared for the arrival of her guests. It is also that her introspective thought—as it passes in and out of the past, present, and future—demonstrates how time does not run straight or uniformly. Her ruminations are set against, and interspersed by, the sights, sounds, and textures of the bustling city of London in the postwar world of 1922.

When Big Ben strikes, on Mrs. Dalloway's errand to buy flowers for her party, it booms: "[f]irst a warning, musical; the hour, irrevocable."[2] This commanding sound absorbs her in this present moment in June. She reflects, "[t]he war was over, except for some […]," such as shell-shocked Septimus Warren Smith (5). One guest to Clarissa's glittering party will bring with her news of the war veteran's suicide that takes place later that day. When she passes through the doors of Mulberry's the florist, she takes in the scent of sweet peas that transport her to that evening, "between six and seven"—when the sky turns "black-blue" and "every flower […] glows " (13). She is abruptly pulled back to the present, however, by the sound of a pistol shot in the street, which draws Mrs. Dalloway and the florist, Miss Pym, to the window. Outside, on Bond Street, a gathering of passersby, who have stopped to stare at a motorcar parked across from the shop, suggests the importance of the vehicles' occupant. The novel slips in and out of characters' thoughts without announcement, and here the reader's point of view shifts, almost imperceptibly at first, to that of Septimus Smith. He is walking along the street somewhere in proximity to the car, which carries within it the important personage whose face is unknown—"Was it the Prince of Wales's, the Queen's, the Prime Minister's?" (16). As a result of the commotion, he has been stopped, prevented from going about his day; for him, "[e]verything has come to a standstill" (14). When he and his wife are finally able to cross the street, the text once again comes back to Mrs. Dalloway via this rumination, which occupies the space somewhere between where Septimus's perceptions end and Clarissa's begin:

[W]hen London is a grass-grown path and all those hurrying along the pavement

[2] Virgina Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt, Inc., 1981), 4.

> this Wednesday morning are but bones with a few wedding rings mixed up in their dust and the gold stoppings of innumerable decayed teeth [… [t]he face in the motor car will then be known (16).

What this passage suggests is that it is in the ruins that one finds revelation. *My own* text seeks not so much revelation as alternative sources of knowledge, but it too sifts through those things turned to dust and left behind as it passes in and out of different modes of temporality. In Woolf's novel, the continuity of English history, the progress of which is demanded by the hours and half hours struck off by Big Ben, is complicated by Mrs. Dalloway's "darting interior voice, so often drawn to shadow […],"and drawn out by St. Margaret's bell that always chimes in a little late.[3] Woolf likens St. Margaret's to the hostess

> who comes into her drawing-room on the very stroke of the hour and finds her guests already there. I am not late. No, it is precisely half-past eleven. She says. Yet, though she is perfectly right, her voice, being the voice of the hostess is reluctant to inflict its individuality. Some grief for the past *holds it back*; some concern for the present (49).[4]

For Mrs. Dalloway, the irrevocability of the hours as told by Big Ben, the most insistent keeper of time in the novel, is an agitation to her. This clock makes claims that are too grand, too monumental. While it announced itself with booms, "the other clock, the clock which always struck two minutes after […], came shuffling in with its lap full of odds and ends, which it dumped down as if Big Ben were all very well with his majesty and laying down the law, so solemn, so just, but she must remember all sorts of little things (128)." Little things are the preoccupation of the hostess, and they will be my preoccupation here. The men in Mrs. Dalloway's life, her husband Richard Dalloway and her former suitor Peter Walsh, deem such things to be trifles, but it is precisely to trifles

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[3] Maureen Howard, "Foreword" in *Mrs. Dalloway*, xi.
[4] Emphasis mine.

that Clarissa Dalloway directs my attention. In response to their laughter, their questions about what could possibly be the sense of her parties, she imagines herself replying that "[t]hey're an offering" (121). She understands that this sounds "horribly vague," but she continues that if she were not to bring those people together, whose existence "she felt quite continuously," it would be "a waste" and "a pity." She insists that this act of bringing together marks her attempt "to combine; to create […]. It was her gift" (122). To whom precisely this gift is given, she is not sure; it is "[a]n offering for the sake of offering, perhaps," Mrs. Dalloway conjectures. I have found it productive to think of the work of making history in similar terms, as a creative effort that involves combining historical subjects and ideas that would not otherwise come together. This text is my offering.

Although we might assume that those people whose existence Mrs. Dalloway feels include only her relations, friends, and acquaintances, a passage at the beginning of the novel suggests otherwise. As she traversed "the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things," she felt herself to be part, "she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best (9)." In its constant shifting between subjectivities and temporalities, in its attunement to the particularities of the hostess, who holds back and gets spread between, *Mrs. Dalloway* makes an effective, albeit not fully revealing, introduction to this text.

And, as convention dictates, both social and intellectual gatherings begin by way of introductions. They proceed by enabling various bodies and voices, not only in harmony but also in tension, to circulate and comingle throughout a shared space. I

continue then by introducing another hostess, one who left Europe for America in the wake of another war. It is via Peggy Guggenheim, a kingmaker of late modernism, that I attend to what might remain for some readers an unanswered question: why are we gathered here and what kinds of people can we expect to meet over the course of this text?

Miss Guggenheim

Peggy Guggenheim first published her memoir in 1946, revised it in 1959 for publication in 1960, and revised it again in 1978. As she explains in the third edition of the book, upon the initial publication of *Out of the Century* she had been an "uninhibited woman," and upon its republication she had become "a lady who was trying to establish her place in the history of modern art."[5] This explanation cum apology that greeted visitors to the 1960s text had been put away in the preceding 1946 edition: "I have no memory. I always say to my friends, 'Don't tell me anything you don't want repeated. I just can't remember not to.' Invariably I forget and repeat everything."[6] If we pass over this statement by virtue of its casual tone—dismissing it, like Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh might, as a trifle—we miss the witty contradictions in which it relishes. Guggenheim casts doubt upon her reliability as a historian while giving herself license to divulge all. She "forgets" and repeats.

She gives her readers a wink, a signal of her promise to gossip and entertain them, undoubtedly, but she also gestures towards two destabilizing ideas: that the history of the

[5] Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1980), 271.
[6] Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: The Informal Memoirs of Peggy Guggenheim* (New York: Dial Press, 1946), 1.

avant-garde in mid-century America is redolent with repetition and that such repetitions are concealed by means of strategic forgetting.[7] Repetition, in this context, has at least three meanings: the repeating of gossip, e.g., "please don't repeat this," repeated acts, and repeated narratives. I examine examples of each: gossip about Guggnheim's "promiscuity" and about what "actually" happened at Allan Kaprow's *16 Happenings in 6 Parts* in 1959; repeated domestic acts such as hosting and cooking, which often go unregistered and the effects of which are often ephemeral; singular narratives, such as the one about Jackson Pollock peeing in Guggenheim's fireplace, that turn out to repeat. In so doing, I take cues from the numerous contemporary academics, including Gavin Butt, Irit Rogoff, James Snead, and Rebecca Schneider, who have interrogated what is at stake in the dominant cultural imperative to deride repetition, and to insist upon "sanctified" discursive practices, singular acts, and singular narratives. Repetition, it is important to note, has been routinely associated with black cultural forms, as well as with the feminine and the homosexual. These insights aren't new but bear repeating, as Schneider posits in her 2005 essay "Solo Solo Solo." In the essay, she cites, among others, Joseph Roach, Griselda Pollock, and Rosalind Krauss, as critics who precede her in arguing against the art historical tendency to advance the modernist myth of the singular, original, heroic, and primarily white male individual creator (who does *not* repeat).[8] The white cultural

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[7] There has been scholarly debate about the artistic movements to which the term "avant-garde" should be said to apply—see Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 11–12, for a brief overview of such debates. Like Suleiman, I use the term avant-garde in a transhistorical sense to make reference to historical European avant-garde movements, including Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism, as well as to modernist and postmodernist movements.

[8] Rebecca Schneider, "Solo Solo Solo," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin Butt (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 24–27.

investment in founding father narratives has proved to be dogged, Schneider notes, despite that we have "supposedly 'already' and 'overly' troubled" them via feminist and post-structuralist scholarly work.[9]

To be clear, neither my nor Guggenheim's texts are ones to offer up any "firsts." It is not only that Guggenheim published her memoirs three times, although that's a start. As with all things that repeat, the three editions—written and then revised in three different decades—are marked by sameness and difference. In the final edition, published the year of Guggenheim's death in 1979, she responds to the widespread critical dismissal of her memoir upon its initial publication in 1946. She cites best-selling author John H. Davis who, in his well-received book about the Guggenheims, published in 1978, claimed the family to have been so scandalized by *Out of this Century* that they "sent hordes of messengers and clerks out to the major New York bookstores to buy up every available copy" and "dubbed it *Out of Her Mind*."[10] Davis went on to report that Guggenheim did not fare much better with the critics who, he claimed, "almost unanimously condemned the work on moralistic grounds."[11]

Guggenheim wrote that Davis had not been right about much, but she conceded that he had accurately characterized the reviews. With the flair for exposé for which she was well known, she even reproduced a sample of these attacks in her own text. A few excerpts help to establish the way in which Guggenheim was perceived upon the

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[9] Ibid., 25.
[10] Paul Vitello, "John H. Davis, Writer With Tie to Kennedys, Dies at 82," New York Times, February 5, 2012, accessed July 9, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/arts/john-h-davis-chronicler-of-kennedys-and-others-dies-at-82.html?_r=0. Quote cited in Guggenheim, *Out of this Century* (1980), xii.
[11] John H. Davis, *The Guggenheims: An American Epic* (New York, William Morrow, 1978), 348.

publication of her writings in relation to the artists—including Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, and, of course, Jackson Pollock—whose artistic legacies were secured, in part, by means of her patronage and support.

A reviewer for *Time* wrote that her prose was "flat and witless" and that the book was redeeming in only one respect: that "between boudoir blackouts," it furnished "a few peeks at some of the men who make art a mystery."[12] Journalist Harry Hansen argued in the *New York World-Telegram* that it supplied "further evidence of why artists shock conventional people." He went on to lament that "[c]onventions, in behavior or painting," did not seem to apply to Guggenheim or to the generation of artists who came of age between-the-wars.[13] In *Book Week*, art critic Katherine Kuh contrasted the distinction of Guggenheim's collection, which she described as composed of "the most advanced experimental art," with the vulgarity of the collector's autobiography. She added that "Miss Guggenheim [had] done the cause of modern art no kindness by mixing it irrevocably with a compulsive recital of her own decadent life."[14] Kuh's critique did not stop with the text itself. She also took aim at Guggenheim's relentless honesty, ultimately concluding that Guggenheim must be "a lonely woman, too hard, too hurt, to have retained *normal* sensitivities."[15] Upon the third printing in 1978, an unnamed reviewer writing for Kirkus no longer found the text to be shocking but found instead that "age [had] not improved Guggenheim's dry recitation of lovers, travels, and galleries." The writer went on to call Guggenheim a "namedropper" and conveyed skepticism about her

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[12] "Art: Temptations of Peggy," *Time*, March 25, 1946.
[13] Harry Hansen, "The First Reader: Art and a Guggenheim," *New York World-Telegram*, March 26, 1946.
[14] Katherine Kuh, *Book Week*, March 31, 1946.
[15] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

claim to have fostered the development of abstract expressionism by bracketing the word foster with scare quotes.[16] For this critic, *Out of this Century* is nothing more than "a relic, best left on the remainder shelf."[17]

It seems a bit excessive, repetitive perhaps, to quote so extensively from such texts. Why go into what Kuh would likely describe as a "compulsive recital" of evidence of Guggenheim's trivialization within the history of America art? Does this parade of citations work only to convince readers that Guggenheim was, in fact, an undiscerning floozy and dilettante, while allowing for a (slightly) wider range of attitudes towards the Surrealists and New York School artists with whom she maintained personal and professional relationships? Not only do the tones of these reviews range—from breezy dismissals to angry lambastes—so do the moral conclusions. I take the time to discuss these distinctions not to suggest we think of each specific criticism as distinct, but rather so that we might better define the contours of the problem to which they begin to amount.

With the exception of Hanson, all of the writers I cite above demean Guggenheim in relation to the artists with whom she was affiliated. The journalist writing for *Time* advances a commonly held myth about the artist in shorthand—in effect that he is alluring in his singularity and that he is endowed with exceptional creative powers that make him inaccessible to people with more "ordinary" powers of perception. To this writer, Guggenheim's prose—which he dismisses as dull and, in strict opposition to the artists with whom she was affiliated, uninspired—is more offensive than her sexual conduct, but he is sure to make reference to it nonetheless.

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[16] Kirkus Review, October 24, 1979. Accessed https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/peggy-guggenheim-2/out-of-this-century-confessions-of-an-art-addic/
[17] Ibid.

Although Kuh does not explicitly reference Guggenheim's sexual life, her use of the word "vulgar" to describe the collector's autobiography suggests that it certainly contributed to Kuh's disdain. By characterizing Guggenheim's lifestyle as "decadent," Kuh gestures towards all manner of indulgences, including both sexual and material, while also signaling her disapproval of feminized bourgeois commodity culture with which Guggenheim was affiliated. In the space between the words "vulgar" and "decadent," Kuh betrays her vacillation between two distinct avant-garde modes of attacking bourgeois domesticity: "an elitist stance opposed to the 'hidebound, moralistic, and spiritually narrow bourgeois subject' or […] a populist position [aligned] with the exploited worker."[18] Kuh demonstrates her commitment to the former attitude rather than the latter by concluding that Guggenheim's lifestyle, and her brash manner of divulging it, tainted the purity of her otherwise important postwar art collection. Kuh's displeasure—at the fact that Guggenheim laid bare the interconnectedness of her vulgar and decadent life and experimental art—is suggestive of an imperative that forms the basis of prevailing formulations of modern art. Modernist criticism requires the suppression of anything bodily, desirous, sexual, or feminine from its discourse, for such immanent excesses threaten the illusion of the artist, and the artwork with which he was assumed to have an indexical relation, as transcendental and self-contained.

It is not by accident that the reviewer writing for Kirkus in 1979 no longer found Guggenheim's failure to uphold the standards of conventional sexual decorum—defined for women at midcentury by marriage, monogamy, and demureness—to be the cause of

[18] Amelia Jones draws upon the work of Raymond Williams to articulate these two positions in *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 65.

her text's deficiency. The sexual revolution had called into question, or at least attenuated, such standards, but Guggenheim, at eighty-one, was no longer in her sexual prime and thus could no longer, by the dictates of heteropatriarchal normativity, represent a figure of sexual provocation. By the late seventies, it was no longer only Guggenheim's prose that was dry; her love affairs had become dry as well. It might be said, in fact, that Guggenheim herself had become dry. If this anonymous writer's sensibilities suggest changing attitudes towards sex, they do not seem to have been influenced that much by feminist thought. This critic understands Guggenheim's claims (to have helped facilitate the rise of abstract expressionism) to be only a thinly veiled attempt to overemphasize her relation to more famous men in order to impress her readers and aggrandize herself.

Only Harry Hansen railed at Guggenheim *and* the artists with whom she was affiliated. Addressing himself to "conventional people," he justifies their shock in the face of a disregard for social conventions, in bed with a disregard for aesthetic conventions. In his emphasis on conventions, Hanson inadvertently helps to direct our attention to the contradictory and oppositional set of presumptions at work in these reviews. By and large, Guggenheim's unconventional scandalous life (which we could also describe as her failure to uphold the norms and conventions of female sexuality at mid-century) is condemned, while her writing and affiliations with domestic life are dismissed as *too* conventional. Namely, these scandals make reference to the love affairs she describes having had before, during, and after her marriage to Max Ernst: including her marriage to Laurence Veil, her affairs with John Holms, who had a common-law wife, Marcel Duchamp, and Samuel Beckett among others. Art and architecture critic Aline Saarinen claimed the book "shocked her deeply" not because Guggenheim "went to

bed with everyone," but because she wrote about it. Guggenheim biographer Mary V. Dearborn adds that her "'vulgarity' lay also in admitting that she enjoyed her sexuality."[19] The same reviewers who accused the collector of staid prose and unabashed promiscuity, for better or for worse—and mostly for better—equate the artists with whom Guggenheim claims to have had professional, marital, and/or sexual relationships with radicality and subversion.

Thus, despite their seeming differences, all of these critics maintain the same contradictory attitude about the artist and his role in Western culture, an attitude that Amelia Jones characterizes in a chapter of her important book *Body Art*:

> The artist has commonly both been strongly differentiated from the perceived norms defined by society in general and, especially in the modernist period, received authority from this very normative subjectivity.[20]

As Jones explains, the artist, as he is traditionally conceived within art history and criticism, is in fact nothing more than an exaggerated representation of "the normative subject in Western culture." This normative subject—known also as the Cartesian subject who is understood to be coherent, self-contained, originary, and to act with intention—has been thoroughly problematized, first by French poststructuralists and then by a host of scholars, such as Jones, who have built upon poststructuralist philosophical work. These insights—that reconceptualize subjectivity as intersubjective, fragmented, and decentered—are of crucially enabling importance to my project, but this chapter is chiefly concerned with a related key issue at stake in Jones's formulation: the longstanding association between the avant-garde artist and disruption and criticism, not

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[19] Mary V. Dearborn, *Mistress of Modernism: The Life of Peggy Guggenheim* (New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 246.
[20] Ibid., 57.

only of established artistic practices and values, but also of ideological and social norms and conventions.

Such attitudes of resistance—as they have manifested themselves in early twentieth century European avant-garde movements such as Dada and Surrealism, the midcentury American movement Abstract Expressionism, or globally distributed postwar movements such as Happenings or Fluxus—have served various, temporally and geographically specific, sometimes conflicting, but often important functions: to critique war; to oppose principles of rationality, noncontradiction, and linearity; to decry colonialism; to subvert capitalism, materialism, and universalizing ideologies. Although antagonism has undoubtedly been a useful strategy of artistic *and* social critique (as Renato Paggioli and Peter Bürger suggest in their famous analyses), the residual effect of these different avant-garde projects has not only been to disparage the past in relation to the future—a practice that implicates subjects differently along axes of race, gender and class—it has also been, as Shannon Jackson argues in *Social Works*, to devalorize systems of coordination and support that are contingent upon maintenance and cooperation within existing social structures, however compromised these structures may be.[21] Jackson's insights are foundational for this project, and so I linger here for a moment to introduce its broader tactics and goals.

In order to navigate this intellectual space it will be helpful for the reader to know, at the outset, my attitude towards critical texts and art historical subjects. It has been similar to Charlotte Moorman's attitude toward physical things. The late avant-garde cellist—who is the primary subject of the forth chapter of this thesis—kept everything

[21] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

with the expectation that even in those objects that others would perceive to be valueless and discard, she would find provisional use. Colette describes the act of writing in similar terms, as "the domestic task of knowing how to wait, to conceal, to save up crumbs, to reglue, to change the worst into the not-so-bad."[22] It has been through the persistent waiting, concealing, and saving of crumbs that I accumulated the makings of this dissertation. As I suggest below, crumbs represent not only debris that gets swept away, but also *material* traces that hedge against forgetting, and fragments that have fallen away from things seemingly more whole.

Over the course of these chapters, I argue that both avant-garde art practices and the historical narratives dedicated to them *discard* domestic subjects—including hosting, cooking, cleaning, caring for, and mourning the loss of others— and the subjects who engage in them as frivolous and unworthy of serious engagement by the discipline. My project emerges as a critical rejoinder to this intellectual habit: it takes the art historical tendency to disavow relation or reliance upon feminized affective and material labor as its central problematic. And, again and again, it grapples with the difficulty of contending with the elusive but nonetheless palpable absence of what I call conventional femininity (which often turns out, as in the case of Guggenheim, to be unconventional) and unrecognized forms of labor (such as, for example, the work of the hostess) in postwar art historical narratives.

One of the primarily tactics it mobilizes in the service of these goals, is to offer a different concept of temporality than the one that governs twentieth- and, despite its

[22] Colette, *My Apprenticeships and Music-hall Sidelights*, trans. Helen Beauclerk (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957).

pretentions, even twenty-first-century art making and interpretation.[23] As I mention above, this prevailing concept of time is linear and future-oriented, as it is driven by the avant-garde call to push up against established norms and conventions in order to *forge ahead*. This project, rather, *holds back*, and lingers, not only over crumbs left behind, but also in dust, shadows, and ashes. Two specific concepts of temporality, that I have borrowed and adapted from others, have proved to be especially useful: an aesthetic of restraint, which takes shape over the course of chapter two, and "temporal drag," which takes shape over the course of chapter three. Contemporary artist Theaster Gates used the notion of an aesthetics of restraint to describe his musical practice with the Black Monks of Mississippi, for which he and his collaborators do not sing "the whole blues" but rather hold back, restrain, and repeat. "Temporal drag" is an idea I borrow from Rebecca Schneider, who borrowed it from Elizabeth Freeman. It serves to make legible the workings of temporal transitivity (as opposed to singularity) and to register the "co-presence of several historically specific events, movements, and collective pleasures" on the surface of the bodies of historical subjects.[24] These paradigms serve not only to challenge singular and progressive notions of time, but also, as the words *restraint* and *drag* suggest, to call into question the assumption that mobility is equally available.

By organizing each of the four chapters, and the conclusion, around a different category of feminized supportive labor—those of the hostess, the cook, the domestic, the

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[23] In *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), Rebecca Schneider points to Marina Abramovíc's insistence on herself as the "original" and self-contained point from which reperformances of her work have been derived, as well as Whitney Museum of American Art curator Chrissie Iles's comment that performance was the "original point" from which subsequent performance art derived as examples of the prevalence of "linear time in most thinking about live performance," 5–6.

[24] As quoted in Schneider, *Performing Remains,* 14.

entertainer, and the widow—I run the risk that these terms might be (mis)taken to signify naturalized and "inflexible gendered identities."[25] Defined in terms of poststructuralist understandings of the performativity of gender, these four categories aim not to reinforce gender norms, but rather to signal towards gendered forms of labor.[26] Lauren Berlant's language helps to make precise the way in which these terms operate in this text. In the preface to *The Female Complaint*, and in an effort to "foreground what motivates and shapes [her] knowledge," she describes having "entered femaleness," at a specific historical moment. Upon having entered into it, she explains that she adopted a certain "style […] of being in femininity."[27] In other words, these categories mean neither to assign an essential (biologically determined) set of attributes to the feminine, nor to put forth the idea of femininity as a set of cultural signs. Rather, in this context, they are underwritten by Berlant's notion of "being in femininity," that conceives of femininity as a site to be inhabited, a site that exists not only across space, but also, as I suggested, across time.

Thus, these four case studies do not correspond with an examination of four independent artists. Rather, they emulate the gendered work of American kin-work, a set of sustaining practices identified and studied by social scientists since the eighties.[28] Kinship is the maintenance of cross-household and cross-generational ties and includes hostessing, entertaining, and keeping in touch via letters, telephone calls, and visits. Each

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[25] Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows, "Introduction," in *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, ed. Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows (Routledge: New York, 2009), 7.
[26] See ibid as well as Lesely Johnson and Justine Lloyd, *Sentenced to Everyday Life: Feminism and the Housewife* (Oxford: Berg., 2004).
[27] Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), vii.
[28] Micaela di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship," in *Signs*, Vol. 12, No. 3. (Spring, 1987), 440–453.

chapter thus traces a network of relations between artists whose affiliations are not legible within traditional art historical narratives, which group artists together based on movement or era. The artists who populate this study include a selection of those whose work has been trivialized on the basis of its affiliation with feminized labor, such as Janet Sobel, Lee Krasner, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Charlotte Moorman, and J Morgan Puett. These artists' careers span the transition from modernist to postmodernist art practices and several generations of feminist thought. (Although, in keeping with my emphasis on provisional usefulness and nonlinearity, readers will not encounter these figures in an order that satisfies chronological expectations.) They have been conspicuously absent from serious discussions of the artistic practices to which they have, unquestionably, contributed importantly, and thus demonstrate the ongoing and systematic nature of the dismissals with which my work contends. These figures do not just serve to represent exclusion, however. Nor is it this project's goal to rescue them from obscurity. When we hold back, in order to survey what art historical narratives have left behind, we find that these remains offer alternative methods of meaning making, methods that abide by, rather than seek to dispel, obscurity. This project looks to other contemporary artists whose work addresses itself to the erasure of feminized creative, emotional, and physical labor—including Theaster Gates, Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, and Dario Robleto—to develop these historical methods.

The postwar period is the focus of my study precisely because it is a time characterized by changing attitudes towards femininity *and* art. Over its course, we might be said to move from the "feminine mystique" to what gender studies scholars, such as Stephanie Genz, have controversially characterized as "postfeminism," as well as from

abstract expressionist to postmodernist conceptual art practices.[29] To get into the debates surrounding these accounts of liberation (namely from the constraints of domestic obligation and the art object respectively), preempts my concerns about progressive, linear, and future-oriented narratives (of dematerialization) that surface over the course of this text. For now, it is important to note that, for very different reasons, prevailing feminist thought and postwar art making and interpretation emerged in ambivalent, if not antagonistic, relation to feminized roles and spaces.

Because women had been not only confined to but also conflated with domestic life since the late eighteenth century, for many seventies-era feminists "escap[ing] from 'home,'" and gaining "distance from the woman who [worked] there" was necessary for the forward movement, sociologically speaking, of women.[30] As the title of her 1963 book suggests, Betty Friedan took aim at *The Feminine Mystique* generally, but she narrowed in on the housewife as the ultimate emblem of passivity. Although, as I discuss at greater length in chapter three, self-identifying feminists of the era actually held a wide range of views towards conventionally feminine behavior and appearance, as Lydia Martens has noted, Friedan's "'out-of-home-centered'" feminist discourses have, in the long run, won out over the "'home-life-is-valuable' type discourse also evident in feminist debate."[31] This is true even as seventies-era feminist discourses have been

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[29] Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon, *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2009).
[30] Anna Hunt, "Domestic Dystopias: *Big Brother*, *Wife Swap* and *How Clean is Your House?*" in *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, 124.
[31] Lydia Martens, "Feminism and the Critique of Consumer Culture 1950–1970," in ibid., 44.

substantially reconfigured and called into question by subsequent generations of gender studies scholars, including deconstructivist feminists and queer theorists.[32]

Some such scholars have recently taken note that domesticity seems to be "experiencing a comeback" in twenty-first century popular culture, and thus have challenged academic feminists to see what they "might learn from the questions being raised within the popular culture about women's relationship to home."[33] Is this return to the domestic a repetition of the backlash against feminism and conservative return to "family values" of the eighties, or are there other narratives at play, they ask. Putting this inquiry aside for the moment, as Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows admit in their introduction to *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*, "questions of sexuality and race are only touched upon implicitly in many of the chapters." This is because, they say, "considering the dominant (and popular) histories of the Anglo-American women's movement…the tensions explored here are largely confined to a white heterosexual relationship between feminism and domesticity in popular culture."[34] In her essay in the anthology, Genz describes this white heterosexual (and middle-class) project as part of "postfeminist reappropriations" of femininity and domesticity "that acknowledge agency and determination." Genz asserts that the postfeminist housewife " is no longer […] an emblem of female oppression but […] deliberately choos[es] to go 'home.'"[35]

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[32] See for example Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988) and Judith Butler's influential *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990 repr., New York: Routledge, 2007).
[33] Stephanie Genz, "I Am Not a Housewife, but…": Postfeminism and the Revival of Domesticity" in ibid., 50; Gillis and Hollows, "Introduction," in ibid., 3.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Genz, "I Am Not a Housewife, but…" in ibid., 51.

My contention is not only that the reevaluation of this relationship is absolutely contingent on attending to questions of sexuality, race, and class. It is also, and relatedly, that it is necessary to question Western feminist theories of agency that are based on a sovereign notion of the self, and that are predicated on identifying a subject who is made legible by the concept of choice, a subject with subversive intent.[36] "Shadow Feminism," is thus indebted to queer, postcolonial, and black feminisms that, as Judith Halberstam puts it in *The Queer Art of Failure*, are not "blind to forms of agency that do not take the form of resistance."[37] We might think of resistance, in the context of restraint and drag, not as an expression of hostility but rather as an impediment to movement. Two of the seminal postcolonial texts on which my work, like Halberstam's, relies are Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and Saba Mahmood's *The Politics of Piety*.

The, term "shadow feminism" though, is one I borrow directly from Halberstam, but to ends that aim to further complicate the binary between agency and passivity on which she relies, even as she rejects "humanistic investments in the female subject and the fantasy of an active, autonomous, and self-activating individualism."[38] My hope is also to expand on the term's metonymic possibilities by considering it within the context of the history of visual representation, in which shadows have figured importantly. Broadly speaking, this text participates in what Frank van der Stok describes as a growing interest among contemporary artists and art historians in "reflect[ing] on the

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[36] Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 128.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 130.

representation of history."[39] Given the ways in which shadows evoke, or even could be said to stand in for, that which is absent, they provoke us to consider not only what we know about the past, but also how we know it. Since this chapter's primary ethos is hospitality, I introduce the tenets of shadow feminism here, but this chapter and the subsequent two are like interposed bodies, behind which the term resides. Shadow feminism thus comes into view gradually as we approach chapter four; it is only there, where the shadow presides, that the concept fully takes shape.

As shadows have, since classical antiquity, been cited as the mythic origin of visual representation, they also bring us back to the question of postwar artistic practices from which our conversation has wandered.[40] (These paragraphs are not the last to explore productive tangents in this text, but, to assure the reader, our discussion does make its way back Guggenheim shortly.) One of the most famous accounts of the shift from modernist to postmodernist art is Lucy Lippard's *Six Years*, in which she describes the processes by which the art object "dematerialized" into what she refers to broadly as "conceptual art."[41] As RoseLee Goldberg explains in her seminal history of performance art, the impulse driving this "disregard for the art object" that resulted in the spacio-temporal extension of art, and in artists "turning to their own bodies as art materials," was a desire to evade the subsumption of art by the market. The assumption was that bodies in performance cannot be bought and sold, and that performance comes into being only

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[39] Frank van der Stok et al. "Introduction," in *Questioning History: Imaging the Past in Contemporary Art* eds. Frank van der Sok et al. (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2008).
[40] See Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1997).
[41] Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, (1973 rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

through disappearance.[42] Free from the corrupting influence of commerce (and its accomplice, bourgeois culture), it was thought, the medium could serve revolutionary or, as Goldberg puts it, anarchic ends.[43] For Goldberg, conceptual and performance-based art thus not only retained the antibourgeois sensibilities of the cultural-artistic avant-garde that Poggioli tells us emerged in the late nineteenth century in France. It doubled down on them: postwar conceptual art was not just avant-garde, it was "avant avant garde."

Goldberg's account represents a history of twentieth-century art that construes modernism to be an interruption to an otherwise congruous lineage of avant-garde antagonists that begins with Futurism and culminates with postwar Conceptualism. Poggioli describes the dynamic of transhistorical avant-garde antagonism as "self-assertion or self-defense used by a society in the strictest sense against society in the larger sense."[44] This narrative has been challenged on a number of fronts. Some scholars, such as Jones, have (as I discuss further) questioned the extent to which we can understand postmodern art practices to constitute a complete break from modernist precedents. Other scholars, such as Jane Blocker, have pointed out that postmodernism is driven as much by doubt (of the possibility of "something beyond the commodity") as it is by desire for it.[45] Blocker notes that it was over the course of reading Jones' *Body Art* that she got to thinking about the question of how the body, towards which visual art

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[42] Peggy Phelan is famous for having asserted that "performance becomes itself through disappearance. See *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.
[43] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (1979 rev. ed., New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 2001) 152, 9.
[44] Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: Havard University Press, 1968), 4.
[45] Jane Blocker, *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), xi.

practices in the postwar period desirously and doubtfully turn, is gendered. She concludes that "the acceptance of body in art came at a price." While the body was celebrated for its liberating and revolutionary effects, "the body's troubling feminine associations," had to be carefully managed.[46]

Even as early as 1973, when Lippard published *Six Years*, hope that the liberating potential of performance could be realized had been subsumed by doubt. But to whatever extent that postwar conceptual art can be construed as an iteration of the twentieth-century avant-garde project, repudiation of the feminized bourgeois domestic sphere, and the laboring bodies bound up within it, has persisted not attenuated. To put the stakes of this repudiation more explicitly into the terms of this project, I turn again to Poggioli who notes that "if the avant-garde has an etiquette it consists of perverting and wholly subverting conventional deportment, the Galeto rules, 'good manners.'"[47] In the broadest sense, my aim is to show not only how this "anti-etiquette" endures, but also how it works to obfuscate the reliance of cultural production on feminized labor that takes place within compromised and obligation-bound realms of responsibility.

Sometimes, Poggioli adds, "with less extreme but purer tension, [the avant-garde] surmounts its own specific hostility to the external factors of public and tradition to establish a contest between subject and object, artist and artifact." [48] By using the word "surmounts," Poggioli suggests that it is when the avant-garde has *triumphed over* its hostility to society and societal conventions that it takes on a different, more intimate battle, that between subject and object, artist and artifact. [Figure 1.1] As I argue in this

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[46] Ibid.,14.
[47] Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 31.
[48] Ibid, 33.

chapter, via a discussion of the famous happenings of Allan Kaprow, the relationship between these two forms of hostility is not as arbitrary as Poggioli here suggests. Attempts to construe the avant-garde in antagonistic relation to the bourgeois domestic sphere also represent attempts to shore up the boundaries between the masculine self and the feminine other. As we will see, postwar performance art has worked *both* to challenge and reify this longstanding dialectical logic—which is the foundation of Western philosophy generally, and Western aesthetics specifically, and which divides subjects from objects, the mind from the body, and the masculine from the feminine. This project contends with the persistent ways in which this philosophical model dictates the terms of artistic production and interpretation by drawing on performance and feminist studies scholarship that is mindful of these contradictions, including Blocker's *What the Body Cost*, Schneider's *The Explicit Body in Performance*, and Jones's *Body Art*. In its attempts to think against the grain of humanist individualism, "Shadow Feminism" relies on these texts as well as texts from the emerging fields of affect theory and new materialism.

What Patricia Ticineto Clough describes as a turn in academic critical theory towards affect, emerged from two bodies of thought: US feminist theories that focused on the body and queer theories that focused on emotion.[49] In his foreword to Ticineto Clough's compilation of essays that take the affective turn as an invitation to write and think experimentally, to "[step] out of this skeptical of the known into an inadequate

[49] Michael Hardt, "Foreword: What Affects Are Good For, " in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, ed. Patricia Ticineto Clough (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), ix.

confrontation with what exceeds it and oneself,"[50] Michael Hardt proffers a suggestion of what affects are good for. Affects are useful, he contends, because they straddle the relationship between the body and the mind. As a result, they disrupt the traditional hierarchical notions of causality, and construe not only the body and the mind, but also the other and the self, form and matter, nature and culture, and past and present in entangled relation, both able to *affect* and *be affected*.

Affects give way to what Ticineto Clough describes as "nonlinear complexities," and the affective turn "throws thought back to the disavowals constitutive of Western industrialist societies, bringing forth ghosted bodies and the traumatized remains of erased histories."[51] My project works in the service of this throwing back by pursing trajectories opened up by the work of scholars—such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Lauren Berlant, and Carol Mavor—who not only theorize affect, but who also demonstrate how it might be enacted to productive intellectual ends.[52] Sedgwick's work especially could be said to straddle the terrains of affect theory and new materialism in that she explores, as the title of her book *Touching Feeling* suggests, the intimate relation between affective emotions and material textures. Given that one of this text's primary goals is to trace cyclically forgotten gendered *labor*, materialist theories of subjectivity—through which, as Jane Bennett puts it in her book *Vibrant Matter*, "the difference between subjects and

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[50] Fred Moten and Stefano Harney as quoted in Patricia Ticineto Clough, "Introduction," in *The Affective Turn*, 28.
[51] Ibid., 3.
[52] I am especially indebted to Sedgwick's *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Berlant's *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); and Mavor's *Black Blue:"The Bruising Passion of Cameria Lucida," "La Jetée," "San soleil," and "Hiroshima mon amour*" (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

objects [is] minimized, [and] the status of the shared materiality of all things is elevated,"—also bring significant insight to bear to these discussions.[53]

With these larger goals in mind, and as a means of introducing you to the figures I've assembled here and the topics of the conversation I hope to initiate, I begin by considering the implications of the tendency to valorize radicality and antagonism that has pervaded art making and interpretation, using Guggenheim, and the transition from modernist to postmodern art making, as a point of departure. Specifically, I trace how art historical modes of inquiry, by their design, convert supportive hospitable labor into narratives that celebrate artistic hostility. (The etymology of the word hospitality itself, as we will see, turns out to give insight into this process.) For now, some art-historically inclined readers might ask: why Guggenheim? Why not approach such an inquiry via the many women artists who were linked, by romance or marriage, to male avant-garde artists such as Max Ernst? Like Guggenheim, Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning sustained relationships with Ernst, but unlike her they were also artists who, along with many of their female contemporaries, have remained either neglected or undervalued within many histories of Surrealism.

To answer this question, Susan Rubin Suleiman's important discussion of the relationship between women Surrealists and the male-dominated movement is useful. As Suleiman explains, metaphoric representations of the female body were omnipresent in

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[53] Some of the new materialist texts that attempt to disturb the systems of thought through which the human and the material, nature and culture have been perceived in hierarchical and diametric relation include Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Amanda Boetzkes's *The Ethics of Earth Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

the visual and literary works of the founding Surrealists. Yet, not a single woman was granted official membership to the group until the mid 1930s when the movement's force and cohesion had significantly dissipated. At this time, younger women, especially those from outside the Surrealist epicenter in France, were included in exhibitions and group publications with some regularity, but the implication of this temporal lag has been that historians have perceived their work to be either an adaptation or imitation of male-produced models. Suleiman makes note, however, of shifting attitudes: as historians give the work of these women more careful consideration, "we are coming to realize [that] a significant number of women did succeed in creating their own version and vision of Surrealist practice."[54] The process of identifying the distinct contributions of historically neglected female Surrealists is, unarguably, an important one; without it, Suleiman rightfully points out, many women would remain entirely unknown or would be seen only as cursory figures within Surrealism's history. That said, such a project, to the degree that it seeks out single, radical innovators, runs the risk of reinforcing a model of valorization defined by a rhetoric of originality and contestation, a rhetoric that I seek to question.

Suleiman makes clear that only careful study will enable scholars to make substantiated assertions about the tactics female members deployed to navigate the Surrealist economy. She nonetheless speculates that, "their version of Surrealist practice included a component of response to, as well as adaptation of, male Surrealist iconographies and mythologies—this being especially the case in the realm of sexuality." Drawing on the writings of seventies-era French feminist theorists, and Luce Irigaray's

[54] Suleiman, *Subversive Intent*, 26.

conception of "mimicry" in particular, she argues, however, that the female Surrealist "'repeats' the male […] but she does so in a self-conscious way that points up the citational, often ironic status of the repetition."[55] Repetition is, as I have suggested, a very useful concept within our discussion of Guggenheim, and feminized labor more broadly, and Suleiman here gestures towards the way in which it can be a means to subversive ends. It would seem, though, that the subversive potential of repetition is contingent upon the historian being able to identify a lack of paternal identification on the part of the repeating female subject. (Such a process of identification, as Suleiman notes, would require the "careful study of individual works and artists.")[56]

Ultimately, such studies are not necessary for Suleiman to assert that women Surrealists nonetheless occupy a doubly marginal position. Although these women elected to participate in willfully marginal avant-garde projects, they, unlike their male elders, were often relegated to marginal positions within the movement, and society more broadly, by virtue of their gender. It is via Hélèn Cixous's 1975 text, "Le Rire de la Méduse"—which Suleiman introduces as the only "avant-garde manifesto written from an explicitly feminist perspective"—that she suggests the critical possibility of this double marginality. Cixous writes that, "A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive."[57] Although the metaphorically feminine text is not to be confused or conflated with socially and biologically female makers of texts (visual and literary), the implication, according to Suleiman, is that female avant-garde artists have been, by virtue of their double marginality, better positioned to produce such texts. What this formulation

[55] Ibid., 27.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 17.

suggests is that such women occupy a critical space that is, to slightly recontextualize Cixous's words, "more than subversive," or, to slightly reorganize Suleiman's, doubly subversive.

As Suleiman demonstrates, feminist scholars have compellingly theorized and mobilized this narrative, which establishes a generative relationship between feminine marginality and subversion. Relatedly, antagonism has been an absolutely imperative mode of feminist critique of patriarchal norms and conventions. As I discuss at greater length in chapters three and four of this thesis, such critiques coalesced into a major paradigm-shifting (as well as complex and fractured) movement in the late sixties and early seventies. Informed by the work of postcolonial feminists, including Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Saba Mahmood, and Judith Halberstam, performance art scholars such as Amelia Jones and Shannon Jackson, black feminists such as Barbara Smith, as well as critics writing on questions of temporarily and propriety in African American literature, I am concerned about the way in which narratives of subversion render illegible or meaningless sustaining and durational feminized labor that is contingent upon maintenance, coordination, cooperation within existing social structures (including the microcosms of the home and the museum) rather than disavowal, disruption, and antagonism.

It is for this reason that I introduce this project via Guggenheim, a figure who has been dismissed and trivialized within the history of modern art *explicitly* on the basis of her affiliations with the hostess and socialite. The supportive role she played in the career of Jackson Pollock, whom art historians have identified to be a watershed figure who contradictorily straddles modernist and postmodernist modes of subjectivity, positions

her, as I discuss later on in this chapter, at a key historical moment for the purposes of my study. Because of the social and cultural visibility that Guggenheim's class privilege afforded her—she had the means, for example, to publish rebuttals to the criticisms waged against her—her marginalization is easier to track than the complete absenting of other supportive figures in postwar art historical discourses. It is important to note though, that the housekeepers and servants, to whom Guggenheim makes occasional but unapologetic reference in her memoirs, perform much of the supportive domestic labor that facilitates her social labor. By its very nature, this underlying labor works best when it is not seen. Such invisible laborers are the elusive subjects not only of the next chapter, but they linger in the shadows of the entire project. As the first two sentences from *Mrs. Dalloway* with which I began suggest, my inquiries into both social and supportive domestic labor are intertwined, not separate. The first sentence of Wolff's novel ("Mrs. Dalloway said she would get the flowers herself.") is decidedly more famous than the second ("For Lucy had her work cut out for her."), but taken together, they remind us that the servant's labor makes possible that of her mistress.

I serve-up Guggenheim in preparation for what is to come: an engagement with the relationship between social and aesthetic conventions that is concerned not only with gender but also and necessarily with race and class. First, though, I need to establish what is perhaps an obvious point. The critical dismissals waged against Guggenheim, with which we began, effectively work to obfuscate the thing to which she works to lay claim over the course of the three editions of her autobiography: a supportive role in the artistic ventures to which she gave not only time, money, and gallery space, but also, and more elusively, her feminized social labor.

Not only did the second edition of *Out of this Century not* begin with a confession, as had the first, Guggenheim also added several chapters to the revised text in which she recounted her history since the publication of the previous edition and voiced a complaint. Although born in the United States, Guggenheim spent her formative years in Europe. In 1941, war drove the Jewish heiress from Nazi-occupied France to New York where she opened, Art of this Century, a gallery devoted to exhibiting the work of European avant-garde artists and, later, works by American artists experimenting with abstraction. The most famous of these American artists was Jackson Pollock, to whom Guggenheim devoted most of her professional energy. She recalls that in those early years she "did not sell many Pollock paintings. A lot of these," she goes on to note, she "gave away as wedding presents to [her] friends."[58] Here, Guggenheim draws for us the long held mythical distinction between masculinized economic activity and feminized "noneconomic" domestic activity, and suggests that she perceived herself to be more successful in her role as gift-giver than entrepreneur.[59] Nevertheless, she writes that she "worked hard to interest people in his work and never tired of doing so, even when it involved dragging in and out his enormous canvases."[60]

Soon after the war ended so too did Art of this Century, which Guggenheim closed upon her return to Europe in 1947. Before she left, she made several appeals to New York art dealers to take over her contract with Pollock. Although she was unsuccessful in securing a dealer for him, Betty Parsons, a young artist and gallery

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[58] Peggy Guggenheim, *Peggy Guggenheim: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1960), 108.
[59] For a discussion of this separate sphere ideology see Micaela di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship," in *Signs*, Vol. 12, No. 3. (Spring, 1987), 440–453.
[60] Guggenheim, *Peggy Guggenheim: Confessions of an Art Addict*, 108.

owner, agreed to give Pollock a show. Pollock exhibited at Parsons without a contract until 1952, when he signed with the Sidney Janis gallery. In the meantime, Guggenheim, who was living in Venice—where she had a brief encounter with the avant-garde cellist Charlotte Moorman who is the subject of the third chapter of this thesis, and, of more immediate relevance, where she continued to display Pollock's work—became less aware of developments in Pollock's career and in the New York art world more broadly. As she writes in her autobiography, it was some time before she realized that, as Pollock's prominence had grown and his work had become the frequent subject of exhibitions, catalogue essays, and reviews, her supportive role in his early career had been, to use her own words, "minimized" or, in some cases, "completely forgotten."[61]

Her laundry list of offenders included the then chief curator of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Sam Hunter, who described Guggenheim only as Pollock's "first dealer" in the introduction to a traveling solo exhibition devoted to the artist, as well as James Johnson Sweeny who, in his introductions to catalogs accompanying retrospectives in São Paolo and in New York, attributed the first Pollock show to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum rather than Art of this Century. "In the biographies in the São Paolo catalog I was completely ignored," Guggenheim added, and "[e]veryone gave credit to the Fachetti studio in Paris for Pollock's first European show, ignoring the ones that were held in Venice by me."[62] In 1950, *Time* magazine published an article noting that Pollock was displaying his work at a gallery in Venice—the suggestion also being that he was attempting to capitalize on his success as a representative of the United States

[61] Ibid.,144.
[62] Ibid.

at "Venice's big Biennale" that same year by seeking to further his career there.[63] Pollock wrote a reply to the magazine vehemently denying the accusations and noting that he had never been to Europe.[64] It was Guggenheim, in fact, who had organized the exhibition at the Correr Museum in Venice, but neither the article in *Time* nor Pollock's response made reference to her directly or indirectly.[65]

Mr. Pollock

The American artist whom photographers Hans Namuth, Arnold Newman, and Martha Holmes made famous for wearing blue jeans and paint-spattered boots did not go to Europe, but he did, occasionally, go to parties. His appearance at one party in particular is something of a legend within the history of American modernism. The anecdote has often served to bolster Pollock's reputation as a tragic and iconoclastic genius, but read against the grain of master narratives, and with the domestic activities and exchanges that take place in the margins of sanctified histories in mind, it is suggestive of the ways in which Guggenheim's trivialization has been a product of her affiliations with feminized spaces and social labor.

On an evening in January 1944, Guggenheim hosted one of her infamous "whiskey and potato chip" soirées at her duplex on East 61st Street in New York. According to her account of the episode in *Out of this Century*, Pollock arrived at the apartment that morning to install a mural she had commissioned for the entrance hall, but

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[63] "Chaos, Damn It!" *Time* in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 70.
[64] Jackson Pollock, "Letter to the Editor," *Time* in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 71.
[65] Guggenheim, *Peggy Guggenheim: Confessions of an Art Addict*, 145.

because it was so large—it was, in fact, the largest piece he had made to date—he had difficulty fitting it and, as Pollock became increasingly agitated, Guggenheim called upon Marcel Duchamp and sculptor David Hare to help. [Figure 1.2] While Duchamp and Hare were busy hanging the canvas in time for the party, Pollock started drinking. By that evening he was drunk. During the party he stumbled into the sitting room where the guests had gathered, unzipped his pants, and urinated in Guggenheim's marble fireplace.[66] Although details of the story have change slightly in each of her three accounts of it, in none of the versions does she state explicitly that Pollock's behavior offended what many have described as her strong sense of propriety. In his biography though, Anton Gill writes, generically, that over time "Peggy had become fed up with Pollock's rudeness" and adds, by way of explanation, that, "she was a stickler for conventional good manners."[67]

A number of other anecdotes that circulate in Guggenheim lore, while not specifically about Pollock, reiterate this characterization. In *Mistress of Modernism*, biographer Mary V. Dearborn describes a frequently cited incident that took place after Guggenheim moved to Venice, where American poet Alan Ansen introduced her to a number of Beat writers stopping through. Allegedly, when Ansen took William S. Burroughs to a party Guggenheim held at her palazzo for the British consul, Ansen advised Burroughs to kiss Guggenheim's hand upon meeting her. The story goes, that a drunk Burroughs replied, "I will be glad to kiss her cunt if that's the custom." This sardonic remark was overheard by another guest, repeated to Guggenheim, and resulted

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[66] Ibid., 106–109.
[67] Anton Gill, *Peggy Guggenheim: Life of an Art Addict* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 379.

in her rescinding Burroughs's invitation to the party.[68] "And of course there was the incident when Guggenheim visited Ansen in 1957," writes Barry Miles in his book *The Beat Hotel*.[69] Miles reports that Guggenheim was at Ansen's to attend a poetry reading, and that at some point over the course of the event poet Peter Orlovsky threw a sweaty towel at his boyfriend Allen Ginsberg that nearly hit Guggenheim. (In other accounts, including Dearborn's, the towel did in fact hit her!) Whether or not biographers have captured something of the circumstances that resulted in Guggenheim's annoyance, by all accounts, she withdrew Orlovsky and Ginsbergs's invitations to a party she was giving in honor of Nicolas Calas. When news of this series of events reached Burroughs, he wrote Ansen to express his lack of surprise: "It was hardly in the cards that Peggy Guggenheim should find Allen and Peter congenial. However it does seem unreasonable to move in admittedly bohemian circles and simultaneously demand conventional behavior."[70]

I am not arguing that the events I have described above—knowledge of which I have drawn from sources not *conventionally* deemed appropriate for extensive citation in scholarly writing—happened in just the ways I have narrated them. In fact, whether they happened at all, matters less than what we can take their traction and currency within historical narratives to indicate. Informed by the writings of feminist and queer studies theorists Irit Rogoff and Gavin Butt, I traffic in gossip, "a distinctly feminized communicative activity," not to put forth evidence of "truths," but rather to pursue a

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[68] Dearborn, *Mistress of* Modernism, 285.
[69] Barry Miles, *The Beat Hotel: Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Corso in Paris, 1958–1963* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 76.
[70] Ibid., 77.

counter-historical method that troubles their coherence.[71] I take seriously a mode of communication that has been "reviled in relation to empirical and verifiable factualities," and that is reserved, according to prevailing systems of knowledge, "for those who have nothing better to do," in other words, not "men of the world," but women and feminized men.[72] Rogoff quotes from social scientist Patricia Spacks's 1985 book *Gossip* to argue that the testimonial power of gossip manifests in the "*relationship[s]* such gossip expresses and sustain" and not necessarily "the information it promulgates."[73]

According to the ways in which these accounts of Guggenheim's encounters with avant-garde male artists get mobilized, she serves as the foil to the "unconventional"; she is "heteronomously 'governed by external rules,'" whereas they are "self-governed" and thus unconcerned with the staid clichés of bourgeois domestic life.[74] It is not by accident that in reading about Guggenheim we keep running across *these* kinds of narratives—they are prominent in every biography devoted to her—and do not come upon texts in which her feminized social labor is deemed sufficiently important to warrant theorization. (And this is not to say, I should note, that Guggenheim did not traffic in the very myths that worked in the service of her trivialization.) The fact that the stories that cast her as "a stickler for good manners" and her male avant-garde interlocutors as idiosyncratic and norm defying have gotten so much traction, speaks to what Rogoff describes as a deep

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[71] Irit Rogoff, "Gossip as Testimony: A Postmodern Signature," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Griselda Pollock (New York: Routledge, 1996), 76. See also: Gavin Butt, *Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World 1948–1963* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
[72] Ibid., 76, 79.
[73] Ibid., 81. Emphasis mine.
[74] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 15.

and lingering investment "in the imaginary concepts of bohemia as linked to radically innovative art and to heroic artistic agents."[75] Ultimately, Rogoff argues:

> So conditioned are we by the hierarchical values of what constitutes a serious cultural endeavour, that we either co-opt these small-scale narratives into the grand scheme of heroic activity or we allow them to slip into a domestic netherworld.[76]

The story of Pollock getting drunk and peeing in Guggenheim's fireplace during one of her parties has functioned in precisely this way: to fortify his immutable image as an erratic genius driven by what Sam Hunter described in the 1956 MoMA catalog as "[a]n uncompromising spirit of revolt."[77] How might we bring to critical consciousness what Rogoff describes as that which slips into domestic netherworlds, without merely bringing it into the fold of "grand schemes of heroic activity"? Instead of simply asserting that we should recognize, where we had not previously, the role Guggenheim's feminized social labor played in fostering Pollock's success, how do we imagine alternative narratives, which might have hung in the smoke-filled, whiskey-scented air, amid the idle chatter, gossip, and guests circulating at East 61st Street? Ultimately, I will argue that how we think about time plays a crucial role in the cultivation and maintenance of this project, but in order to arrive at that conclusion, first let us draw from the domestic netherworlds to mobilize what Jacques Derrida describes as "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy […] a law of abounding, of excess, a law of participation

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[75] Ibid., 76.
[76] Ibid., 77.
[77] Sam Hunter, "Jackson Pollock" Museum of Modern Art *Bulletin* Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (1956): n.p.

without membership," in other words, a means of troubling the currency of this legendary anecdote.[78]

Before the emergence of what Amelia Jones describes as the "performative Pollock who would be spoken of as one of the many origins of postmodernism," and before his persona and production were reevaluated in terms of their ideological expediency to a masculinist US imperial project, there were two paradigms for situating the artist within the annals of history.[79] According to the first, Pollock, like a meteor, came out of nowhere. Preexisting artistic styles and movements provided only something against which he could react. Sam Hunter describes this phenomenon in terms often used in the telling of such origin stories: "In the beginning," he writes,

> Pollock had felt his artistic mission was to disorient, to unsettle and to promote disorder, and with an unexampled savagery he proceeded to make his art a kind of wrecking enterprise. His first exhibited work looked somewhat like a battlefield after a heated engagement, strewn in this case with the corpses of Picasso, the Surrealists, Miro, Kandinsky perhaps, and fragments of American Indian art. The accelerating tempo of his revolt led him to search for a total freedom that would transcend his artistic sources and his own mood of crisis. He created finally an autonomous and sovereign artistic reality, powered only by its own dynamism, monumental in scale and breadth of feeling.[80]

In this triumphal account of Pollock's creative actualization, which traffics in nationalist and biblical myths, the fact that Hunter switches from listing the casualties of Pollock's war as people to "fragments of American Indian art," does not prevent it from conjuring the image of actual Native bodies. Written in the year of the devastating Indian Relocation Act, which aimed to remove tribal members from the reservations onto which

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[78] Quoted in Rofogg, "Gossip as Testimony," 76.
[79] Jones, *Body Art*, 56. For an example of these reevaluations see Griselda Pollock, *Looking Back to the Future 1990–1970: Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture* (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishing Association, 2001).
[80] Hunter, "Jackson Pollock," n.p.

they had been forced by the deadly Indian Relocation Act of 1830, Hunter's text suggests a likeness between the cowboy painter and the United States, which was also imagined to have been a self-defined masculine force that came into being by projecting onto feminized and undefined wide open spaces. [Figure 1.3]

Mrs. Sobel

In an essay that appeared in *Art Forum* about a decade later, art historian William Rubin took to task this tendency to disassociate Pollock from an anterior tradition of modern painting. He cautioned that such a practice worked only in the service of the artist's detractors who, on this basis of it existing outside recognizable traditions of art, claimed that his work did not constitute painting at all. Some of these critics, who were writing in the 1940s and 1950s, likened his compositions to "baked-macaroni," the implication being that his work was as deliberate as a sloppy bowl of noodles.[81] Other critics lambasted the canvases for looking like a "run-on pictorial fabric that had no beginning or end, and which Pollock […] sold by the yard like a textile, ostensibly for the purposes of interior decoration."[82] In this formulation, the artist's paintings are no more rarified than a mass-produced domestic object.

Over the course of Rubin's text, he sets out to demonstrate that Pollock's work is not driven by a mystical and primitive force, as Hunter would have us believe, but rather that it is "firmly rooted in European traditions." Rubin thus describes Pollock's work as "individualistic, complex, subtle and sophisticated," and part of an "unfolding" series of

[81] As quoted by Manny Farber, "Jackson Pollock" *The New Republic* 112, No. 6 (June 25, 1945): 871–72 reprinted in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews*, 53.
[82] William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition" *Art Forum,* February–May, 1967 in ibid., 118.

artistic developments that extend from Impressionism to Cubism and Surrealism.[83] His teleological analysis thus seeks to legitimize Pollock by locating him along the trajectory of a dignified patrilineage. (Pollock himself would have, undoubtedly, identified more with Hunter's characterization than Rubin's, since he participated, as I have suggested, in a postwar American discourse that sought to reject the cultural authority of Europe.)

In an attempt to establish that the all-over style for which Pollock is known was directly influenced by Cubist compositions that Mark Tobey created during the late thirties and forties, Rubin draws visual similarities between the two bodies of work. Ultimately though, he is unable to meet his own standard of proof to assert that Pollock had ever seen any of his predecessor's paintings. Rubin concludes that even if Pollock had "arrived at his all-over style without having seen the Tobeys […] he had, nevertheless, seen in 1944 and again in 1946 a few paintings by Janet Sobel that prophesied his own style more closely than did the Tobeys."[84] Like most of the critics who suggest a relationship between Sobel's work and Pollock's, Rubin goes on to describe her as a Russian-born housewife who took up painting after having had five children, followed by a number of grandchildren. He emphasizes that she is a self-taught "primitive" painter, and thus his use of the word prophesize to qualify the relationship between her precedent work and Pollock's subsequent work is significant. As Anna Chave notes in a 1993 article in which she attempts to reevaluate Pollock's work in feminist terms, casting Sobel as a domestic, "primitive," and premonitory figure, effectively serves to reinforce "Pollock's status as the legitimate and unique

[83] Ibid.,119.
[84] Ibid., 163.

progenitor."[85] Yet, she also goes on to claim that Pollock's paintings are indeed "definitively" distinct from Sobel's because of their "heroic scale."[86]

Ms. Krasner

The aim of Chave's revisionist reading is to suggest that although Pollock has been firmly associated with virile masculinity in postwar cultural discourses, we can in fact read his associations with "nonknowledge, wordlessness, and incoherence," as evidence of his assumption of the "position of the woman." Drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of reversal, Chave suggests that we reclaim the value of Pollock's work from a feminist perspective when we recognize its associations with the decentered and the voiceless as feminine rather than masculine. She anticipates criticisms from feminist scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Susan Rubin Suleiman who have argued that claiming a privileged place for men who willfully participate in marginal cultural production at the "place of displacement" effectively doubly displaces women.[87] Although Chave notes that Pollock did "on some level" use "his masculine authority to appropriate a feminine space," she nonetheless insists that he is more successful at occupying this space than his wife and fellow artist, Lee Krasner.

What prevents Krasner from achieving success as an artist, Chave argues, is that while Pollock exhibits "rampant lawlessness," tied up with feminine associations, Krasner demonstrates "rampant order," tied up with the masculine. Among the evidence she offers to support this claim is that Krasner looked dutifully to Europe, the

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[85] Anna C. Chave, "Pollock and Krasner: Script and Postscript," *RES* (Cambridge, Mass.) 24 (Autumn 1993), reprinted in ibid., 273.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 272.

metaphorical fatherland, for artistic inspiration, and, as a result, painted like "a man," or, more precisely, "a succession of men." Pollock, on the other hand, attempted to visualize the New World, "represented [by] the Mother," and marked by a lack of cultivation, knowledge, or authority. Chave draws on biographical accounts to report that Krasner was domineeringly orderly and that it was for this reason that she worked at a small scale in her "Little Image" series. It was a scale, Chave speculates, that offered the artist more control. She casts Pollock as a speechless and "uncouth high school dropout," in contrast to Krasner, whom she imagines as effusively talkative in the advancement of her husband's work, and as mobilizing her urbanity and cultivation in the service of his social education and improvement. While "he prevailed in the studio," Chave goes on to suggest that, "there were ways in which she prevailed at home."[88] [Figure 1.4]

Ultimately for Chave, the work these artists produced reflected their opposing dispositions—which she claims to be gendered feminine and masculine respectively. Pollock, who worked in "the capacious barn in back," created "monumental pictures" that were "free and fluid." Krasner, who worked in "the small upstairs bedroom of the couple's farmhouse," created "diminutive" images that were "constricted, congested, obsessive." Claiming both psychological and biographical insight, Chave concludes that what kept Krasner "enchained," artistically, was "no doubt her self-appointed role of serving as Pollock's voice."[89] She qualifies Pollock's freedom as a manifestation of the feminine because of the fact it is not freedom for its own sake, but rather "freedom to express frustration," frustration, she implies, at the constraints imposed by ordering

[88] Ibid., 264, 272, 263.
[89] Ibid., 268.

structures such as language and civilization.[90] Indeed, Krasner might not have been at such liberty.

Not only does Chave do more to uphold than trouble the gendered divisions she mobilizes, she also has a tendency to get her binaries mixed up. The terms in which she describes Krasner are not unilaterally masculinized, but are, in fact, closely affiliated with the work of the hostess: loquaciousness, refinement, orderliness, and domestic confinement. Rather than reverse the terms of Pollockian discourses, I suggest instead that we linger in the cracks and netherworlds into which small-scale domestic narratives slip. When we do so, we become conscious of the ways in which these discourses work hard to keep the domestic excesses that threaten to contaminate them out of sight.

Although Chave suggests that Pollock's heroically-scaled paintings were inspired by the wide-open vistas of the American West, which she likened to the feminine void, in turns out that the first time Pollock painted at a large scale was at Guggenheim's instruction, when she commissioned him to paint the mural to decorate her apartment.[91] Many of the critics who recount the circumstances surrounding the making of the wall-sized painting, including Rubin, use the word "decorate," it seems, to trivialize Guggenheim's role in facilitating it.[92] But in response to those critics, including Harold Rosenberg and Aldous Huxley, who likened Pollock's allover compositions to wallpaper, modernist champion Clement Greenburg noted that only "those not sincerely in touch with contemporary painting," would puzzle over the distinction. [93] In an article printed in

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[90] Ibid., 273.
[91] Ibid., 273, 271.
[92] Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition," in *Jackson Pollock*, 120.
[93] In a 1948 roundtable discussion on modern art in *Life,* Aldous Huxley said Pollock's work seemed to him "like a panel for a wallpaper which is repeated indefinitely around

the women's fashion magazine *Vogue* in 1967, he addressed what he perceived to be the difference between art and wallpaper more directly, perhaps out of consideration for who he imagined his audience to be. He noted that Pollock's allover "layout does not really repeat the same figure or motif from one edge of the canvas to the other like a wallpaper pattern."[94] Naturally, the difference between Pollock's work and wallpaper, according to Greenberg, is that Pollock's compositions *do not repeat*.

When we consider Pollock's work within the context of those domestic narratives that have fallen away from it, the oppositions that have structured discussions of his artistic practice become unsustainable. His compositions share affinity with Sobel's, which Rubin reports as having been described as "compounded" of textures and materials drawn from domestic netherworlds: "marble, mother-of-pearl, multi-colored spider webs and a splatter of milk."[95] The heroic scale of such works as *Alchemy* from 1947 and *Number 31* from 1950—which Chave claims to be what distinguishes the paintings from "Grandma Sobel's," such as her *Milky Way* from 1945—was initially determined by a domestic space that Guggenheim describes as marked by a "very feminine atmosphere." [Figure 1.5] *Mural*, which he created in 1943 to decorate a wall of Guggenheim's apartment, hung, like wallpaper, in the same space as the "brassieres, panties, and blouses" that Guggenheim's maid, who did the household laundry, hung to dry in the

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the wall," as cited in Chave, "Pollock and Krasner" in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews*, 278 n. 64. In an article on the work of American Action Painters printing in *Art News* in 1952, Rosenberg claimed Pollock's work to look like "apocalyptic wallpaper," as cited in Pepe Karmel, "Introduction," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews*, 11. Text quoted in Clement Greenberg, "Art," *The Nation* 166 No. 4 (January 24, 1948), reprinted in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews*, 59.

[94] Clement Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock: 'Inspiration, Vision, Intuitive Decision," *Vogue* 149, No. 7 (April 1, 1967), reprinted in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews*, 110.

[95] Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition," in *Jackson Pollock*, 164.

kitchen.[96] To be clear, I'm not suggesting we claim for his paintings alternative sources of origin in the domestic, but rather that we seriously engage those domestic narratives that have been sublimated in Pollockian discourses, so that, ultimately, we might register the feminized labor on which Pollock's production relied.

Mr. Kaprow

As Ameila Jones explains in the chapter of *Body Art* devoted to examining Pollock as a figure who contradictorily straddles modern and postmodern modes of subjectivity, photographic representations of the artist in the *act* of painting also signposted philosophical shifts in the conception of art making from object-based to processual and performance-based. It might seem then that Pollock's work calls for the expansion of the analytical social horizon that I implied was necessary above. Allan Kaprow certainly puts stock in this idea in his iconic 1958 essay, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," in which he traces a line of decent from Pollock's paintings to the happenings Kaprow was famous for having inaugurated in 1959.

For Jones, Kaprow's essay provides a means of challenging those histories of contemporary performance that claim happenings to have originated in European avant-garde movements of the early twentieth-century, moving, in 1952, through John Cage's "event" at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, before arriving onto the scene in the early sixties.[97] While she notes that such accounts are not, strictly speaking, false, she also takes issue with the way in which they construe happenings as having emerged in

[96] Guggenheim, *Out of this Century* (1980), 258.
[97] Among such histories that Jones mentions explicitly is Roselee Goldberg's influential *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* rev. ed. (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 2001.)

strict opposition to the formalist movement for which Pollock has long stood as an emblem. More precisely, she argues that this paternal lineage "evacuates the history of its conflicted, discursive dimension."[98] Kaprow's account, on the other hand, aligns what Jones describes as the "performative Pollock" with the "open-ended, and processual concepts of art making that we now associate with practices critical of modernist formalism." Although Jones acknowledges that in Kaprow's discussion of Pollock there is a "lingering romanticism," (by which she means that Kaprow characterizes Pollock in heroic and self-identical terms, even as he argues that Pollock offered a means of challenging dominant modernist ideas about the art object and the artist) for Jones this is a *contradictory* element of Kaprow's characterization.[99] By casting this romanticism as "lingering," she suggests it to be a vestige of modernism rather than endemic also to postmodernism. But there are indications that the authority of the male artistic voice gets reaffirmed, rather than contradictorily subsists, over the course of the performative turn that Kaprow describes. While the social horizon extends over the course of this turn, it is still autonomous male figures such as Kaprow who sanction the parameters of such extensions.

Kaprow, in fact, traces this reaffirmation for us in a passage in which he describes the way in which Pollock's work breaks definitively with the tradition of painting and extends beyond the canvas into the extra-aesthetic, and thus the environmental, the performative, and the social. It wasn't merely the way in which Pollock painted—by "dripping, slashing, squeezing and daubing" paint onto the face and sides of canvases placed horizontally on the floor—that gestured beyond the rectangular field of the two-

[98] Jones, *Body Ar*t, 60.
[99] Ibid., 56.

dimensional art object, it was also the scale at which he painted.[100] Kaprow describes Pollock's mural-scale works as precursors to happening environments and offers this clarification about their relationship to the everyday:

> Pollock's choice of great size resulted in our being confronted, assaulted, sucked in. Yet we must not confuse the effect of these with that of the hundreds of large paintings done in the Renaissance, which glorified and idealized the everyday world familiar to the observer […]. Pollock offers no such familiarity, and our every day world of convention and habit is replaced by the one created by the artist.[101]

Kaprow imagines the social space that extends beyond the physical dimensions of Pollock's work as defined in antagonistic relation to the conventional everyday and as unambiguously dictated by the artist's design.

This text has implications for our reading of Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, the iconic art event through which he made his initial attempt to confuse art and life, and from which subsequent happenings took their name. About Kaprow's happenings, Gavin Butt writes that they are "'known of' and not known and they are so 'only through their dispersed traces: hearsay and gossip, reminiscence, and a few photographs and documents.'"[102] As Butt discusses at length in his essay "Happenings in History, or The Epistemology of the Memoir," one such trace is the autobiography of African American writer, Samuel Delany, known both for his science fiction and for his academic writings in queer and literary theory. Delany, along with his cousin Boyd, were the event's only

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[100] Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," in *The Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 3–4.
[101] Ibid., 6.
[102] Gavin Butt, "Happenings in History, or, The Epistemology of the Memoir," *Oxford Art Journal* (2001) 24 (2): 123. In Butt's text he cites Benjamin H.D. Buchloh and Judith F. Rodenbeck, *Experiments In the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts–Events, Objects, Documents* (Wallach Art Gallery: New York, 1999), 111.

black and, Butt speculates, only uninvited guests.[103] (Although Shirley Prendergast, a black woman, participated in the happening as of one of the event's cast members.)[104] What compels Butt about Delany's account is that in it he does not claim privileged knowledge about the iconic happening for having been there. Instead, he remembers that his experience was marked, from the outset, by uncertainty.

Much of the uncertainty, Delany suggests, was generated by the fact that each member of the audience was only able to occupy one of six chambers that made up the event-space over its course. Translucent polythene walls, pulled across an unpainted wooden support structure, divided each of the six spaces from the others and Delany writes that, "You could make out only the ghost of what was going on in the chambers beside or across from yours."[105] [Figure 1.6] It was also unclear when the happening began and ended. After a series of assistants came and went from Delany's designated space—bringing with them an object or a noisemaker or two—a woman in a leotard came into the chamber and smiling announced, "That's it." But it was not until Kaprow himself walked by and said, "Okay, it's over now," that they felt certain it was acceptable to stand up from their folding chairs and walk out.

Although this anecdote suggests the ways in which, via Delany's telling of it, *18 Happenings* can serve as a productive model for thinking about subjectivity in relation to history making, for our immediate purposes, it is also suggestive of the fact that although the artwork is located in spacio-temporal contingencies rather than in a specific object, Kaprow nevertheless retains his authority to dictate where and when these contingencies

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[103] Ibid., 117.
[104] Jane Blocker, *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), xii.
[105] Ibid., 116.

begin and end.[106] Kaprow performs for us this act of delimitation in a 1966 book he wrote and designed with the intention of "introducing" his reader to recent developments in art that had facilitated the emergence of *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings* (also the book's title).

The opening of the book is not marked by a title, copyright, or acknowledgements page, but rather by a page on which the word "STEP" is printed in bold capital letters opposite a flyleaf. On the verso, the words "RIGHT IN" appear opposite a photograph of Kaprow, using his left hand to pull back the bottom corner of a large rectangular piece of fabric hanging from what appears to be a door-sized opening in the wall. With his other hand extended and open before him in a welcoming gesture, his body slightly bowed, and a pursed-lip smile across his face, he performs the role of the host greeting his guests. [Figure 1.7] Although this photograph was taken in conjunction with the happening *Coca Cola, Shirley Cannonball?,* its relationship to the event itself is not the source of its meaning here.[107] A note on the photographs that appear in the book gives an indication of the way in which Kaprow intends the photographs to function within the context of the

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[106] This is the very compelling premise of Butt's essay: in effect that *18 Happenings* performs for Delany "the subjective conditions of historical writing." Butt cites from Delany's text in which he asserts that "[A]s a representation and analysis of the situation of the subject in history […] I don't think Kaprow's work could have been improved upon." Ibid., 119–120.

[107] According to Jeff Kelley's description of the event in *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 49–50, the happening was comprised of a ten-minute dance routine performed by large three-dimensional models of a foot and a torso, each of which was occupied by a person who animated the object from within. Kelley notes that the abstract and sinuous shape of the foot was inspired by a foot copied from a painting by Surrealist Joan Miró. The shape of the foot also appears on the vertically oriented banner that Kaprow pulls back in the photograph associated with the happening.

book. "Photographs of art works have their own reality," he writes.[108] In other words, he meant this particular image to operate not as a signifier for the durational happening, but rather for it to signal to readers that the book is meant as a performance into which they are welcomed, the parameters of which Kaprow is present (photographically) to mark. What does it mean then for Kaprow to perform the role of the host who controls the boundaries of where (in space and time) a performance begins and ends?

To answer this question the etymology of the word hospitality, which Tracey McNulty traces in her philosophical study *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity*, is helpful. She notes that the word is made up of two primary Latin roots: "*hostis*—meaning "guest" or "host"—and *pet-* or *pot*, meaning "master."[109] These two fields of meaning became locked into interdependence through their transmission in a single word, but McNulty points out that they have remained, nonetheless, in contradictory tension. Not only does the Latin word *potis* indicate mastery over the domain of the home and all the subordinates and possessions therein, but also mastery over selfhood and identity. In fact, being the master of one's self, is a precondition for assuming domestic and social power. McNulty explains:

> The one who offers hospitality must be the master *chez lui*; the "I am in my place" […] is part of the condition of the offering. But as the etymology makes clear, this "place" or *chez soi* is not just a dwelling place—the house in which the master makes the law—but the fact of residing within an identity, the *chez soi* of ipseity in which the master gathers together and disposes of what is proper to him. The master who is eminently himself offers hospitality from the place where he is "at home," from a position of ipseity as self-identity.[110]

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[108] Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1966), 21.
[109] Tracey McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), ix.
[110] Ibid., x.

In other words, the linguistic root *potis* serves to make reference to the autonomous, self-contained, and self-governing subject that we have discussed. The Latin word *hostis*, on the other hand, makes reference to a gesture of reciprocity between an inter-subjective host and guest, and specifically "he who compensates a gift with a counter-gift." The best host then is the one who gives the most of himself away, contradictorily undercutting the dominion on which his hospitality is predicated in the root *potis*. Importantly, the root word *hostis* makes no distinction between host and guest. Perhaps as a result of the anxieties such confusions produced, in Roman and Greek law, the word shifted from indicating reciprocity to tension. Ultimately, the host became extricated from the association altogether and it became a designation for "stranger," and even "enemy." These trajectories suggest how *hostis* came also to be the root of the word hostility.[111]

Since McNulty examines hospitality as it manifests in early religious traditions and archaic practice, the host within the context of her study "is almost invariably male" and often without female equivalent. She points out, in fact, that within biblical and classical antiquity, and even some traditional societies today, women cannot assume the role of the hostess because "they are neither invested with a legal identity or social status nor able to dispose of their own possessions."[112] Although she considers the question of how to navigate the marginalization and devaluation of the hostess within a study of hospitality, she does not consider ways in which, even in ancient or biblical contexts, they might, to recall a bit of text by Derrida, participate unlawfully, without membership or the way in which we might understand hospitality not simply to be an isolated act of exchange but, more complexly, to be constituted by enabling and durational labor.

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[111] Ibid., xii.
[112] Ibid., xxvii.

Rather, she argues that the only way in which women took part in hospitable acts were as objects to be gifted from one man to another. Thus, they signify for McNulty "the presence of something improper within the host's personal property, a foreign presence internal to the host's "'eminent personification' of identity."[113] What this means is that women function for McNulty as they had for Chave, as discursive or metaphorical entities, representing the threat posed by the presence of the other within the confines of the seemingly autonomous male subject. In McNulty's study, women are thus constituted by a limited biological or culturally gendered reality.[114] As a result, they are largely absented from the text and are replaced by the feminine, a displacement, as Suleiman points out, that is often at work in the French psychoanalytic texts on which McNulty relies.[115]

It is important to note that her approach is motivated by her efforts to avoid assigning essentializing traits to the feminine—a problem I take up more explicitly in chapters three and four of this thesis—but she ends up participating in the elision of the gendered labor of the hostess that is the concern of the present chapter. Yet, to return to Kaprow, McNulty's definition of the philosophical parameters of hospitality provides a useful framework through which to consider his welcoming gesture. The way in which he

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[113] Ibid., xxviii.
[114] McNeuty's approach is driven by a desire to extricate from femininity "allegedly feminine attributes" such as "maternal protectiveness, selfless love, and homemaking," and yet the implication of her analysis is that the woman is reduced to that which resides within the male. She writes: "My focus is not on the feminine as a generous or selfless mode of welcome or "way of being," or the female subject who inhabits the symbolic arena differently than man, but the extralegal status of the feminine, its "thingly" quality, its status as a possession or property "internal" to man. For if woman functions as the internal marking of the Other, what she is internal to is an identity figure not only as "virile," but male." Ibid., xxvii.
[115] Suleiman, *Subversive Intent*, 14.

addresses himself to the outsider, the stranger, the other, as well as the way in which he mobilizes language and occupies space, suggests an attempt to differentiate clearly between where his "domain" begins and ends. As the conditions for extending such an offer reside in clearly defined parameters of selfhood, his self-containment also seems to be something upon which Kaprow's textural performance insists. As he asserts in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, the contaminating other against which his subjecthood is positioned is the feminized bourgeois whom he names, at two points in his text, as the "enemy."[116] Although Kaprow articulates this hostility to be part of an emancipatory avant-garde project, as the etymology of the word suggests, it also has something to do with a desire to delimit the masculine self from the feminine other.

Mr. Marinetti

"Welcome!" is printed in cursive script on the first page of the catalog published in conjunction with the Smart Museum's exhibition *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* that opened in Chicago in 2012 before making a national tour. Inadvertently, it repeats Kaprow's hospitable gesture before going on to establish its premise in subsequent pages. Adding to the cacophony of voices to speak to the significance of the "social turn" in contemporary art, *Feast* attempts to track expansions in visual art practices over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries via the overriding theme of hospitality. As the title suggests, the exhibition primarily imagines the artist's adoption of the tactics of the hostess as working in the service of the disruption of artistic and social norms.

[116] See Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life,* 49, 59.

In her introduction to the catalog, curator Stephanie Smith takes cues from RoseLee Goldberg's seminal history of performance art, first published in 1979 and then reissued again in 1988 and 2001, by tracing the origin of artistic engagement with hospitality and meal preparation back to the Italian Futurists, the quintessential avant-garde antagonists of the twentieth century. The way in which the *Feast* narrative begins with the Futurists, then moves through Fluxus, a 1960s movement with which Kaprow was affiliated but not an official member, to arrive, via relational aesthetics, at the embodied, inter-relational, durational, and meal-based projects that make up the contemporary works in the exhibition is suggestive of why neither the exhibition nor the catalog do much to consider how feminized durational labor figures into the show's broad themes or specific artworks. Among those projects that seem particularly well suited to analysis in these terms are Theaster Gates's *Soul Food Pavilion*, to which I will return in the next chapter, and an installation devoted to J. Morgan Puett's domestic experiment Mildred's Lane, which I consider at length in chapter three. I argue that *Feast*'s emphasis on radicality and antagonism—which in turn results in a failure to register the role of feminized durational labor in artworks that readily invite, and even elicit, such considerations—serves as an indication of systematic elisions at work within broader discourses on contemporary art.

In keeping with the model Smith sets out in her introduction, it is followed by excerpts from Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *The Manifesto* of *Futurist Cooking*, first published in the *Gazetta del Popolo* in Turin in 1930, amidst economic, political, and social instability. In a subsequent essay, art historian Hannah Higgins charts a relationship between Futurism and Fluxus via what turns out to be the highly contentious

topic of spaghetti. Higgins's essay is playful, but it nevertheless gives clear indication of the conceptual underpinnings and stakes of the exhibition. She formulates it in response to one of the central tenets of Marinetti's food manifesto: the necessity of abolishing pasta from the Italian man's diet.

Not only does Marinetti decry this "starchy food" for its affiliation with culinary tradition, the overturn of which he calls for, he also disdains the ways in which it blocks, weighs down, slows, and generally interferes with the physical vitality and mental agility of the male body. He notes that because it is a food that is "swallowed, rather than masticated" it is not broken down by saliva but rather its "tangled threads" move directly from the mouth to the pancreas and the liver, "interrupting the equilibrium in these organs," and resulting in "lassitude, pessimism, nostalgic inactivity and neutralism."[117]

Ultimately, in the food regimen towards which Marinetti aspires, the body's nutritional needs would be satisfied by pills and powders devised by chemists. Not only would such substances reduce the "volume and weight" of food consumed for the purposes of subsistence, they would also, he argues, reduce the cost of living and the number of work hours, thus freeing up time to have less frequent, but more inventive meals. As Higgins notes, rather than sitting around the family kitchen table sharing a humble bowl of spaghetti, Marinetti imagines the eaters of the future at a banquet table, sipping on "exotic liquor (Muscat wine, Marsla, Whiskey, Alkermes, and Vermouth)," eating "labor-intensive food (sculpted meat skyscrapers, Chicken Fiat, dried lettuce

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[117] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "Manifesto of Futurist Cooking," *Gazzeta del Polol* (Turin), December 28, 1930, reprinted in *Futurist Cookbook*, trans. Suzanne Brill (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1989), 35; reprinted also in *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art*, ed. Stephanie Smith (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum, University of Chicago, 2013), 34–39.

leaves, and hollow banana peels)" made of "costly and hard to find ingredients (rose petals, caviar, cockscombs, and pineapple)."[118] [Figure 1.8]

Higgins explains that before the invention of the mechanical pasta press in the seventeenth century, pasta had to be made by hand kneading, a process that was laborious and time consuming. It was thus expensive and consumed almost exclusively by the upper classes. But the development of pasta drying and mechanical production processes in the nineteenth century turned it into a cheap and easy-to-make food staple, consumed regularly by the Italian working and peasant classes. Marinetti's aversion to pasta clearly had its roots in classism. His evocation of Italian men atrophying from their consumption of pasta, was not, in fact, dissimilar from the kinds of anti-Italian sentiments that were prevalently waged against Italian American immigrants at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. But by midcentury, thanks to the introduction of canned spaghetti, such as Chef Boyardee, to American markets, as well as the affordability of dried pasta in the United States during the war years, spaghetti had become thoroughly incorporated into the American diet and even appeared as an icon of American popular and consumer culture in James Rosenquist's mural-size paintings.[119] (It was likely this association—with the banalities of middle-class American life—that the critic who likened Pollock's work to "baked macaroni" was attempting to evoke.)

Mr. Williams, Mr. Filliou, and Mr. Anderson

In Higgins telling of it, it is at this point in the history of spaghetti that the history of Fluxus joins up with it. While Marinetti perceived the cheapness and quickness of

[118] Higgins, "Schlurrrp!: The Case For and Against Spaghetti" in *Feast*, 43.
[119] Ibid., 42–44.

spaghetti to be among its many undesirable attributes, for Fluxus poet Emmett Williams and French poet Robert Filliou these were characteristics they valued and which led to their invention, in 1963, of *The Spaghetti Sandwich*. Made from leftover cold spaghetti noodles and red sauce squished between two slices of bread, the sandwich was "born from necessity" during a time when Williams and Filliou found it "hard enough to feed [themselves]."[120] [Figure 1.9] This was one of a number of food-based projects predicated on the sixties-era, new left artist ethos of getting by on and sharing low-cost food.[121] But, as Cecilia Novero notes in her book *Antidiets of the Avant Garde*, it also represents, relatedly, a certain contempt for bourgeois domestic values that in postwar America would have included balanced nutrition, and perhaps also conventions such as following recipes and warming up food rather than eating it cold, straight out of the refrigerator. The alliterative *Spaghetti Sandwich* is made, she writes, with "everyday ingredients that come together in unorthodox and *informe* agglomerates of dubious 'good' taste."[122]

In other words, the two touchstone movements through which *Feast* brackets and defines the concept of hospitality represent the two distinct manifestations of avant-garde excoriation of the bourgeois domestic sphere, associated with femininity. Recall that the first, which is adopted by the Futurists, is "an elitist stance opposed to the 'hidebound, moralistic, and spiritually narrow bourgeois subject'" and the second, which is adopted

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[120] Emmett Williams, *My Life in Flux—And Vice Versa* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992, 128 as quoted in Higgins, "Schlurrrp!" in *Feast*, 44.
[121] Higgins cites Alison Knowles's 1969 performance art piece *Identical Lunch,* Carol Gooden and Gordon Matta-Clark's FOOD restaurant which opened in Manhattan in 1971, and Daniel Spoerri's restaurant projects of the sixties and seventies as among such projects. Ibid., 45.
[122] Cecilia Novero, *Antidiets of the Avant Garde: From Futurist Cooking to Eat Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 224–225.

by Fluxus artists, is "a populist position [aligned] with the exploited worker."[123] It was Raymond Williams who described the tendency of modernist artists to reject bourgeois values in an attempt to obfuscate affiliation with the debased domestic realm of women and children. In his influential chapter "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," Andreas Huyssen also discusses the ways in which populist avant-garde artists purported to champion the masses but nonetheless disavowed mass culture, which they related, unequivocally, with the feminine.[124] In the postwar period, the need to refute affiliation between the American man and the feminine became increasingly urgent. As Jones explains in *Body Art*, in the wake of the Second World War and over the course of the Cold War and the rise of corporate America, there were pervasive anxieties about the conformist mass-oriented man, exemplified by the Nazis in Germany and the Communists in the Soviet Union. Such a man was "enfeebled in his dependence on others—including and especially women—for cues regarding proper bourgeois taste and behaviors."[125] Jones notes that "anxieties about the feminization of the American male" were not just voiced in popular culture, but rather "on all levels of American culture from the end of the war onward."[126] In short, women, their increased demands, and the mass-consumer culture with which they were affiliated were to blame, many speculated, for the threats posed to the virility of the American male.

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[123] Amelia Jones draws upon the work of Raymond Williams to articulate these two positions in *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 65.
[124] Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) 44–64.
[125] Jones, *Body Art*, 78.
[126] Ibid.

Across the non-uniform shift from modernism to postmodern, this anti-bourgeois attitude remains, I argue, tied to an individuating project, but often takes the form of emancipatory struggles against systems of power, including classism, colonialism, and capitalism, in the sustainment of which normative bourgeois culture has been variously implicated.[127] Again, my aim here is not to refute or negate the importance of these struggles. Instead, it is to point to the ways in which postwar avant-garde emancipatory projects have often, in the service of talking on large-scale systems of power, disavowed their relation with and reliance on small-scale, long-durational, feminized labor that is performed, out of necessity, in compromised relationship to such systems.

To return to pasta, I want to address more specifically how to navigate the absences by which the *Feast* narrative is marked, but let me first chart the rest of its trajectory. Higgins writes that when the "idealism of the 1960s yielded to the pleasure principle of the 1970s and 1980s" it marked "the lost cause of spaghetti in fine art."[128] To illustrate the way in which aspirations turned to disappointments, she gives the example of Danish Fluxus artist Eric Anderson's mournful score, entitled *Spaghetti al Vento*, which he wrote in the late seventies. [129] The score instructs a person to eat spaghetti, alone, and weep, noting that the salty tears will make the pasta more delicious.[130] Although Higgins's narrative skips from here to the early nineties, I would like to

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[127] Although the term postmodernism is frequently debated and contested, there is consensus, however, that the last third of the twentieth century was marked by profound social, economic, and cultural changes. See for example "Inside the Wale: An Introduction to Postmodernist Art" in *Themes in Contemporary Art,* eds. Gill Perry and Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[128] Higgins, "Schlurrrp!" in *Feast*, 45.
[129] For the well-known account of this shift from hope to disappointment see: Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[130] Higgins, "Schlurrrp!" in *Feast*, 45.

interject one narrative that speaks, I suggest, to the interim. In it, several of the themes we have been discussing repeat.

Mr. Basquiat

Under the pseudonym Albert Milo, American "Neo-Expressionist" painter Julian Schnabel appears as a character played by British actor Gary Oldman in his 1996 film *Basquiat*. Made almost a decade after Jean-Michel Basquiat's death, the movie purports to chart the pop icon's meteoric rise to fame from a street artist to a fine artist and his subsequent fall from grace in the New York avant-garde scene of the 1980s. Although Schnabel was a cursory figure within Basquiat's constellation of friends and acquaintances, one of the movie's most climactic and teachable moments comes towards the end of the feature, when Milo (Oldman) invites a drug-addled Basquiat (Wright) over to his house for dinner.

After schooling his silent and undone-seeming guest on the significance of a few of his enormous paintings (actual works by Schnabel), Milo, holding a gold-rimmed glass of red wine and wearing royal purple- and white-striped pajamas, pushes open a heavy set of carved wooden doors that open onto the dining room. The room is ornately decorated, not only with Schnabel's sixteen by sixteen foot paintings, but also with antique furniture and tapestries. On a long oval table, a big bowl of spaghetti and an open bottle of wine sit waiting for them. With a soundtrack of Italian soprano Renata Tebaldi singing an aria from Giuseppi Verdi's opera *Il Travatore* in the background, Milo spoons piles of spaghetti into two bowls, and he and Basquait (Wright) sit down to eat at one end of the otherwise empty table.

Milo's daughter—who, in an attempt to add an effect of reality, is played by the director's daughter, Lola Schnabel—interrupts them after a brief conversation and the scene cuts to another in which Basquiat (Wright) and Milo's daughter find themselves alone in the host's studio.[131] Kneeling on the floor, he sketches a quick portrait of her before walking out. When Milo returns, he is surprised to find that Basquiat (Wright) has left without saying goodbye and rushes to the door after him. When he opens it, he finds Basquiat (Wright) peeing in his hallway with his back to the door. Rather than bid him farewell as he had planned, Milo smiling raises his eyebrows, closes the door, turns to his daughter, and says incredulously, "He's pissing in our hallway." When she responds with a disbelieving look, he retorts: "Really!"

It is tempting to dismiss this representation of Basquiat as just a fictional movie. After all, it seems reasonable to insist that we could not possibly be meant to take these parodic representations of the artist seriously. Yet, as Okwui Enwezor notes in a review published in *Frieze* magazine in the year of the film's release, this depiction has serious stakes within art historical discourses.[132] Enwezor's assertion is especially true since Basquiat was working at the height of the eighties art market by which his works were quickly absorbed. Although he made about one thousand paintings, most ended up in private collections and were thus unavailable for scholars to study.[133] The fact that art historians have tended to associate the artist with a conservative return to figuration and

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[131] Janet Maslin "A Postcard Picture of a Graffiti Artist" *New York Times*, August 9, 1996, accessed February 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9E07E4DF123EF93AA3575BC0A960958260.

[132] Okwui Enwezor, "Basquiat," *Freize* 32 (January/February, 1997), accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/basquiat/.

[133] Jordana Moore Saggese, "*Jean-Michel Baquiat: The Radiant Child* Panel Discussion" (presented at the Museum of African Diaspora, San Francisco, California, May 15, 2014).

traditional media that elicits little critical interest, has contributed to a lack of scholarly attention to his work. As Jordana Moore Saggese noted at a panel discussion that took place in conjunction with a screening of the documentary *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child* (2010) at the Museum of African Diaspora in 2014, his legacy is "more secure in pop culture than academia."[134] In fact, her recently published book, *Reading Basquiat: Exploring Ambivalence in American Art*, is the first to devote sustained attention to his work outside of the context of a museum exhibition. What this means, in other words, is that the assumptions at work in Schnabel's film have largely gone unchecked by official art history and criticism.

The scene in which Basquiat pees in the hallway makes explicit reference to Pollock, and it marks one of many which attempt to place Basquiat along a continuum of archetypal white male artists who create in antagonistic relationship to established norms and values. Yet, it simultaneously satisfies the racist desire for Baquiat to perform the role of the uncivilized primitive. His beginnings as a street artist in New York City are often taken to be an indication of his "rough" upbringing in the ghetto, when, in fact, he was born into a middle-class immigrant family that lived in Borough Hill, a neighborhood, which a friend and member of Basquiat's band Gray described in an interview as "a very tony part of Brooklyn."[135] The film only gives indications of the fact

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[134] Ibid.

[135] Andrew Wilson, "Basquiat: Like Boom for Real," *Art Monthly* 210 (October 1997): 9. During the panel discussion that followed the screening of *Jean-Michel Baquiat: The Radiant Child* at the Museum of African Diaspora, San Francisco, California, May 15, 2014, someone in the audience expressed surprise to find that Basquiat had not come from a "troubled background." Jordana Moore Saggese replied that we tend to suppress the narrative of Basquiat as an artist from a middle-class background who was well-versed in the history of art and its techniques in favor of the narrative "that satisfies our need for black artists to be untrained, rough, and primitive."

that Basquiat was well versed in the history of art when it furthers the narrative that the artist was invested in a white patrilineage. In the opening scene, for example, a young Basquiat stands with his mother in front of Pablo Picasso's monumental *Guernica,* which was on view at MoMA until its return to Spain in 1981.[136] The film provides this originary moment in order to suggest how Basquiat would become the "Black Picasso," a name bestowed on him not only by the popular press, but also in critical art discourse of the eighties and nineties.

Although the movie provides little in the way of engagement with the artworks themselves—which were represented only by copies produced by Schnabel—it attempts to make Basquiat's works legible to a white mainstream critical audience by linking his visual style to European modernism and the canonical white visual artists to whom his compositions sometimes make reference. By representing Basquiat painting on the floor of his studio while listening to Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, and Grandmaster Flash Melle Mel, the film, while drawing further comparisons to Pollock, also offers some reductive suggestion of the ways in which his compositions are inflected with the rhythms of African American jazz and hip-hop. But the question of how the artist was influenced by and engaged with black culture and history gets largely neglected.

In order to resolve the crisis of recognition that his compositions pose, the film covers Basquiat's work with what Enwezor describes as "a confetti of whiteness."[137] The artist deployed complex, layered, and poly-lingual visual tropes that included not just

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[136] Grace Glueck, "Picasso's Antiwar Guernica Quietly Leaves U.S. for Spain," *New York Times*, September 10, 1981, accessed February 16, 2015 http://www.nytimes.com/1981/09/10/arts/picasso-s-antiwar-guernica-quietly-leaves-us-for-spain.html.
[137] Enwezor, "Basquiat."

references to visual and musical artists, but also to capitalism and the African diaspora. His works incorporated African symbols, anatomical drawings, appropriated texts from scholars such as Robert Farris Thompson, and even remixes and Xerox copies of his own iconography initially appropriated from other artists. He used text as graphic elements in his compositions and often drew from his Puerto Rican mother's native tongue, Spanish, as well as his Haitian father's native Creole. He put visual and semiotic systems of signification into play to suggest how readily the meaning of language could shift.

Saggese points to Basquiat's *Untitled (History of the Black People)* as an expedient example of the artist's play with visual and textural signs. [Figure 1.10] At the center of the triptych a stylized boat is surrounded both by Nubian-style masks and words such as "sickle" and "salt." A rectangular box inscribes the word "Thebes" in the lower left-hand of the composition, and above the box he has written the word "Memphis" in his signature script and below it, the word "Tennessee." By clustering these words in close proximity, Basquiat draws the viewer's attention to the fact that, depending on its context, Memphis can signify both a city in Ancient Egypt and a city in the American South.[138] He thus conjures associations with both the Ancient Egyptian slave trade and the Atlantic slave trade that introduced Sickle Cell Disease to the Americas and through which salt became a major commodity.

Some of the questions that *Untitled (The History of Black People)* raises are questions to which I return later in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation, but an in-depth analysis of the complex layers of signification that this work offers up to consideration are beyond my scope here. For now, I would like briefly to consider one

[138] Saggese "*Jean-Michel Baquiat: The Radiant Child* Panel Discussion."

more work by Basquiat in order to bring the stakes of his historical treatment for this particular project into clearer focus. Once again, I draw on insights made by Saggese who, in her article "Cut and Mix," conducts close readings of lesser-known works on paper including *Untitled (Picasso Poster)*. [Figure 1.11] In this simple composition, Basquiat appropriates an untitled portrait of a woman by Picasso, which was featured on a lithographic poster created for the *Maitres de l'Art Modern* exhibition at Galerie Beyeler in 1955. But Basquiat alters it by crossing out Picasso's signature and applying rectangular blocks of pink acrylic paint to the upper and right-hand sides of the image. As Saggese explains,

> Basquiat's intervention effectively flattens the curve of the hairline with one long horizontal stroke at the top of the image but follows the contour along the left side of the woman's face. The resulting shape, which Basquiat has isolated from the background of the image, looks more like a mask than a face and further accentuates Picasso's well-known modernist appropriation of African art.[139]

As Saggese goes on to note, with a simple gesture, Basquiat reminds us of the extent to which modernists artists, such as Picasso, have relied upon imagery made by African artists or artists of African descent. Not only do such dependencies go unacknowledged within histories of modern art, but the contributions of such artists are often excluded entirely. In fact, it is by means of this kind of strategic forgetting that Basquiat comes to be the "Black Picasso."

Relatedly, Schnabel places Basquiat within a lineage of white male artists, but suggests that his emotional unraveling towards the end of the feature, into which the urination scene figures, is a result either of what is suggested over the course of the film to be his lack of good character or what Madonna and others have described to be his

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[139] Jordana Moore Saggese, "Cut and Remix: Jean-Michel Basquiat in Retrospect," *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 28 (Spring, 2011): 93.

"fragility."[140] As Jennifer González noted in the panel following the screening of *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Radiant Child*, these suggestions seem to "dismiss the possibility that it was a deeply racist context in which he was working."[141] The representation of Basquiat peeing in the hallway, which repeats, differently, the well-known anecdote about Pollock, illustrates the way in which the artist was made expedient to the heroic narratives that attempt to render his paintings fully legible to white viewers and attributable to white patrilineage. Meanwhile, it also suppresses the supportive narratives that make visible the racist ideologies by which he was overdetermined. I return in the next chapter to the question of how shifting the spatial and temporal horizon of our analysis necessarily complicates these dominant critical frameworks.

Basquiat's abrupt departure from the dinner party prompts this text's departure from the realm of the hostess, and signals a gesture of impropriety of its own. The halting of this chapter in the midst of a discussion of *Feast* is intentional (though we will return to its narrative about hospitality in art in the next chapter). It makes this interruption in order to pursue some of the questions that Baquiat initiates about the sublimation of black artistic contributions within dominant art historical narratives. My focus thus far has been on the routine trivialization of the supportive labor of the hostess within these histories. While I have gestured towards the ways in which domestic supportive laborers in unprivileged relationship to race and class have, historically, enabled the hostess, it is in chapter two that I take on these complexities directly. One of the contradictions about the party is that while it is predicated on feminized work, the rules of hospitality dictate that

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[140] Madonna as quoted in *Jean-Michael Basquiat: The Radiant Child*, directed by Tamra Davis (New York, NY: Arthouse Films, 2010), DVD.
[141] Jennifer González, "*Jean-Michel Baquiat: The Radiant Child* Panel Discussion."

this labor must be concealed and kept from sight. At the party, only those rooms that have been tidied are open to guests. Since the domain of this chapter has been that of the party, much of the messiness with which this project contends has been put away.

To draw us into messier spaces, let us think back to Samuel Delany's perceptions of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*. Recall that Delany was struck by the fact that his knowledge of the work was limited because he was spatially contained to one of six or so rooms, each of which was separated from the others by translucent polythene walls. He remembers that those present "could make out only the ghost of what was going on in the chambers beside or across from [theirs]."[142] This experience of partiality was not unique to Delany or even to attendees, for even cast members, and Kaprow himself, could only be in one place at one time. As Butt has noted, this is an evocative metaphor for the subjectivity of history. It is also a suggestive way to imagine the various spaces we move through over the course of this text. By likening these chapters to the partitioned rooms of Kaprow's happening, I am not claiming that by entering into the space of another we gain more complete knowledge or dispel uncertainty. Rather, each provides a means of complicating our engagement with the same questions. To repeat, differently, Kaprow's gesture, I invite you to "step right in." This invitation may, at first, seem to be at odds with my earlier interruption. But by casting Kaprow's gentlemanly request within the context of my interruption, I am to bring us into a domain that entertains such contradictions.

[142] Ibid., 116.

Two

The Cook: Chitterlings and Theaster Gates's Aesthetic of Restraint

> *Atticus shook his head at me […]. "But he's gone and drowned his dinner in syrup," I protested. It was then that Calpurnia requested my presence in the kitchen […]. [She said,] "if you can't act fit to eat at the table you can just set here and eat in the kitchen!"*
>
> Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

> *Invisibility, let me explain, gives one a slightly different sense of time, you're never quite on the beat.*
>
> Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

This text moves from the hostess's domain of the party into the cook's domain of the kitchen. It does so via a scene from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* in which the novel's protagonist, Scout Finch, is called away from her guest seated at the dining room table and into the kitchen by the family's housekeeper, Calpurnia. Earlier in the day, in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, and in the wake of the 1929 US market crash, Scout schooled her first grade teacher Miss Caroline, in "county folk" etiquette, only to be reprimanded shortly thereafter for her own impropriety. Both episodes concerned the dietary affairs of Scout's classmate, Walter Cunningham. Walter was in the first grade, but he was a number of years older than Scout. He had been held back, because, every spring, he missed class in order to help his dad work the fields of their farm. When, on the first day of school, an eager but unknowing Miss Caroline took stock of the lunch situation of her students, she found that Walter was without food to eat and pressed him for an explanation. Three times she asked if he had forgotten it. The first two times he responded only with a twitch in his jaw, but the third time he finally mumbled, "[y]eb'm." Miss Caroline proceeded to retrieve a quarter from her purse and instructed him to take the quarter to buy lunch, and to pay her back the next day.

On his third refusal, and upon Miss Caroline growing impatient, a whispering student encouraged Scout to involve herself. "Miss Caroline, he's a Cunningham," Scout said "graciously on Walter's behalf." While Scout thought she had made things "sufficiently clear," Miss Caroline remained confused, so she tried again. "Walter's one of the Cunninghams, Miss Caroline." When this second attempt proved no more effective than the first, Scout had to spell it out: "You're shamin' him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn't got a quarter to bring to you, and you can't use any stovewood."[143] Everyone other than the young college graduate with her "new ways of teaching," knew that Walter did not forget his lunch; he didn't have any lunch to bring. And the Cunninghams never took something they couldn't pay back.

Scout's efforts to instruct Miss Caroline on local class dynamics and tact did not earn her teacher's thanks or praise. Rather, an agitated Miss Caroline told her she had "gotten off on the wrong foot," slapped her wrist with a ruler a few times, and made her stand in the corner until class was dismissed. When Scout's brother Jem found her in the schoolyard to walk home for dinner, she was "rubbing [Walter's] nose in the dirt," for having "gotten her off on the wrong foot," an expression Scout repeats without quite seeming to know what it means. It was under these circumstances that Jem invited Walter home for dinner. By the time the three of them got to the house, "Walter had forgotten he was a Cunningham," and Jem called to Calpurnia, their cook, to set an extra place at the dinner table.

As Walter discussed farm problems with their father Atticus, Scout observed him piling food on his plate. When he requested molasses, Calpurnia, at Atticus's beckon,

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[143] Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (New York: Warner Books Edition, 1960), 20.

brought it to him in a pitcher and stood waiting while he poured it on to his vegetables and meat. For the second time that day, Scout felt the need to intervene. "He would probably have poured it into his milk glass had I not asked what the sam hill he was doing," she justified. It was then that Walter remembered he was a Cunningham, with a clatter returned the pitcher to the saucer Calpurnia was holding, and put his hands in his lap. Although Atticus gave Scout a reprimanding look, it was Calpurnia who requested to speak with her in the kitchen, where they exchanged the following words:

> "There's some folks who don't eat like us," she whispered fiercely, "but you ain't called on to contradict 'em at the table when they don't. That boy's yo' comp'ny and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?"
>
> "He ain't company, Cal, he's just a Cunningham—"
>
> "Hush your mouth! Don't matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house's yo' comp'ny, and don't you let me catch you remarkin' on their ways like you was so high and mighty! Yo' folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin' 'em—if you can't act fit to eat at the table you can just set here and eat in the kitchen."[144]

Just as this scene portrays an ill-mannered interruption of polite conversation and an abrupt shift from the dining room into the kitchen, so we have turned our attention from the hostess to the domestic laborer. Lee's text introduces us to the complex and contradictory relationship between race, class, and gender that gets triangulated via hospitality and that is the focus of this second chapter. As such exchanges attest, the structure of this relationship reveals itself most clearly when the rules of hospitality are transgressed. If Scout had not commented on Walter's use of syrup, he might not have remembered that he was a Cunningham until he was well on his way home, and we might never have registered the supportive labor of Calpurnia or have been called to the kitchen. What is striking about Calpurnia's intervention is that she defends the rules of a

[144] Ibid., 24–25.

table for which she provides, but at which she is not free to sit. For the sake of pedagogical clarity, she tells Scout that "[t]here's some folks who don't eat like us," giving nothing away about her unprivileged relationship to "us." She also conveys no sense of irony or injustice when she announces that Scout's punishment is to eat dinner in the place where she herself spends her days, and where she sets up a folding cot on those occasional evenings when she spends the night.

At the beginning of the book, Scout introduces Calpurnia as "a tyrannical presence" that she had felt "as long as she could remember." While Atticus might give disapproving looks and hard life lessons, it was Calpurnia's responsibility to discipline Scout, calling her home "too soon," supervising her bathing routine, and hushing her when she spoke out of turn. More specifically, Calpurnia disciplines boyish Scout into the ways of femininity. And when Jem starts going through puberty and having altercations with his little sister—during one of which he tells her that "[i]t's time [she] start bein' a girl and acting right!"—Calpurnia tells Scout that she can come in the kitchen whenever she feels lonesome. It was after she started coming around and watching Calpurnia work that Scout "began to think there was some skill involved in being a girl."[145] At work here are the regulatory norms through the reiteration of which sex, as well as Calpurnia herself, materializes.[146] Not accidentally, Scout begins to register the servant's labor around the same time that she registers that her cook has been leading "a modest double life." What triggers the realization is that when Scout and Jem accompany Calpurnia to her church, Scout hears Cal speak like the "[r]est of the colored

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[145] Ibid., 115–116.
[146] I'm drawing here on Judith Butler's discussion of the *materialization* of sex. See *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Routledge: New York, 1993).

folks" rather than in the "white-folks' talk" that she used in their home. For Scout "[t]he idea that she had a separate existence outside [their] household was a novel one, to say nothing of her having command of two languages."[147]

These excerpts have something to teach us about the supportive, obligation-bound, and contradictory work of upholding convention performed by laboring black women. Because we have moved from the realm of the party to the realm of the kitchen, which in so doing requires that we register the dependence of the former upon the latter, it seems a suitable segue between the last chapter and this one. What is perhaps less clear is how it helps to negotiate the transition between two points on *Feast*'s narrative arc: that between modernism and postmodernism, and more specifically between Futurism and Relational Aesthetics. As I have suggested, the Fluxus movement serves this role within the context of the exhibition itself. Yet just as Scout's interruption at dinner exposed an infrastructure of support, obligation, and asymmetrical privilege, I draw on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which like Fluxus is a cultural product of the 1960s, to interrupt *Feast*'s narrative about hospitality in order to expose its assumptions about antagonism and radicality.

My investment in *Feast*, it is important to note, is not merely for its own sake, however. The exhibition provides a means of initiating the conversations in which this chapter seeks to engage, but the stakes of these conversations are more broadly situated. I learned about *Feast* in 2012, as I was working to formulate this project. The exhibition's focus on hospitality seemed to promise that it would at least consider the limitations of the persistent valorization of what Pogiolli describes as "anti-etiquette" in art making and

[147] Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 125.

interpretation. My assumption was that it would also take up ways of thinking about the social turn in art, and the artistic activities that preceded and facilitated this turn, that would account for the potential value of feminized labor, while pointing to the ways in which this labor has been largely absent or otherwise dismissed in art historical narratives. Instead, *Feast* followed the model of approaching art of twentieth and twenty-first centuries established by RoseLee Goldberg's important, but also, by virtue of its attempts to survey, didactic, history of performance art. As I mentioned in chapter one, Goldberg traces the origin of performance art back to the Italian Futurists. Because *Feast* is a recent and celebrated exhibition that makes explicit claims about the status of hospitality in art, it serves, for me, as a barometer of wider, and often-unstated assumptions about feminized supportive work in the contemporary art world.[148]

It seems only by accident that the show includes projects that complicate its premise that artistic engagements with hospitality have worked primarily in the service of disrupting aesthetic and social norms, for such alternative narratives are not given acknowledgement or consideration in either the show's catalog or didactics. One such project is Theaster Gates's *Soul Pavilion* in which he engages the history of African American culinary traditions, and more specifically, the history of soul food in which black female domestics have played a crucial, but also highly contested role. It may seem counterintuitive to begin tracing an alternative genealogy for hospitality in art that *accounts* for black culinary labor (which has been primarily, but by no means exclusively

[148] Stephanie Smith received the Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award in support of her proposal to organize *Feast*. The exhibition also received financial support from the Andy Warhol Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others, and was voted the best museum exhibit of 2012 in the *Chicago Reader*'s annual Best of Chicago poll.

performed by women) via an art project created by a man. Yet, Gates's work helps to makes clear how futurist modes of temporality and antagonist modes of sociality absent the black female body from the scene of cultural production. Taken together with black feminist texts and literary studies scholarship that considers questions of temporality and propriety in African American history, Gates's *Soul Pavilion* enables us to develop a concept of aesthetic restraint that emerges as a critical rejoinder to an aesthetics of futurism espoused by the Futurists and adopted by *Feast*. Ultimately, it prepares us to recognize the powerful expression of this aesthetics of restraint in Carrie Mae Weems's iconic body of photographic work, *The Kitchen Table Series*, which she created in the early nineties. Her project coincides with the emergence of what French curator Nicholas Bourriaud describes as relational aesthetics, which as I discuss below, is an important culminating moment in *Feast*'s narrative. In the service of tracing an alternative genealogy for hospitality in art that moves through Weems's work, let us return to my initial interruption. In order to make the implications of this impolite behavior clear, I retrace my steps back to the 1980s where my narrative about the exhibition left off.

In 1985, in an attempt to reconsolidate a leftist politics that had been dispersed by conservative economic and social developments of the decade in which Basquiat was working, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Moufee published *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. It is their theory of antagonism on which the visual art critic Claire Bishop relies to critique Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics in an influential and controversial essay, which appeared in *October* in 2004. The term relational aesthetics is taken from the title of a collection of essays that Bourriaud published in 1997 in which he

attempted to "come to grips with contemporary art practices" of the nineties.[149] He was responding to the fact that art critics and scholars were demonstrating reluctance to characterize and to develop criteria by which to evaluate art made after the 1980s (or even the 1960s) because of its seeming heterogeneity and opacity. What he deduced is that in response to the shift from a goods to service-based economy many artists, including Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Liam Gillick, and Rikrit Tiravanija, were making works that hinged upon interactivity and human relations. Their artistic projects do not have utopic agendas, Bourriaud asserts, rather they seek to provide "ways of living and models of action within the existing real."[150]

Although Bourriaud is eager to distinguish relational aesthetics from art trends of previous eras, Higgins, and *Feast*, nevertheless celebrate projects that fit within Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics for the ways in which they carry the baton for 1960s movements with socially ameliorative aspirations, such as Fluxus. After having lamented "the lost cause of spaghetti," in the late seventies and eighties, Higgins jumps to the nineties to announce that, "the story isn't all tragedy."[151] She goes on to offer Thai-born artist Rikrit Tiravanija's use of gallery spaces to prepare and serve noodle dinners, as an example of ongoing artistic commitment "to feeding people," "to creating access to food," and to tapping into its "socially binding aspect."[152] For Bishop, Tiravanija's meal-based art projects exemplify how Bourriaud's relational aesthetics privileges

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[149] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002), 7.
[150] Ibid., 13.
[151] Higgins, "Schlurrrp!" in *Feast*, 45.
[152] Ibid.

entertainment value and feel-good sociality between the like-minded at the expense of critical reflexivity and rigor. [Figure 2.1]

Although their concepts emerge in opposition, I argue that *both* Bourriaud and Bishop negotiate the expansion of visual arts practices to ends that disavow what Shannon Jackson describes as "our enmeshment in systems of support."[153] To rearticulate the limitations of Bourriaud's project I draw on Jackson and Bishop, but what is more complex to navigate is Bishop's concept of antagonism and the implications it has for the arguments I have been developing. In chapter one, I invoked the word's conventional definition, but in Laclau and Mouffe's formulation, on which Bishop relies, the word is given expanded critical dimension that requires further unpacking.

For Bourriaud, what distinguishes relational art of the nineties from preexisting paradigms of art making is that sociality is the substrate from which relational art works are formed.[154] Thus, "[t]he possibility of relational art," he writes, "points to the radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art."[155] Although relational art draws participants into inter-subjective encounters, Bourriaud questions philosophical frameworks, such as that put forth by Emmanuel Levinas, which would limit the definition of relational interactions to include responsibility, obligation, and servility. Rather, Bourriaud argues that artists who produce relational art "invent possible encounters," while participants adapt to these possibilities in the same way a player "return[s] a service in a game of tennis."[156] As Jackson notes, not only does Bourriaud assume, to maintain his tennis game analogy, that the playing field is level and

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[153] Jackson, *Social Works,* 45.
[154] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 15.
[155] Ibid., 14.
[156] Ibid., 23.

that players come to the game equally equipped, he also fails to consider how "this playful exchange" necessarily depends on unmentioned supportive (or servile) parties, for example those responsible for calling the lines or picking up the tennis balls.[157] In keeping with the postwar art historical tendencies I have been discussing, Bourriaud understands expanded visual art practices of the nineties to mark a radical break with previous art making traditions such as '60s performance art and happenings that involved audience members or the public, and to exist in unsupported relation to obligation-bound realms of responsibility.

Bishop also questions the facility, sense of social celebration, and optimism in Bourriaud's account, and draws on Laclau and Moufee to argue for the necessity of antagonism for achieving democratic ends through artistic production and engagement. What this means for Bishop, more precisely, is that when antagonism is working, political and social "frontiers" are "brought into debate," and "relations of conflict are sustained, not erased."[158] What is important to note is that in drawing on Laclau and Moufee, Bishop evokes a notion of antagonism not based on a collision between two opposing *physical* forces. Recall that this materially driven concept of antagonism is one that Sam Hunter extended to the aesthetic realm when he described Pollock's artistic production as "a wrecking enterprise." As Bishop explains, Laclau and Mouffe's conception of antagonism is grounded rather in a carefully defined theory of subjectivity. Whereas Bourriaud imagines relational art as facilitating inventive encounters between fully coherent and self-contained subjects, Laclau and Mouffe argue that antagonistic encounters between entities reveal the precariousness, vulnerability, and, ultimately, the

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[157] Jackson, *Social Works,* 46.
[158] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall, 2004): 66.

incompleteness of such entities. In other words, as Bishop puts it, "the threat the other represents transforms my own sense of self into something questionable."[159] Such confrontations not only call into question the limits of subjective and objective relations, but, as Jackson notes in her analysis of Bishop's take on Laclau and Mouffe, "the very givenness of the social world."[160]

Although Bishop does not acknowledge the ways in which a theory that construes the relationships between social sectors as relative and nonobjective runs the risk of "discount[ing] the weight of their effects," Jackson notes that this was an implication Laclau and Mouffe explicitly address. In fact, their revised 2000 edition was formulated specifically to insist that their aim was not "to support a vision of a new frictionless world."[161] In other words, just because the relationship between social sectors is constructed, does not negate the fact that the experiences of living beings within those sectors are grounded in material realities that have historical weight and thus do not feel so easily revisable. While Jackson notes that it is "perilous to imagine such […] theory as frames 'to be applied' by contemporary artists," she also recognizes "why such thinking has been a provocative resource in the world of contemporary art."[162]

Because the theory of subjectivity on which their concept of antagonism is founded is meant to serve equalizing aspirations, we can understand why it would appeal to artists, critics, and scholars with socially ameliorative goals. Nevertheless, the way in which the concept gets mobilized by Bishop, as well as the historical weight the concept of antagonism carries within art historical discourses, demonstrate the difficulty of

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[159] Ibid.
[160] Jackson, *Social Works,* 52.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., 53.

translating such a theory into practice without having, as I explain further, a disavowing effect. Although in her essay Bishop carefully distinguishes between "a physical concept of opposition," and "a social concept of antagonism," she differentiates between those projects that succeed in being antagonistic and those that do not, by drawing on language that suggests physical disruption to be an indicator and correlative of social disruption.[163] As Jackson remarks, relational artworks that meet with Bishop's approval are "tougher," "more disruptive," "difficult," "sometimes excruciating," "uncomfortable and exploitive," and "staggeringly hard."[164] She describes those projects that do not serve Laclau and Mouffe's "theory of democracy as antagonism," as preoccupied with "togetherness," "pleasure," and instilling in participants a sense of "belonging," while seeking to facilitate relationships that are "harmonious" between people whose engagements are marked by "informal chattiness."[165] Inadvertently, then, Bishop dismisses the role of the hostess here, a role that is performed precisely to facilitate belonging, harmony, and chattiness.

For Jackson, when we move away from "polarized critical and artistic allegiances," and experiment with language that works across these divides we realize that "social antagonism" can be at work in artistic contexts that "feel good."[166] Without wanting to the reduce the complexities of the notion of antagonism that Laclau and Mouffe put forth, and that Jackson maintains even as she moves away from polarizing discourses, my subsequent discussions of feminized durational labor and the politics of temporality in this chapter seek to demonstrate how the logic of antagonism, as it plays

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[163] Ibid., 56.
[164] Bishop as quoted in ibid., 55.
[165] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 67, 69, 70, 68, 67.
[166] Jackson, *Social Works*, 60, 58.

out not only within physical but also social space, risks obscuring rather than exposing the interdependencies and asymmetries between contingent social subjects.

One of the arguments that *Feast* makes about artists' engagements with hospitality, in the sixties and seventies at least, is that they have been "predominantly male-led endeavors."[167] In the introduction to the catalog, as a side note, Smith mentions that contemporaneous to male artists running restaurants and salons, the development of the feminist movement gave rise to performance art and to artistic interrogations of "the feminine" and "the domestic" as categories that have constrained women. The works Smith calls upon to represent feminist trends in postwar art making include Barbara T. Smith's *Ritual Meal* (1969), a psychedelic dinner party which Smith describes as extending from "that disruptive strand of avant-garde hospitality," and Suzanne Lacy's *International Dinner Party* (1979), which she organized in various locations across the globe (although mostly in California, New York, and Europe) in homage to Judy Chicago's famous installation *The Dinner Party,* which also debuted that year.[168] She does not completely absent from her narrative feminist consciousness-raising that happened around kitchen tables, and feminist installation and performance art that engaged themes of hospitality or used food as a substrate, but she does gloss over these histories.[169] This is an elision I risk repeating here in an attempt to chart an alternative

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[167] Stephanie Smith, "Introduction: Of Feasts, Hospitality, and Art," *Feast,* 14.
[168] Ibid., 14–15.
[169] Discussion of the influence of a few key projects, such as *Womanhouse* (1969), Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1979), Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), and Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy* (1964), would help to demonstrate how the feminist art movement popularized and politicized the incorporation of everyday spaces and materials, including the body, into art making.

genealogy for hospitality that takes the histories of feminist art to which Smith makes brief reference, only as a point of departure.

In *The Dinner Party*, scholar Jane F. Gerhard charts the history of Judy Chicago's installation, which has long served as an icon of the seventies-era West Coast feminist art movement, "from controversy to canonization." Over the course of her book, she argues that, despite its limitations, the work played an important and supportive role in not only developments in the art world, but also in the galvanization of popular feminism in the United States.[170] Although a detailed discussion of both *The Dinner Party*'s contributions and shortcomings is not my concern here, a brief comment, on which Gerhard elaborates only in a footnote, is. While acknowledging the difficulty of characterizing trends in the heterogeneous seventies-era feminist movement without risking reductivism, Gerhard nevertheless claims that an overriding theme of feminist art making and social critique was to question women's confinement to domestic spaces and roles. She reminds us that in *The Feminine Mystique* Betty Friedan characterized the home as "a dressed-up internment camp," and in an article she wrote for the first issue of *Ms.* magazine, Judy Syfers famously asserted, "I Want a Wife."[171] Although she does not dwell on conflicting attitudes for long, Gerhard does go on to point out that not all feminists rejected feminized roles or "viewed the home as a site of oppression." She accommodates this divergent history of feminism into her narrative simply by acknowledging that: "[F]or

[170] Jane Gerhard, *The Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism 1970–2007* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013).
[171] Ibid., 49.

many wage-earning women and women of color, the home functioned in more complex ways."[172]

Barbara Smith introduces the 1983 black feminist anthology *Home Girls* with a simple declaration: "There is nothing more important to me than home."[173] About her first home in Cleveland, Ohio, Smith recalls that her great-aunt Phoebe had been the one to rent it. Because Phoebe was a live-in cook for another family she was often absent, but Smith, her mother, and her grandmother who lived there still considered the residence to belong to her. As Rebecca Sharpless explains in *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, for African American women who worked as domestic laborers in the United States from the end of the Civil War until after the civil rights movement, "[p]aradoxically, preserving and providing for [their own] famil[ies] meant leaving [them] for long hours, days, or even weeks."[174] Sharpless draws on a poem written by Kate Rushin in the same year *Home Girls* was published to illustrate how African American women have been made, via an exploitative labor system, to satisfy not only the physical hungers of white families, but also white racist fantasies of the nurturing mammy, at the expense of being present for their own. [Figure 2.2] Rushin writes:

> Aunt Jemima
> Aunt Jemima on the Pancake Box
> Aunt Jemima on the Pancake Box?
> AuntJemimaonthepancakebox?
> Auntjemimaonthepancakebox?
> Ainchamamaonthepancakebox?
> Ain't chure Mama on the pancake box?

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Barbara Smith, "Introduction," in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983), xix.
[174] Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South 1865–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 110.

Mama Mama
Get off that box
And come home to me[175]

As bell hooks, Toni Morrison, and other haves noted, what often enabled white women to take jobs outside the home during the second-wave feminist era was abdicating domestic responsibilities to other women, especially women of color.[176] Black feminists have recognized that working in one's own home, and even having access to so-called private space, can, from a historical view attuned to the implications of race and class, be understood as privileges that black women in the United States have not always or easily been afforded. (Although the very presence of domestic workers within the "private" spaces of white homes belies the fiction of separate spheres.) It is with irony that Smith points out that many of the goals towards which middle-class white feminists aspired in the seventies—including "heading families, working outside the home, not building lives on expectations dependent on males, and seldom being sheltered or pampered as women"— were goals many black women had achieved upon the abolition of slavery.[177] (Before abolition, of course, they did not have homes outside of which to work.) This is not to say that for African American women the home is a haven from industrial capitalism, intimate vulnerability, or white scrutiny and judgment. In fact, and as we will soon discuss, given the virulence of American narratives of black sexual and domestic pathology, the opposite could be said to be true. For now, let us remain sensitive to these complexities while we consider how the following statement by Smith might color our understanding of *Feast*'s emphasis on antagonism. Smith puts it simply: "[B]lack women

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[175] Ibid., xvi–xvii.
[176] Toni Morrison, "What the Black Woman Thinks About Women's Lib," *New York Times Magazine*, August 22, 1971, 14–15.
[177] Smith, "Introduction," xxvi.

have had to take on responsibilities that [their] oppression [has given them] no choice but to handle."[178]

I want to insist on the fact that these complexities fall into the cracks of *Feast*'s narrative about hospitality as something that warrants careful consideration. Although seventies-era feminist artistic engagements with hospitality get sidelined, as Stephanie Smith points out, they nonetheless fit within the exhibition's narrative arc, which traces the consistent ways in which artists—from the beginning of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first—have sought to upend, disrupt, disengage, and dismiss the conventions of hospitality. For a consideration of what Smith describes as "the feminized model of hosting and cultural production," which largely falls outside the bounds of the exhibition, into the cracks, she directs readers to a short essay by Berlin-based art critic Jan Verwoert.[179] In the essay, Verwoert draws a comparison between the dinner party and the cultural event: both take place on a temporal horizon of "enhanced theatricality" that is upheld by "many small [and uneventful] acts."[180] His discussion of "sustained social communication" that includes "phone calls, e-mails, conversations" recalls the important work of anthropologists such as Micaela di Leonardo who, in the late eighties, argued for the necessity of registering the gendered labor of kinship which includes "the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties."[181] Based on Verwoert's essay though, it remains unclear what the stakes of registering this labor within the context of *Feast*, or contemporary art historical discourse more broadly, might be.

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[178] Ibid., xxviii.
[179] Smith, "Introduction: Of Feasts, Hospitality, and Art," 15.
[180] Jan Verwoert, "The Anti-Angelic Host: Reading the Politics of Hosting Culture Through the Writing of Virigina Woolf," *Feast*, 360.
[181] di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays," 442.

In his emphasis on cultural events getting planned and audiences being built, it seems that Verwoert seeks to draw attention to the fact that the exhibition itself, and perhaps many of the artworks, installations, and performances included in it, came together by means of feminized durational labor that goes unregistered because it happens "offstage" on "an altogether different horizon of social temporality."[182] When he refers to a "different horizon of social temporality," he evokes a concept of time that is extended and of constant duration, and also that gets filled slowly and repetitively as opposed to quickly and theatrically. As our discussions of Pollock, happenings, Fluxus, and relational aesthetics have suggested, extending the temporal, spatial, and social horizon of art making and interpretation has still comfortably accommodated the trivialization and in some cases the invisibility of feminized supportive labor, both social and domestic. But I think Verwoert is right to suggest that how we conceive of time has a direct relationship to our awareness of these support structures. I take his essay as an invitation to bring this insight to bear on the narrative about hospitality in art to which *Feast* plays host.

With full knowledge of the risks involved in making such an assertion, Daylanne K. English writes that "time and justice—although often imagined to be standard and uniform—are actually contingent and unevenly available."[183] English looks to strategic representations of time in African American literature from the postbellum to contemporary period to trouble Benedict Anderson's well-known thesis that citizens of a nation experience time collectively. She is mindful of the warnings of scholars such as

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[182] Verwoert, "The Anti-Angelic Host," 360.
[183] Daylanne K. English, *Each Hour Redeem: Time and Justice in African American Literature,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 24.

Madhu Dubey who have argued that locating African Americans in "residual zones" outside of dominant structures of temporality involves a number of risks. Namely, it can work in the service of bolstering longstanding racist ideologies—articulated in the nineteenth century by the influential philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel—that assert that Africa and, by implication people of African decent, exist in an "undeveloped state," "in nature" and "outside of history."[184] Yet, she also notes the dangers of ignoring the ways in which African Americans have experienced time differently over the course of US history. [Figure 2.3] This unequal access to time relates not only to US slaves "who own[ed] neither [their] bod[ies] nor [their] time," but also to African Americans after the abolition of slavery who have been repeatedly pulled back in time by means of federal legislation, including *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and the *Dred Scott* decision. Such legislation reverted African Americans to noncitizens by importing tenets of the nation's founding documents into the present.[185] Looking across the history of African American literature, English notes that African American writers have consistently "represented a profound connection between differential temporalities and differential justices in the US."[186]

In order to make clear the implications of English's arguments for my discussion of *Feast* and for my broader discussion of the elision of feminized durational labor from contemporary art discourses, I pull the discussion back to Futurism, the founding movement from which the exhibition traces subsequent artistic engagements with hospitality. Like numerous avant-garde visual and literary artists of the early twentieth

[184] Ibid., 7.
[185] Ibid., 4.
[186] Ibid., 3.

century, futurists embraced modernist philosopher Henri Bergson's notion that "modern humans 'exist in a state of pure possibility.'"[187] The implication of this idea, as it relates to time, is that the future is open, and is thus of greater value than the past or the present. Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912) and Umberto Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913) are just two examples of many celebratory avant-garde visualizations of the dynamism and forward motion of the human body. [Figures 2.4 and 2.5] As English explains, the development of Bergson's theories, as well as the futurist movement, coincided with "both the peak years of lynching in the United States and the birth of the anti-lynching genre."[188]

While avant-garde plays of the era, such as August Strinberg's *Dream Play* (1902), involved elaborate and fluid changes of sets, props, and costumes, in anti-lynching plays, which were primarily written by women, the staging was traditional, the sets remained unchanged over the course of the production, and the content was melodramatic and repetitive. According to the stage direction for the most famous anti-lynching play of the era, Angelina Weld Grimké's *Rachel*, each of the three acts are set "in the same room."[189] English compares a 1916 playbill for *Rachel*, which features a photograph of the play's heroine, stiffly clutching a Victorian-era side table, to George Braque's 1910 analytical cubist composition, *Violin and Candlestick*, in which even inorganic objects are endowed with the capacity for motion. [Figures 2.6 and 2.7]

Although anti-lynching plays seem to be out of step not only with avant-garde theatrical conventions of the early twentieth century, but also with non-avant-garde

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[187] As quoted in ibid., 12.
[188] Ibid., 12.
[189] Ibid., 14–15.

drama, English notes that the genre itself was resolutely consistent: almost all anti-lynching plays of the 1910s were set in static domestic settings. Another way in which they conformed is that "again and again, the plays represent the lateness of black male characters as a sure sign they have been murdered in acts of terrorism by enraged whites."[190] For African American families the lynching of black men was a trauma that repeatedly foreclosed the future, and the use of anachronistic forms and static settings suggests that anti-lynching playwrights contested the theories of dynamism, future possibility, and openness put forth by Bergson and championed by avant-garde playwrights, writers, and artists.[191]

While psychoanalytically inspired plays engaged with questions of dreams as well as the preoccupations that arose from within individual psyches and familial relationships, anti-lynching plays of the early twentieth century, such as Grimké's *Rachel*, Mary Burill's *Aftermath*, and Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Safe*, drew attention to the fact that for African Americans, individual and familial damage did not arise from within, but rather was inflicted from without.[192] The ways in which African American lives have been governed by external rules to devastating ends, calls into further question the notion of self-governance on which avant-garde artists of the twentieth century have,

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[190] Ibid., 12.
[191] Ibid., 16.
[192] Ibid., 18. This is not to say that psychoanalytic analysis is not relevant to black culture, as the work of African American feminists Hortense Spillers and Deborah McDowell demonstrates. For a review of the contributions of Spillers and McDowell see Doris Witt, *Black Hunger: Soul Food and America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 16–17. At Witt points out, via McDowell, "claims that psychoanalysis is simply irrelevant to black culture can function as a strategy for delegitimating inquiry into intraracial power imbalances, particularly those inhering in black private life."

as we have discussed, often insisted. The anti-lynching plays suggest, by their unchanged settings, that the safest course of action for black people is to "stay […] put."[193]

English notes that in the 1920s Harlem Renaissance writers briefly adopted strategies of presentism, but by midcentury "African American writers returned resoundingly," to what she describes as the "strategic anachronism launched by Grimké." She looks to Richard Wright's grim midcentury novel *Native Son* to argue for the ways in which his use of an anachronistic literary form—naturalism—is doubled by his descriptions of the ways in which the Progressive Era and midcentury affluence and opportunity had thoroughly "bypassed neighborhoods like Chicago's South Side."[194] I want to use English's insights to think about another project set in Chicago's South Side: Theaster Gates's *Soul Pavilion*. Although Gates's work is included in *Feast,* the conceptual framing of the exhibition (which, suggests it to be part of a lineage the descends from Futurist experimental dinners, through Fluxus and relational aesthetics, all movements thoroughly invested in futurity) renders illegible the black history with which the artist is thoroughly engaged.

In the same neighborhood where Wright's Bigger Thomas waited out his days—watching cars wiz by, transporting people with places to be, before his racially pre-ordained death by execution, Chicago-born artist Theaster Gates purchased three abandoned buildings.[195] It was 2009, the height of the foreclosure crisis, and although separated by seven decades from the Depression-era Chicago represented in Wright's book, both marked moments of national economic distress compounded severely along

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., 19.
[195] For a more detailed description of the plot of *Native Son* as it relates to justice and temporality see English's chapter, "The Death of the Last Black Man," in ibid.

geographically, and as I have suggested via English, also temporally demarcated, racial lines. In fact, both moments exist on a long trajectory of racial discrimination in housing and lending that extends over the course of the post-emancipation history of the United States.[196] Using timbers from old Chicago factories and barn wood from regional barns that were, to use Gates's language, "on their way out," the artist restored these building into multifunctional spaces that would house collections of objects and gatherings of people. [Figure 2.8] In an interview conducted for *Feast*, the artist emphasized that "choosing to use those materials over other newer materials," was intentional and significant.[197] In so doing he made physically tangible the relationship between young Chicago working-class men—whose best options were either to get a WPA job working in Chicago steel mills or meatpacking plants, or in rural areas outside the city replanting forests or conserving soil—and those foreclosed or abandoned South Side Chicago buildings he purchased in the first decade of the twenty-first century.[198]

Not only has Gates saved "objects, furniture, and debris and pieces of derelict buildings inhabited or used by black people," he has also saved and made publically accessible other discarded things including the University of Chicago Art History Department's glass lantern slide archive, 14,000 books on architecture and design from the now-closed Prairie Avenue Bookstore, and the final inventory of vinyl albums from

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[196] For a discussion of the ways in which the housing crisis of the mid-2000s was underpinned by systematic and intentional discriminating against people on the basis of race, and the ways in which this crisis is merely one episode in a longer historical trajectory of discrimination in lending and housing that has been in place over the course of not just the twentieth century, but the entire history of the US see Laura Gottesdiener, *A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight for a Place to Call Home* (Westfield, NJ: Zuccotti Park Press, 2013).
[197] Theaster Gates, "Theaster Gates: Dorchester Projects," Vimeo video, 2:54, posted by Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2012, https://vimeo.com/36813608
[198] English, *Each Hour Redeem*, 83.

Dr. Wax Records, a defunct store located in the Hyde Park neighborhood.[199] [Figure 2.9] In naming the structures that house these materials Dorchester Projects, Gates plays to the tension between art projects and housing projects such as South Side Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes, which is widely considered to be one of the greatest public housing failures in US history.[200] It strikes me that within the context of Dorchester Projects, the slide lantern collection and the Prairie Avenue Bookstore collection serve not only to represent unwanted things, but also, and relatedly, absent histories. The University of Chicago Art History Department's slides are undoubtedly marked by the same disavowals through which Basquiat came to be known as the "black Picasso," and it is likely that only a select few of the Prairie Avenue Bookstore's holdings on architecture speak to the ways in which racial injustice is inculcated by urban planning and civic governance. [Figure 2.10] Such elisions are brought into sharper focus not only by the historical weight of the building's materials and site, but also by the fact that these collections live along side other materials that promise to complicate dominant histories of art and architecture. Such materials include the comprehensive collections of *JET* and *Ebony* magazines founded by John H. Johnson, as well the John H. Johnson Corporation's in-house editors' library.

According to the artist, what he hoped to achieve by hosting dinners in *this* space, within the context of *Feast*, was to enable participants to "ask harder questions about the relationship between […] acts of generosity and the history of that generosity via food,"

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[199] Gill Perry, *Playing at Home: The House in Contemporary Art* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2013), 71.
[200] Robert J. Sampson, *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 9.

specifically the foods of black people.[201] Although the concept is an intensely debated one, Gates characterized the foods he and his collaborators served guests—fifteen of which were specifically invited and five of which were selected by lottery—as "soul food." The term gained wide circulation in the early sixties to signify food practices that purportedly had their roots in slavery.[202] In prompting the participants of *Soul Pavilion* to engage the complex histories of soul food and hospitality in the United States, Gates conjures laboring black women who, despite having a vexed relationship with the notion of soul food, developed many of the techniques necessary to make dishes associated with it.[203] He makes the affiliation clear enough when he says in an interview published in the *Feast* catalog that through this project he aims to recognize "[his] mom's simple recipes, and her life of making," as well as "the legacy of her generosity."[204]

To note that it has been primarily (but by no means exclusively) black women responsible for cooking so-called soul foods, is to risk working in the service of what Doris Witt identifies as "the frequent conflation of African American women and food [that] has functioned as a central structuring dynamic of twentieth-century US psychic, cultural and sociopolitical, and economic life."[205] However fraught the affiliation, though, soul food foregrounds the hard and obligatory domestic and culinary labor of black women through which such food is often made. This labor has been tidied not only from

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[201] Theaster Gates, "Interview," in *Feast*, 196.
[202] Witt, *Black Hunger,* 80–82.
[203] See Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens.*
[204] Theaster Gates, "Interview," in *Feast*, 197.
[205] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 4.

Feast's exhibition spaces and catalog, but also from art historical narratives more broadly.[206]

Putting the complexities of soul food aside for a moment, and thinking diachronically, we should note that first as slaves and then as domestic laborers, black women "fed fifteen generations" of privileged white families in the United States. After emancipation, they also fed their own families by means of not only left over food they had made for their employers, but also their hard-earned wages.[207] To put forth these facts is not meant to "biologize[...] the cooking abilities of African American women," nor is it to suggest that their culinary production was undifferentiated by historical moment, region, and personal and professional circumstances. [208] In her history of domestic workers in the South, Sharpless denaturalizes the white racist stereotype that African American women are innately skilled in the kitchen by accounting for the ways in which, from the end of the Civil War until the civil rights era, black women had few options but to accept positions, with low pay and long hours, conducting domestic work in the homes of white families. The mythic concept of black women as "natural" cooks makes it necessary for Sharpless to emphasize that women who performed culinary labor

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[206] This process of putting these women, and their work, out of sight has been enabled by the fact that such labor is difficult to trace. Sharpless discusses this issue in her book. She notes that: "Cooking is […] ephemeral, as a meal over which the cook has labored for many hours is often consumed within a matter of minutes. The results of a successful meal—sated diners who have received good nutrition—is basically invisible…Because of the fleeting nature of its product, food preparation is repetitive, for people typically like to have a to have at least two meals a day and frequently more. A cook can never point to something permanent as the product of her labor." Sharpless notes, however that cooking is a type of domestic labor that is more tangible than other forms, for there are sometimes recipes, as well as oral and written recollections that attest to the fact that African American women performed this sustaining labor.
[207] See Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens,*1.
[208] Witt, *Black Hunger,* 97.

learned their trade, and with varying degrees of success. Some women cultivated skills by familial example, others gained proficiency by consulting their peers or by trial, error, and experience. As literacy rates increased among African American women, some accumulated knowledge by reading and modifying recipes. Few, but not many, she notes, received formal training.[209]

The culinary repertoire of African American domestic workers often included foods associated with what has come to be known as soul, including black-eyed peas, okra, sweet potatoes, cornbread, collard greens, and fried chicken. Yet Sharpless's account demonstrates just how varied the process of cooking these foods and the final products could be. From the end of the nineteenth century well into the twentieth, and depending not only on region, but also on the financial resources of their employers, domestic workers had uneven access to developing technologies, such as stoves and refrigeration, as well as ingredients such as chemical leaveners and commercially dressed poultry.[210] Sharpless troubles a monolithic notion of African American cooking not only by pointing to historical developments, regional variations, and class contexts, but also by describing the wide range of culinary traditions that successful cooks mastered, sometimes by choice and other times by necessity. These traditions included everything from French haute cuisine to eastern European dishes. It was perhaps unintentional that Gates's dinners suggested the broad range of culinary knowledge many African American cooks developed by incorporating Asian, and especially Japanese influences in

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[209] Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens,* 11.
[210] For a much more detailed account of the wide ranging experiences of African American cooks in the south from the end of the Civil War until the last third of the twentieth century see Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens* and specifically the chapter "From Collards to Puff Pastry."

his soul food menu.[211] Nevertheless, the fact that soul food, under the auspices of *Soul Pavilion*, emerges as a pliable, although, as we will discuss further, no less historically charged, concept is one indication that the artist was not uncritically promulgating it as a signifier of "authentic" blackness. We should emphasize here that the cross-cultural dietary exchanges to which *Soul Pavilion* makes reference were underwritten by slavery, capitalism, and colonialism.[212] In order to engage these material histories and to understand what is more fully at stake in using soul food to register the supportive labor of black women, though, we need to discuss the foods that were prepared and the context in which they served in more specific detail.

To make the meals over which Gates's guests communed, two chefs consulted with Erika Dudley, a program manager at the University of Chicago's Civic Knowledge Project.[213] [Figure 2.11] In an interview with *The Chicago Reader* Dudley explained that she "grew up making soul food with her grandmother and later studied the history of soul

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[211] Gates also worked with Japanese potters including Kouichi Ohara to create tea ceremony inspired ceramics for the events that would hold the juices cooked collard greens produce.
[212] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 100.
[213] The Civic Knowledge Project's mission is "to develop and strengthen community connections through humanities-based educational programming" in an effort to attenuate "the social, economic, and racial divisions among the various knowledge communities on the South Side of Chicago." See "About The Civic Knowledge Project," accessed March 4, 2015, http://civicknowledge.uchicago.edu/about.shtml. The two chefs were Michael Kornick, owner of mk, a "New American" restaurant in the River North neighborhood of Chicago and his Executive Chef Erik Williams, a Chicago-born chef who rose through the ranks without having been formally trained and who now teaches at-risk-youth how to cook. An article posted on the website for Chicago's Public Media radio station WBEZ cites Kornick as having noted that he received training from Paul Prudhomme's head chef, Leroy Thomas, "a 48 year-old illiterate black chef who taught the then 22 year-old Kornick how to cook Cajun specialties—and then some. 'I've had Leroy's rémoulade on every one of my menus—since I was 23,' said Kornick," accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.wbez.org/blog/louisa-chu/2012-02-29/ritual-soul-food-dinner-96859.

food."[214] For those readers not familiar with ongoing debates over soul food, she reports: "Many twenty-first century African Americans have rejected soul food. It's not a healthy choice, it represents an unpleasant history, and it's 'what we used to do.' So how," she asks, "do we keep these traditions alive and show why they are important to black identity?" Although dishes varied over the course of the five evenings that *Soul Pavilion* took place, Dudley required chitterlings, a laborious dish made with the bowels and intestines of hogs, be a part of every meal. In so doing, she put her culinary project in conversation with the Black Arts and Black Power movements of the sixties.

As Doris Witt explains in her book *Black Hunger*, it was in the postwar context of a reinvigorated struggle for the rights of US citizenship, and coherent selfhood, that black men associated with black nationalist movements, including Black Power and Black Arts, first valorized foods that had metonymically served to link blackness with filth. Black soul food writers, such as cookbook author Bob Jefferies, also claimed soul to be a concept that could not be known to racial outsiders. Meanwhile, white writers, such as *New York Times* food critic Craig Claiborne, attempted both to defuse the potency of such claims and to elect themselves into the soul brotherhood, by authoritatively defining soul food for primarily white readerships.[215] I draw on Witt's analysis to suggest how the discourses through which soul food and chitterlings came to be contested sites of signification represent various attempts to delimit the boundaries of the self from the other, the inside from the outside, and the masculine from the feminine.

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[214] Elly Fishman, "Theaster Gates's Dinner Party," *The Chicago Reader*, March 13, 2012, accessed March 4, 2015, http://www.chicagoreader.com/Bleader/archives/2012/03/13/theaster-gates-and-the-art-of-soul.
[215] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 82, 96–97.

It is not accidental, but it is contradictory, Witt asserts, that Black Power's recuperation of soul food was coupled with a repudiation of black maternity and black female labor. Although Witt finds that the debates surrounding chitterlings are fraught precisely because, as I explain further, they threaten to upend distinctions between not only the boundaries of the body but also, and by extension, privileged identities and unprivileged ones. As her discussion of "the drawing up and crossing of boundaries" via soul food attests, the association between the chitterlings and filth has the potential to slip between discourses of race, sexuality, class, and gender and is suggestive of all that is at stake in its containment and stabilization.[216] When these slippages become the site of our inquiry, we can begin to account for why chitterlings have borne what Witt describes as the "metonymic burden" of soul food.

A 1969 article in *Time* magazine, titled "Eating Like Soul Brothers," asserts that: "Today, as 200 years ago, the true 'stone soul' dish is chitterlings, pronounced 'chiltlins.'"[217] For this unnamed writer, who presumably addresses an uninitiated white reader, chitterlings distinguishes soul food from southern food, and the elided syllable, separates insiders to black culture from outsiders. The suggestion here is that chitterlings are the "stone soul" dish because they are more "authentically" black than other foods associated with soul. Poststructuralist critiques of authenticity represent one means of troubling such claims. Although bell hooks has noted that in refuting the experiential basis of soul, poststructuralists deny younger generations of black Americans access to a legacy of survival forged from "viable strategies of resistance to racism."[218]

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[216] Ibid., 83.
[217] Ibid., 80
[218] Ibid., 96.

In the late sixties and early seventies, other black Americans, including Nation of Islam religious leader, Elijah Muhammad, and civil rights activist and comedian Dick Gregory, disagreed with hooks's conclusions about both the value and authenticity of soul without adopting poststructuralist critiques. It was not just that soul food was born out of a history of oppression and thus represented an "unclean" and "unhealthful practice of racial genocide."[219] It was also that it represented an inauthentic phenomenon of black bourgeois "slumming," adopted by middle-class black artists and intellectuals, such as Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones), who did so in an attempt to assume proletariat personas. As Witt explains, the postwar period was marked by the consolidation of a black middle class in the United States that faced accusations from other African Americans, and perhaps most famously from sociologist E. Franklin Frazier in his 1957 book *Black Bourgeoise*, of racial inauthenticity. Drawing on the work of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, she concludes that upwardly mobile African Americans attempted to affirm their racial identity by celebrating soul foods, and especially chitterlings, but that they did so by "othering it onto the black working class and poor."[220] For those blacks who dismissed the racial authenticity of soul food, it was also troublesome that it was appropriated by aristocratic whites who, as Tom Wolfe insinuates in *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers* (1970), attempted to differentiate themselves from staid middle-class whites by romanticizing things supposed to be primitive and proletarian.[221]

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[219] Ibid., 80.
[220] Ibid., 88.
[221] Ibid., 79.

These debates only begin to indicate why soul food and chitterlings are sites of intense contradiction and contestation, and why interrogating these sites is important for our discussions of Gates's *Soul Pavilion* and the feminized durational labor that the project, I argue, invites us to register. The question to which we need to attend is this: what threat do both the refusals and fetishizations of chitterlings seek to manage? One could argue, as Kelly Oliver has done, that *all* foods, as they get ingested, and then either absorbed or excreted by the body, call into question the body's very borders.[222] Drawing on Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory of abjection, Witt points out though that chitterlings, as the internal passage of a hog through which food passes from the mouth to the anus, draw attention to the difficulty of distinguishing inside from and outside, and the ontological crisis inaugurated by internalizations of the other, more acutely than other foods. To understand more clearly how this crisis plays out across various structures of signification, I first turn to Witt's analysis of Ralph Ellison's novel, *Invisible Man*, which was published in 1952, prior to Black Power era valorizations of soul food.

The problem with which the protagonist is faced over the course of the text is whether he should embrace or reject his racial identity, resulting either in his invisibility or visibility among whites. In being confronted with this choice, the Invisible Man comes to despise Dr. Bledsoe, the president of the black southern college at which he has been educated who teaches his students to seek acceptance from whites and, in turn, to accept black subordination. After giving in to his conflicted desire to eat a "hot, baked Car'lina yam," that he buys from a New York City street vendor, the narrator fantasizes about a scene in which he confronts Dr. Bledsoe in "the crowded lobby" of his residence building

[222] Ibid., 85.

in Harlem. The Invisible Man sees himself "whipping out a foot or two of chitterlings, raw, uncleaned, and dripping sticky circles on the floor," and accusing Dr. Bledsoe of being "a sneaking chitterling lover" who "indulges in a filthy habit," but who does so only "in private," and when he thinks he's unobserved.[223]

As Witt notes, there is ambiguity here about whether the outing that is taking place is racial or sexual in nature. While we have discussed the fact that chitterlings have served as a sign for blackness, the narrator also conjures the hog intestine in homosexual terms: as both phallic (dripping with fluids) and anal (uncleaned of feces). As the book was published during an era when anti-Communist hysteria in the United States was routinely directed at gays and lesbians, Witt argues that the allusion to gay male anal sex would have been as plain to readers then as it is now. That chitterlings came to signal not only blackness but also homosocial or homosexual desire is suggestive for Witt of why they became "the most fetishized of soul foods by the late 1960s—among not only black men but also aspiring white soul brothers such as Craig Claiborne."[224] It is not that we should think of this scene as one in which sexual outing *passes* for racial outing, she says, but rather that we should be attentive to how readily allusions to the filthiness of chitterlings slips across different registers of meaning. We should note then the class inflections of the Invisible Man's accusations, as they could also be said to take aim at the authenticity of Dr. Bledsoe's bourgeois values.

Given the metonymic instability of hog bowels, we can make sense of efforts to contain and control their meaning as attempts to stabilize not only social structures, but

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[223] Ralph Ellison, *The Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1995), 263–65.
[224] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 84.

also, if we believe psychoanalysts, corresponding structures of subjectivity. Witt suggests that:

> As that which transgresses the boundaries between food and excrement, phallus and anus, origin and decay, chitterlings point to the fragility of the system through which privileged identities such as whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality are maintained as what Kristeva calls the *corps propre*, and blackness, femininity, and homosexuality, as unclean and improper.

We have discussed how 1960s conflicted fascinations with chitterlings represent, on the one hand, attempts to shore up boundaries between race, class, and sexuality. On the other, they are suggestive of the very tenuousness of such boundaries. But thus far the question of how laboring black women figure into such tensions has gone unanswered. This is because when we track black nationalist appropriations of soul food, we also track how this process of extricating soul food from its associations with the filth was, in fact, a process of absenting black laboring women.

In his reflection on soul within the context of music, Baraka exposes the gendered underpinnings of the association between soul and filth in a passage of his book *Blues People* in which he writes: "[T]he adjective *funky*, which once meant to many Negroes a stink (usually associated with sex) was used to qualify [soul] music as meaningful." The various black female cookbook writers whom Witt cites as making apologies for the smell they produced while making chitterlings serves to indicate that this association was indeed operative in discourses not only about soul music, as Baraka indicates, but also soul food. Although the displacement of black women and their labor from Black Power era valorizations of soul is complexly motivated, one of the primary ways in which it gets

maintained is by means of the prevailing instance that soul food and music come together through improvisation—in other words without preparation.[225]

Witt looks to the laboriously tested and carefully written recipes in soul cookbooks by black women, including Pearl Bowser, Kathy Starr, and Vertamae Smart Grosvenor, to challenge the notion of black culinary improvisation. Sharpless's history of black culinary workers, many of whom she can only identify by the first name their employers used to address them, also attests to the fact that even when it was not codified into written recipes, black culinary production was the result of hard work and accumulated skill. It is important to note though that one reason that improvisation became a fixation within discourses on black food was in order to resist routine appropriations of black culture by whites. To give just one example, Sharpless notes that over the course of the twentieth century many cookbooks were published by white people that made use of the recipes, and sometimes also the voices, of African American women without giving credit or attribution.[226] To assert that soul food is the product of improvisation then, is to suggest that knowledge of its making cannot be transmitted to racial outsiders. While seeking to thwart the pirating of black cultural forms by whites, this claim also works to ends that not only attempt to stabilize and contain racial meanings, but also to render invisible the labor of black women.

It is not just that the tendency of Black Power discourses to disavow the relationship between soul food and black female labor is an unintended byproduct of racial resistance. Black Power repudiations of femininity generally, and black women specifically, are in fact vigilant and systematic. In order to fully suggest what these

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[225] Ibid., 89–90, 98.
[226] Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens,* xxiii–xxix.

readings of soul food and chitterlings bring to bear on our understanding of Gates's *Soul Pavilion* (and the question of hospitality more broadly) we need to make explicit why removing black women from the scene of black cultural production was of such vital importance to black nationalist discourses.

The project at the heart of the Black Power movement was to solidify the notion of black manhood as pure and self-contained. It was thereby necessary for Black Arts poets and writers to use language that would challenge the strong association between the cultural and literary forms they used to advance their message, and bourgeois, and thereby effeminate, society, as well as gay and Jewish subcultures.[227] In a poem titled *Black Art* that begins, "[p]oems are bullshit unless they are teeth," Baraka—who, in the fifties, had affiliations with Beat Poets such as Allen Ginsberg—claimed that men in the Black Arts movement, "want poems that kill." The enemies toward which these killing poems are directed include "mulatto bitches" and "Stinking/Whores!"[228] Witt argues that the misogynist, homophobic, and anti-Semitic tendencies for which black nationalism is known, represent displaced anxieties about the sanctity of black manhood.

One of the most pervasive of these anxieties was about the possibility of homosexual or homoerotic encounters between black men. In the homophobic attack he mounted against James Baldwin in his book *Soul on Ice*, Black Panther, Eldridge Cleaver betrays the way in which black homosexuality was linked to miscegenational black motherhood. Cleaver writes: "many Negro homosexuals […] are outraged and frustrated

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[227] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 91.
[228] Amiri Baraka, *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, William J. Harris (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), 219.

because in their sickness they are unable to have a baby by a white man."[229] Black nationalists such as Cleaver, implied that homosexuals were the pathological offspring of racial and sexual transgression "committed by and upon black women."[230] Witt notes, that Cleaver is not the only one for whom the site of reproduction inaugurates a crisis for black male selfhood. From Jon Eckels's poem in which he implies disdain towards the fictive black character Mary Bell Jones for being "full of groans," when the "slum lord is on [her]," to George Jackson's likening of chattel slavery to being captured in his mother's womb, there is much evidence in Black Arts literature and poetry to suggest the conflation of black women with black "slave" mothers and white domination.[231]

It is not just that these discourses reduce black women to passive and complicit sites of racial and sexual violence. Under slavery, a system predicated upon the economic benefits of white slave owners superseding legally unrecognized black familial ties, black men were often forced to part from their families. It was the owners of the mother who always assumed ownership of children. As black feminist scholar Hortense Spillers argues, the absence of the black father from "mimetic view as a partner in the prevailing social fiction of the Father's name," gave birth to the enduring myth of the dominant black female who takes charge of "illegitimate" offspring.[232] The conflicted and pathologized image of the black woman as dominant within black culture and subservient to white patriarchy, accounts for the tendency of black nationalists to abstract the laboring power of black female bodies. Reflecting on the scene of his birth in his 1969 book *Die Nigger Die!*, for example, H. Rap Brown describes the violent gesture of the

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[229] As quoted in Witt, *Black Hunger*, 92.
[230] Ibid., 92.
[231] Ibid., 90–92.
[232] Ibid., 93.

white male doctor pulling him from his mother's womb, while failing to register the exertions of his mother who pushed him.[233] What these complexly determined heterosexist views amount to, Madhu Dubey tells us, is that within the ideologies of Black Power, black women represent an oppressive history that threatens to abort a revolutionary future. As Dubey puts it, black women stand for "the dead static past, tainted with white values, which the militant black writer must destroy before he can articulate a new revolutionary black sensibility."[234]

This future-oriented rhetoric of black masculine empowerment bring us back to English's arguments about the racially determined availability of time, but provokes us to consider how these determinations are underwritten by gender too. English describes how during the black nationalism of the sixties and seventies, presentism and futurism briefly supplant the strategic anachronism that African American writers from the late eighteenth century until the present have consistently adopted. She argues that Black Power activists and Black Arts writers could afford to adopt literary forms and political ambitions more firmly grounded in the present, and directed toward the future, not only because of legislative advances for black Americans, including the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but also because their activities were situated within the context of many other future-oriented national and international activisms, including but not limited to the civil rights, antiwar, women's, and gay rights movements.[235]

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[233] As Witt notes, representations of women as passive during childbirth are hardly unique to black nationalist discourses. Ibid., 94.
[234] Ibid., 93.
[235] English, *Each Hour Redeem*, 122–123.

Baraka's poem "It's Nation Time," is one of the examples English provides of a Black Art poem that "carries urgency, action, and unity in its imagery and in its insistent present tenses, participial forms, compressed words, and rapid tempo."[236] Baraka writes:

> Time to get
> together
> time to be one strong fast black energy space
> one pulsating positive magnetism, rising
> time to get up and
> be[237]

English describes Baraka's poem as a global call for a black nation that comes into being through the musical and the oral—not only is the poem rhythmically written, it makes explicit reference to musical instruments and sounds, including bells, drums, and persistent booms. Although she cites the line in which he asserts that, "the black man is the future of the world," she does not suggest how, as a result, the present- and future-oriented black community he evokes might not necessarily accommodate the presence of black women. In the context of a more general discussion of the Black Arts Movement, she is clear that scholars have been right to critique not only its misogyny and homophobia, but also its dismissal of history, even and especially African American history, and its rigid definitions of racial identity. Yet it is not clear, based on her discussion, how the racial advancement imagined within Black Power ideologies is actually *predicated* on removing laboring black women from view, as these bodies belie fictions of racial, sexual, and temporal purity.

These accounts of Black Power ideologies about soul food, chitterlings, temporality, music, and laboring black women, seem to have taken us away from the

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[236] Ibid., 111.
[237] Baraka, *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, 240.

table Gates's sets in *Soul Pavilion*. Yet, these histories aim to give a fuller and more precise sense of what is at stake when, as Witt puts it, "soul is either uncritically embraced as the essence of blackness or else dismissed as inauthentic."[238] Gates's invitation to "ask harder questions about the relationship between […] acts of generosity and the history of that generosity via food," is one indication that his project serves to engage the complexities that we might otherwise lose as a result of either uncritical acceptance or complete dismissal. [239] The fact that this encounter with African American culinary history takes place within a site devoted to housing otherwise lost and discarded things, and to giving material presence to histories of various kinds of foreclosure, suggests also that the project is governed by a very different concept of temporality than the presentism and futurism not only of the Black Power movement but also, and to different ends, of *Feast*.

Since an emphasis on the concept of culinary and musical improvisation has been one of the ways in which laboring black women have been absented from the scene of the cultural production of soul, it is important to consider the musical element of Gates's project. Over the course of dinner and discussions, the artist's experimental music ensemble, the Black Monks of Mississippi, preformed sonic compositions. These compositions incorporate vocals, instrumentation, stories, and sermons, and borrow from a wide range of musical forms, including African diasporic and Eastern monastic traditions. Although there are moments that are attributable to seemingly recognizable musical expressions, including gospel, spiritual, and the blues, the combined effect is neither to put forth a sign of authentic blackness nor to evacuate the music of historical

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[238] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 80.
[239] Theaster Gates, "Interview," in *Feast*, 196.

weight and content.[240] The wide range of musical influences is not the only reason that these compositions never cohere into something determinate. It is also because, as Gates's puts it, his aim is "to not sing the whole blues," but rather to hold back, and to adopt what he describes as a "monk aesthetic" characterized by restraint and repetition.[241]

We might think of Gates's musical project in Paul Gilroy's terms, as an expression of transatlantic black creativity and exchange that exceeds constricting binary frameworks, especially, as Gilroy puts it, "those that counterpose essentialism and pluralism."[242] Yet, Gates's emphasis on restraint and the incorporation of black culinary history "encourages us to recognize barriers to, and even assumptions about the gender of, movement which discussions of black music can sometimes seem to skirt."[243] As Witt explains in her discussion Vertmae Smart Grosvenor's attempts to undermine essentializing representations of black foods and black female cooks, it is not that African American women have been absent from black Atlantic cultural exchanges, it is rather that they participated "even when they themselves are not 'free' to move."[244]

Grosvenor was born in South Carolina in the late 1930s and describes herself as a culinary griot. She published several cookbooks in the late sixties and early seventies, at the height of Black Power valorizations of soul food; served as a commentator on Afro-American culinary history on National Public Radio; and, in the mid-nineties, hosted the

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[240] For an extended discussion of questions of authenticity as they related to music of the black Atlantic see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[241] Theaster Gates, "Black Monks of Mississippi in Eindhoven" 14:47, posted by Theaster Gates's artist website, http://theastergates.com/artwork/2237027_Black_Monks_of_Mississippi_in_Eindhoven.html
[242] Gilory, *The Black Atlantic*, 120.
[243] Witt, *Black Hunger*, 175.
[244] Ibid., 176.

series *The Americas' Family Kitchen* on PBS. As a concrete example of how relatively stationary women have contributed to transatlantic cultural production, Witt cites the many recipes Grosvenor exchanged via letters with friends and family, including a cousin living in the West Indies. Although these exchanges took place when she was homebound, as the parental custodian of her two daughters, Grosvenor wrote that "her kitchen was the world."[245] When we situate transatlantic culinary practices within the contexts of slavery, colonialism, and capitalism, the notion of exchange becomes more complex than this one anecdote suggests, but it nonetheless gives insight into the limitations of transatlantic discourses that privilege mobility.

It is not only as it relates to mobility, or lack thereof, though, that Gates's adoption of an aesthetic of restraint provides a framework through which we might register the labor of black women and raise questions about the invisibility of laboring black women within discourses of contemporary art. It is important to consider what this aesthetic of restraint means within the context of a space that Gates hoped would allow for his guests to "feel safe" and "be more vulnerable." He notes that he is especially eager to "open up […] communities that are often marginal to the contemporary art world."[246] As Candice M. Jenkings explains in her book *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy*, and as the African American literary traditions we have considered thus far have emphasized, concerns of safety and vulnerability structure the lives of black subjects in particular and profound ways.

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[245] As quoted in ibid., 155.
[246] Theaster Gates, "Theaster Gates: Soul Food Pavilion," Vimeo video, 4:54, posted by Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2012, https://vimeo.com/37407879

The pervasive stigmatization of black domestic and sexual life as deviant has not only served to rationalize the exclusions of black people from civic membership and protection, it has also been used to justify the infliction of pain and violence on black bodies. As our discussion of Black Power era discourses has suggested, the sexualized black female body has been routinely cited as the origin of black degeneracy since the antebellum era. The 1965 study of the black family, known as the Moynihan report, suggested her excessive power within the domestic sphere, her failure to conform to the heteropatriarchal family structure, and her unconstrained reproductive capacity, were to blame as well. Jenkins argues that while vulnerability is a condition of human intimacy that can never "be made safe," black subjects experience this vulnerability doubly. This is not only because "the black body is always already assumed to be signifying desire," it is also because the notion of arbitrary racial violence is not a metaphorical "hangover" from slavery.[247] Every black person living in the United States today faces the relentless threat of physical endangerment. As Jenkins puts it, "black subjects in a racist society are at literal risk on a daily basis, and are constantly susceptible to the consequences of the culture's barely concealed racial hostility."[248]

Looking to domestic literature written by African American women over the course of the twentieth century, Jenkins suggests that, from the nineteenth century into the twenty-first, African American women, especially but not only of the middle class, have responded consistently to characterizations of black female sexuality and black domestic life as depraved. She does not take her literary examples—which include Nella

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[247] Candice M. Jenkins, *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 20.
[248] Ibid., 5.

Larson's *Passing* (1929), Ann Petry's *The Street* (1946), Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973), and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982)—to be transparent representations of social realities, but rather understands them to be fictional narratives through which these realities get negotiated. These text's black female characters express ongoing concerns about and emphasis on propriety. Such preoccupations represent deliberate attempts on the part of middle-class African American women to embrace bourgeois values in order to protect black families from stigmatization and thus physical harm.

These strategies have their roots in the nineteenth century, and emerged in response to the perceived inability of African American families to model the "republican ideal," and African American women to model the sanctity of femininity. Yet, Jenkins insists that this "earnest longing to rescue the black community from such narratives of sexual pathology remains a central part of the black cultural imaginary."[249] This is true, she says, even though faith in the prospect of its realization, especially via the emulation of sexual and familial norms, has significantly diminished since the Victorian era.

As a contemporary and nonliterary example of this practice, she describes an elision in the history of her undergraduate alma mater, Spelman College, the historically black liberal arts school for women in Atlanta. Spelman was founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Sofia Packard and Harriet Giles, white missionaries who established the school in order to educate formerly enslaved women. Although, like every first year student, Jenkins was required to acquaint herself with the institution's history, she was only recently made aware of the probable romantic involvement of the two founders. She recalls that "the notion was so suppressed that [she doesn't] even recall any

[249] Ibid., 23.

speculation about it on campus."[250] Yet, she takes serious issue with Sheila Alexander-Reid's assessment that in not openly acknowledging the same-sex relationship of their school's founders, Spelman students and alumnae demonstrate the ways in which the "African American community is light years behind the rest of the civilized world."[251] Alexander-Reid justifies this claim by noting that at other (predominately white) colleges, such histories are celebrated and not silenced. Such an accusation, Jenkins points out, is grossly negligent of the histories of racial exploitation and exclusion that have been justified by the purported lack of civility of peoples of African decent.

To put the implications of Jenkins's insights more explicitly into the terms of Gates's project, consider her assertion that black women have "[paid] with their bodies, or rather with the concealment and restraint of those bodies, for the ultimate 'safety' of the black community as a whole."[252] Efforts to limit the exposure of black sexual and domestic life have often been accompanied by a desire to take refuge behind the façade of conventional domesticity, in an attempt to create what Jenkins describes as a "hyperprivate space," a space in which black subjects might experience the vulnerability of intimacy not doubled by racial vulnerability. Of course, as our discussion of chitterlings made clear, there is no extricating inside spaces from outside spaces. Both are subject to the same threats and systems of power. As a number of scholars, including Lauren Berlant, have told us, it is a misstep to read domestic spaces as bounded or safe.[253] Jenkins insists that we recognize attempts on the part of African American

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[250] Ibid., 2.
[251] Ibid., 1–3.
[252] Ibid., 14.
[253] Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 51.

women, in literature and lived black experience, to exemplify propriety and family stability, accompanied by their silence on practices of so-called transgressive sexuality such as lesbianism, as deliberate attempts to keep black peoples out of harm's way. Ultimately, though she is reticent to endorse such strategies as they do "little to alleviate the real pressures of the vulnerability, or to create new social and personal spaces for intimacy." What she hopes for instead are "spaces complex enough to move us beyond fantasies of an intimate life made 'safe.'"[254]

We can understand Gates's adoption of an aesthetic of restraint and his efforts to create an environment that "allows for people to feel safe," and to "be more vulnerable than [they] might be normally," to signal his self-conscious attention to the double vulnerability of black subjects. In abiding by complexity rather than working to dispel it, it seems that his project, to my mind at least, is not working in the service of a misguided fantasy. Rather it keeps *bringing us back* to the realization that the logic of antagonism removes the laboring black female body from the scene of cultural production. [Figure 2.12] An aesthetic of restraint then, emerges *in response* to the restraint and vulnerability of black bodies, not to stifle conversation but to open us up to the limitations of an aesthetic of futurity.

Since we began at the kitchen table, this is where we will also end. Like many of the antilynching plays of the early twentieth century, each of the twenty photographs in Carrie Mae Weems's *Kitchen Table Series* are staged at the same table, *in the same room*. [Figure 2.13] In each shot, the camera captures the length of the table as it extends away from the lens and towards the photographic subjects on the other end. The visual effect is

[254] Ibid.

that viewers occupy space at the table, are invited in, but are also kept at a distance. Weems has called us to the table to confront many of the issues we have raised here. As a motif, the kitchen table makes explicit reference to the history of domestic labor, feminist consciousness-raising, and intimate domestic life. The artist has suggested that this photographic project, like her earlier *Family Pictures and Stories* (1978), emerged in response to the Moynihan report.[255] It represents her ongoing attempts to trouble the report's damaging assertions about the pathological state of black domestic life.[256] The spotlighting effect of the overhead light evokes black domestic intimacy as a site of scrutiny and interrogation.

Through her complex performances of black womanhood, which are the focal point of every frame, Weems rejects both the tendency to overlook and to objectify the black female subject. Through the minimal stage-like setting and domestic props that change over the course of the series, the performativity of the various scenes announces itself to event the most inattentive eye. These are images of Weems's very deliberate making. She anticipates the presence of the gaze of the other. Yet, because the scenes are so explicit about having been staged, the viewer is also aware of occupying the space of Weems as photographer, looking on at Weems as performing photographic subject. This is one of the ways in which these photographs heighten our awareness of transgressed boundaries between self and other, inside and outside. The compositions also belie the fiction of domestic arenas as private and protected. The hermeticism of the room is

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[255] Kathryn E. Delmez, "'Real Facts, by Real People': Folklore in the Early Work of Carrie Mae Weems," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, ed. Kathryn E. Delmez (Nashville, TN: Frist Center for the Visual Arts, 2012), 11.
[256] Franklin Sirmans, "A World of Her Own: Carrie Mae Weems and Performance," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, 47.

threatened not only by the inclusion of part of a closed door in the background of every frame, but also by the changing casts of characters who enter and exit from the space. In *Untitled (Woman and Phone)*, the placement of the telephone on the table in the foreground, and the fetal bodily position of the figure, whom the title identifies simply as woman, sitting at the other end of the table in the background, make explicit reference to the damage the so-called outside world can inflict upon the so-called inside world.

Although the twenty images and the fourteen text panels with which the photographs are coupled are suggestive of a narrative arc, they do not end up adding up to something clear cut and sequential about which viewers can claim certain knowledge. Not only do the titles and accompanying texts identify the photographic figures to which they refer in generic terms—as simply man, woman, daughter, friends, and children—thus leaving the relationship between the figures abstract and largely unknown to us, there is also disjunction between the images. For example, in the first photograph of the series, *Untitled (Man and Mirror)*, the unnamed woman sits at one end of the table in front of a mirror, while the unnamed man embraces her from a standing position from behind. She does not look into the mirror, but rather meets, and refuses, our gaze; his face is buried in her hair and concealed behind a brimmed hat. In the next image, *Untitled (Man Smoking)*, we assume that time has passed, that the man has made himself comfortable in her space, taken off his hat, and hung up his Malcolm X posters on the wall that was empty in the last frame. They drink whiskey and play cards. His back is angled toward the camera and so his hand is fully visible to us. With a hand over her mouth, concealing her expression, she keeps her cards against the table and angled towards her. [Figure 2.14] This is one of several explicit visual cues over the course of

the series that signal the woman's refusal to be read, even while being seen. (The mechanics of this refusal are something I discuss at length in chapter four, in relation to performances by Charlotte Moorman and photographic works by Lorna Simpson.) If we felt a plot building, it gets interrupted in the third photograph in the series, *Untitled (Eating Lobster).* Not only have the man and woman switched places at the kitchen table, but the decorations in the room have also changed. A still life of flowers hangs in the place of the Malcolm X posters, and a cage housing a bird sits in the corner.

The text is perhaps more cohesive; it suggests that these photographs represent the cultivation and dissolution of a relationship. Crossed fingers and uncertain futures, that "could be only a paper moon hanging over a cardboard sea," give way to lurking "trouble" and truth slapping the protagonist "hard up-side [her] head."[257] Prose that emulates a third-person novel is interspersed with popular phrases and song lyrics.

> Like a change gotta come, like women were the mules of the world, like she needed to go tell it on the mountain, like she wanted to take a rocking chair down by the river and rock on away from here, like good morning heart ache sit down, like she needed to reach out and touch somebody's hand, like she needed her soul rocked in the bosom of Abraham, like momma said there'd by days like this, like her man didn't love her, like she needed him to try a little tenderness. Like maybe she'd get herself a white man, see what he'd do.[258]

The voices these lines conjure, of Sam Cooke, Billie Holiday, Diana Ross, Louis Armstrong, the Shirelles, and Otis Retting, create a polyphony that undermines any sense we might have had that these stories are about someone singular. That these are lines we have already heard undermines any sense that this story is about something new. Although the text follows a narrative arc, what it conveys most expressly is that "racism

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[257] "Kitchen Table Series," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, 76–105.
[258] Ibid., 96.

puts pressure on the private space of the home."[259] In other words, the text makes explicit how racism's intrusive and ongoing presence dictates the course of events and forecloses the future. "He said she was too domineering." "She was working, making money, becoming what he called a 'bougie,' he wasn't working and this was truly messing with his mind. He was starting to feel like a Black man wasn't supposed to have nothing […] like it ain't a man's world […] like he didn't have a dream."[260]

Ultimately, the "insistently reiterated space," and the fact that in both the images and text end up where they could be said to have started, with the woman "being alone again," contribute to what I have been describing, via Gates, as an aesthetic of restraint and repetition that emerges in critical response to an aesthetic of futurity.[261] Here again, Weems's text uses a musical reference to reiterate the point. She leaves us with the opening lyrics of one of the first songs Nina Simone recorded, "Little Girl Blue." The song begins with a piano arrangement of the popular carol "Good King Wenceslas," but Simone's dusky contralto interrupts the familiar melody. With an arresting quality for which she was known, she croons, "[S]it there and count your fingers. What can you do? Oh, girl you're through. It's time you knew/ all you can ever count on/ are the rain drops that fall on/little girl blue."[262] As we leave Weems's kitchen table, Simone's voice, the materiality of it and the way it makes us wary of the aesthetics of futurity, stays with us.

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[259] Elizabeth Abel "Domestic Borders, Cultural Boundaries: Black Feminists Re-view the Family," in *The Familial Gaze,* ed. Marianne Hirsch (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 138.
[260] "Kitchen Table Series," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, 99.
[261] Respectively: Abel "Domestic Borders, Cultural Boundaries," 135, in *Cultural Boundaries,* and "Kitchen Table Series," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, 103.
[262] Ibid.

Three

The Domestic: Dust and J. Morgan Puett's "Temporal Drag"

> *The specter of women's work haunts capitalism.*
> —David Staples, "Women's Work and the Ambivalent Gift of Entropy"

> *Nobody knew what form of intimidation Mr. Radley employed to keep Boo out of sight, but Jem figured Mr. Radley kept him chained to the bed most of the time. Atticus said no, it wasn't that sort of thing, that there were other ways of making people into ghosts.*
> —Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

> *Where the myth imagined the force of machines as a power driving history forward, [there is] material evidence that history has not budged. Indeed, history stands so still it gathers dust.*
> —Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*

As visual artist Marissa Lee Benedict has remarked, one of the most difficult things about introducing Mildred's Lane "is finding a place to begin."[263] Several years ago we could have attributed the problem, at least in part, to the fact that most readers familiar with contemporary art had probably never heard of it. In 2011, however, Creative Time in New York organized *Living as Form,* an exhibition held in the Essex Street Market building that featured "documentation" of socially engaged art projects created between 1991 and 2011. Mildred's Lane was among the hundred or so projects included. In the form of a small wall-mounted installation, it was also represented in the Smart Museum's exhibition *Feast* that opened in Chicago in 2012 and then traveled to Huston, Santa Fe, Gambier, and finally Minneapolis where it closed in 2015. Later in 2012, the project was the focus of a series of lectures, workshops, and activities that were held in an experimental studio space at the Museum of Modern Art in New York,

[263] Marissa Lee Benedict, "A Lived (Living) Practice: J Morgan Puett, Mildred's Lane, and the Mildred Complexity," *A Lived Practice Blog*, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Sullivan Galleries, http://blogs.saic.edu/alivedpractice/a-lived-living-practice-j-morgan-puett-mildreds-lane-and-the-mildred-complexity/.

organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900–2000*. In 2013, Mildred's Lane gained recognition among contemporary art-goers in Minneapolis when it was advertised as the place where Fritz Haeg had begun his crocheted rug. The rug was the centerpiece of the Walker Art Center space where the artist was in residence for several months. In 2014, installations devoted to the project occupied space in the Art Institute of Chicago's Sullivan Galleries as part of the exhibition *Proximity of Consciousness: Art and Social Action*, which was organized in conjunction with the international conference on art and social practice, *A Lived Practice*. *Proximity of Consciousness* marked the largest-scale attempt to bring the experience of Mildred's Lane to an institutional space to date.

This laundry list of exhibitions conveys little, perhaps, except that institutional interest in Mildred's Lane has grown in the last several years, and that, as a result, it is likely many more readers will have a point of reference now than did before 2011. As the various exhibition titles suggest, this heightened attention has coincided with what performance studies scholar, Shannon Jackson described in 2011 as "the social turn" in contemporary art.[264] This increased institutional engagement with Mildred's Lane specifically, and the accumulating scholarship on "socially-based" art trends generally, have not, however, translated into increased critical attention and understanding of the project. This is in part because the question of how to navigate Mildred's Lane has proved to be as difficult for museums and galleries to answer as it has been for visitors such as Benedict.

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[264] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics,* (New York: Routeledge, 2011), 11.

She responds to the problem of where to begin by suggesting we think of Mildred's Lane in relationship to a path. Citing social anthropologist Tim Ingold's concept of wayfinding, she notes that, "the path, like the music melody, unfolds over time, rather than [only] across space."[265] Ingold points out that when we ask ourselves "where am I?" we do not tend to imagine the response in terms of a precise geographic location. Rather, we formulate our sense of location in terms of where we have been and how we might reach other places from where we are. He writes:

> In music, a melodic phrase is not just a sequence of discrete tones; what counts is the rising or falling of pitch that gives shape to the phrase as a whole. Likewise in wayfinding, the path is specified not as a sequence of point-indexical images, but as the coming-into-sight and passing-out-of-sight of variously contoured and textured surfaces.[266]

If the path analogy suggested a linear trajectory it would be a misleading rather than orienting way of approaching Mildred's Lane. But Ingold is clear that he is not interested in linearity. He is interested in the question of how we navigate the various paths available to us. His claim that this process is something we experience not only in space but also in time will prove to be a useful one. For now, the question remains: from where we've been—Guggenheim's duplex at East 61st Street in New York, Calpurnia's kitchen in Maycomb, Alabama, Dorchester Projects on the South Side of Chicago, and a polythene chamber inside one of the six parts of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings* at the Rubeun Gallery in New York—how do we determine where we are?

We could simply describe Mildred's Lane as a set of vernacular structures on a "wildish" ninety-six acre compound in rural Pennsylvania that artist J Morgan Puett and

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[265] Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2011), 238.
[266] Ibid., 238–239.

her friend, former partner, and well-known installation artist, Mark Dion, open up to their friends, colleagues, young aspiring artists, and neighbors from the surrounding community. It is also Puett's home, where she and Dion have raised their son, Gray Rabbit. Instead of using language conventionally deployed to describe the head of household, Puett calls herself an Ambassador of Entanglement, a name suggestive of her role as a host, facilitator, and participant in the many public lectures, performances, domestic experiments, formal and informal projects, and yes, parties that take place at Mildred's Lane every year.

Puett has devised her own word, complex(ity), to gesture towards the function of Mildred's Lane as a both a physical place and an intellectual project. In the artist's lexicon, the word complex(ity) is a deliberate play on the denotations of the stem word "complex" as both a noun and an adjective. It signals Mildred's Lane to be a group of similar buildings on a shared site: in other words, a complex, *and*, more complexly, something that consists of many different yet connected parts; something that is not always easy to analyze or understand; and something that is complicated and intricate. The suffix "ity" carries with it important information: it indicates the ongoing state of the adjective it modifies into a noun. In other words, Puett contends that Mildred's Lane's complexity is not something isolated in a singular time or place, it is rather a durational and sustained condition. So to formulate the question in terms Ingold's concept of wayfinding, if this is where we are going, how do we get there?

Upon his first visit to Mildred's Lane in 2004, journalist Alastair Gordon wondered if he was encountering a reenactment of some weird Depression-era fantasy. Six years later, at a panel discussion on Mildred's Lane and the reinvention of artist

communities at MoMA, Gordon described the circumstances of his visit to this unusual homestead and contemporary art complex in the Upper Delaware River Valley Region of Pennsylvania.[267] He had visited to write a feature for the *Home and Garden* section of the *New York Times*, but admitted that "it was a challenge to even figure out how to explain what this place might be," for it seemed to him to be so many different things at once. The "so many different things at onceness" of Mildred's Lane makes it a compelling, although in turn slippery site through which to move my study, which, like Mildred's Lane, crosses times, places, academic, and nonacademic terrains, not according to the logic of linearity, or of back-and-forth, but of entanglement.[268]

As is perhaps becoming clear, this project unfurls messily, but deliberately, across chapters while Mildred's Lane unfurls across a collection of strange physical spaces, but both seek to trouble art historical narratives that create and maintain the illusion of objects, subjects and events as discrete, not only in time and in space, but also from emotional and physical labor. Mildred's Lane, in its dramatization of the gendered durational activity (across time and space) that sustains subjects, objects, and events (namely artists, artworks, and performances) that *appear* discrete in art historical narratives, will emerge as yet another stage on which the concerns of the this dissertation are set. On the broadest level, this chapter, like the last, coheres around the question of what our understanding of time has to do with the (in)visibility of feminine emotional, physical and creative labor in contemporary art discourses.

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[267] J. Morgan Puett, Mark Dion, Alastair Gordon, Glenn Lowry, "Reinventing Artist Communities," part of the Museum of Modern Art's Conversations with Contemporary Artists series, November 8, 2010, audio recording accessed on the museum's website, June 1, 2011, http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/254/2498.
[268] Gordon, "Reinventing Artist Communities."

In order to make these claims more fully legible, as it relates to this particular site, I attend to three seemingly basic questions: What is Mildred's Lane? From what art historical traditions does it emerge and to what others does it make reference? And finally, how do we read it and determine its meanings? As I have suggested via my initial reflections, naming what Mildred's Lane is, is one of the most difficult problems it poses. And yet, rather than trying to decide what precisely Mildred's Lane *is*, I am more concerned with what it *does*. It will be my assertion that it functions as a relational network based on a loosely articulated set of "rules of household propriety" that constrain the behavior of guests based on a preexisting social agreement that dictates the terms and conditions of hospitality. These rules distinguish Mildred's Lane from other communal based living experiments that briefly held an important place in art historical narratives in the sixties and seventies, and put it rather in negotiation with the contemporary domesticity industry and the conventions of femininity, which often serve as the basis for its trivalization and dismissal. Furthermore, I clarify the ways in which its design emerges as a critical rejoinder to art historical debates that privilege patriarchal, avant-gardist thinking, which valorize artistic innovation, visuality, antagonism, individualism and a progressive view of stylistic and material change over historicism, materiality, cooperation, coordination, and a recursive view of stylistic and material change. Finally, I argue that we can read this project as an intervention not only in regard to our habits of mind with regard to temporality, or how we understand the relation between past, present and future, but also in regard to our understanding of the conventions of femininity. I suggest that J. Morgan Puett and her homestead share something with feminism. From

prevailing contemporary perspectives, both Puett's homestead and feminism seem "out of time."

I examine this seeming anachronism in relation to the material function of dust; the notion of temporal drag (a term which I borrow from Rebecca Schneider, who borrowed it from Elizabeth Freeman); Marxism and its undervaluation of feminine labor; and the history of Spiritualism, a movement that historians often describe as marking the fleeting feminization of religion that resulted in widespread attempts to communicate with the dead in the nineteenth century. Ultimately, I want to attune the reader to the systematic ways in which feminine creative, emotional, and physical labor gets written over, trivialized, and disavowed by a set of art historical practices that struggle to conceive of time as doing anything but moving forward, of radicality as involving anything other that rejection of the past and of conventions, and of the art object as anything other than discrete in time and space.

As I've noted, Gordon's disorientation and his subsequent efforts to make it legible move us from the question of what Mildred's Lane *is* to what it *does*. Although he suggests that he is not entirely sure where he is, he attempts to evoke the atmosphere of this defamiliarizing place for his readers by calling upon familiar tropes. He describes the experience of turning onto a long, winding, unpaved path, choked by trees, that lead him to the main house and "out of the present." The opening of his essay, "In Her Own World," reads like lines out of a nineteenth-century novel that crosses between romantic and gothic, Mark Twain and Jane Eyre. Gordon writes:

> The 21st century peels away along the half mile of Mildred's Lane, a rutted red dirt drive that winds among trees and rocky outcroppings in the hills of northeastern Pennsylvania. The road ends in a turnaround, beyond which stand several wooden buildings of indeterminate age. Even the tousle-haired woman

> who recently greeted a visitor at the door of the largest ones—dressed like Huck Finn in baggy linen pants and blue suspenders—seemed somehow untethered from the present.[269] [Figure 3.1]

The woman whom he identifies as "somehow untethered" is Puett, an installation and textile artist from a bee grafting family in Hahira, Georgia, who makes Mildred's Lane her home, and its maintenance and social production her artistic praxis. By casting Mildred's Lane and its keeper as unhinged from the present, from the "real" world, Gordon suggests that it is a whimsical, although, we might infer, by extension, also trivial, indulgent, feminized, and homebound practice, a place of dress-up, dinner parties, and domestic arts, a twenty-first century version of Marie Antoinette's Petit Trianon.[270]

If this seems like a broader assertion than a single excerpt can sustain, I should point out that Gordon's language is merely representative of a more systematic journalistic tendency when it comes to describing Mildred's Lane. When Senior Program Specialist at the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative and *Art 21* blogger, Daniel Fuller, visited in August 2009, he described his experience as "A Day at Art Disneyland."[271] After her stay that same summer, professor of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art

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[269] Alastair Gordon, "In Her Own World," *New York Times,* May 29, 2008, accessed May 15, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/29/garden/29puett.html?scp=1&sq=mildred%27s%20lane&st=cse.

[270] Bee grafting is a highly specialized aspect of bee keeping which involves the production of queens from by bee larva. With proper nourishment from its hivemates or an apiarist, every bee larva has the potential to become a queen. See "Almanac of Facts and Pictures Culled from *The Grafter's Shack*: An Art Installation on the Universe of Beekeeping and the Practice of Bee Grafting," produced in conjunction with J. Morgan Puett's grafter's shack installation for the grounds of Wave Hill, in the Bronx, New York, which was open from July 14 to October 27, 2002. *The Grafter's Shack* was subsequently moved to the grounds of Mildred's Lane where it serves the additional function of a guest residence.

[271] Daniel, Fuller. "A Day at Art Disneyland," August 2009, *Art 21 Blog*, http://blog.art21.org/2009/08/18/a-day-at-art-disneyland/#.VRYXRTTF_oE.

history at University of College London, Petra Lange-Berndt, wrote an article in which she described Mildred's Lane to be a "mental fairyland," where "a bohemian life can be lead today."[272] In other words, Gorden's description, captivating as it may be, participates in the tendency to remove Puett and her project from the terrain of what is relevant, urgent, and political, and thereby ignores, as Elizabeth Freeman has written "the interesting threat the genuine pastness of the past sometimes makes to the political present."[273] This chapter serves to demonstrate the ways in which Mildred's Lane does not disassociate from the present, but rather demands that we imagine the present, and its relationship to the past, differently. Prevailing ways of telling time might indeed construe Mildred's Lane as estranged from the world beyond its confines, but the activity of Mildred's Lane, despite, or perhaps even because, of its seeming out-of-stepness, participates in and makes visible apparatuses of labor and support that sustain the world from which journalists have described it being removed, and thus makes evident the interconnectedness of the two.

While Mildred's Lane is an experimental collaboration between Puett and Dion, it is Puett who is Mildred's Lane's constant. Dion is there much less often, as he travels between the site and his New York apartment, and his duties to Mildred's Lane are thereby largely ambassadorial while hers are largely domestic.[274] As a result, his artistic

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[272] Petra Lange-Berndt, "Test Site Bohemia. On *Mildred's Lane* by J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion, Pennsylvania," in *Texte zur Kunst*, vol. 21, no. 81 (March 2011), 173–175.
[273] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 14.
[274] On January 31, 2001 Puett gave a presentation for the exhibition and lecture series "The New Administration of a Fine Arts Education" at the Columbus College of Art and Design (curated by James Voorhies with Lisa Dent and organized by the Bureau for Open Culture.) The Bureau for Open culture produced a small pamphlet in conjunction with the lecture series where there appeared a short interview between Puett and

career is much less closely associated with the site than Puett's. The abundance of scholarly attention that his work has been paid—in the form of commissions, such as *Curator's Office* (2012–2013) for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts's exhibition *More Real?: Art in the Age of Truthiness*; major worldwide exhibitions, such as his renowned *Tate Thames Dig* (1999) at the Tate Gallery in London; and publications, such as *Mark Dion* published by Phaidon in 1997—provide a useful contrast to the relative lack of scholarly attention that Puett's work has been paid. This contrast might be attributable to the fact that she is closely affiliated with a project that seems too readily to accept the asymmetrical equation that Roland Barthes posits as: "Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys: Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises)."[275]

The claim that Mildred's Lane has been passed over by contemporary art scholars might seem to be contradicted by my earlier assertion that it has received increased attention from museums since 2011, and that it has often been the feature of newspaper, magazine, and blog articles. But its increased visibility has not given way to formal scholarly publications (nor, I should add, to more thoughtful analyses). The list of articles that could be said to fall into the category of serious engagement is short. In 2002, Mary Jane Jacob's "Material With a Memory," an essay on Puett's installation *Cottage*

Voorhies. In their transcribed interview Puett described her life, as well as Dion's, as migratory, and it is undoubtedly true that she frequently travels in the service of her artistic practice. But it is also true that Dion comes and goes more freely, while Puett lives at Mildred's Lane full time and is more beholden to its daily demands. Dion referred to Puett as Mildred's Lane's "constant" and himself as its "ambassador" at the MoMA panel, "Reinventing Artist Communities."

[275] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978),14.

Industry, was published in *The Object of Labor: Art, Cloth, and Cultural Production*.[276] In 2011, Lange-Berndt's article "Test Site Bohemia," appeared in the quarterly German magazine *Texte Zur Kunst*.[277] (As I have noted, she described Mildred's Lane as a place where "a bohemian life can be led today.") Creative Time's *Living as Forum* catalog included a description of the project several paragraphs long.[278] In the *Feast* catalog, a one-page introduction to Mildred's Lane was followed by a letter from Puett in which she gives a more detailed description.[279] Perhaps, given Mildred's Lane's heightened visibility in recent years, it is only a matter of time before scholars devote it serious attention, but my suspicion is that the lack of efforts to do so up to this point indicate a reluctance to contend with the seeming out of stepness of its gender politics.

For Gordon, Mildred's Lane initially seemed to be a place of unbridled reenchantment, but by the time he was invited to participate in the panel at MoMA, he had begun to think about how Mildred's Lane might actually be a resuscitation of the sixties artist commune.[280] During Gordon's presentation at MoMA, he projected images of what he referred to as radical environments, created by artists in the 1960s who were fleeing the city, and rejecting the structures of the museum and gallery. The screen flashed from Buckminister Fuller standing against one of his geodesic domes at Black Mountain College in North Carolina; to Gerd Stern at the USCO communal living space,

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[276] Mary Jane Jacob, "Material with a Memory" in *The Object of Labor: Art, Cloth, and Cultural Production*, eds. Joan Livingsone and John Ploof (Chicago: School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2007), 299–314.
[277] Lange-Berndt, "Test Site Bohemia," 14.
[278] Nato Thomson, *Living as Forum: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2001* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 146–147.
[279] "Mildred's Lane," *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Conteporary Art*, ed. Stephanie Smith (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum, University of Chicago, 2013), 238–247.
[280] See Alastair Gordon's book, *Spaced Out: Radical Environments of the Psychedelic Sixties* (New York: Rizolli, 2008).

installed in an old church in Garnerville, New York; to Allan Kaprow's disheveled students in front of solar heated structures at their commune, Drop City, in Goat Field, Colorado. [Figures 3.2] Gordon suggested that like these sixties artist communities and movements, Mildred's Lane is "interdisciplinary"; it provides refuge for world-weary artists; and its emergence may also be a barometer, albeit an attenuated one, of a certain set of wider (and unnamed) social stresses.

Mildred's Lane does indeed seem to emerge in response to social stresses, but allusions to sixties communes do not make those stresses fully legible. For Puett, sitting on stage with Gordon, comparisons to the structure and aspirations of the sixties commune have only limited usefulness and do not explain why so many guests have found their participation in the domestic and social activity at Mildred's Lane to be so generative. For Puett, Mildred's Lane raises different questions, questions that she articulated in this informal response to Gordon's presentation:

> It's curious to us how and why [the experience at Mildred's Lane is so transformative for guests]. It might be the town/country dichotomy. But moreover I think that there's not a place or space where people can really be at home. I don't know what I'm trying to articulate here, but there is something that's different from the communes. I look at those images and they are […] like a nightmare, slather, some adolescents, and clothes everywhere. I look at those images and think oh my god, we've got to do something! That's not how we live; [life at Mildred's Lane] is very deliberate, very intentional, and very composed at all times. But there's something else: inventive and creative domesticating is striking a chord with people. And that's the question I ask. Why is that affecting so many people who come to Mildred's Lane? We're not quite sure, but generosity is key.[281]

While Puett struggles to articulate what it is exactly that distinguishes Mildred's Lane from those "failed" idealized environments that remain now only in photographs, her visceral reaction to the image of disorder at Drop City, and her suggestion that "home"

[281] Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."

might be the factor of difference, is suggestive. Although these communal/movement based living-arrangements of the sixties and seventies did, to a degree, help to widen popular conceptions of "home" to ends that paved the way for contemporary, concept based households like Mildred's Lane, there is something beyond historical context that marks these experiments as different.

What seems to enable life at Mildred's Lane to be "deliberate, intentional, and composed," while life at Drop City was haphazard, unruly, and chaotic, are the rules of household propriety that coordinate the relationship of large groups of people, sometimes strangers, to each other as well as to the practices of dwelling, shopping, gardening, cooking, eating, cleaning, repairing, caretaking, making, playing, and entertaining. There are in fact three different kinds of guests at Mildred's Lane to whom different rules apply. Puett and Dion enforce these rules, upon which I will shortly elaborate, but for this task they also rely on their staff, which includes a "digestion choreographer," a "minister of comfort," a "supervisor of entanglement," and a "fugitive in archives." These whimsical names designate demanding work and correspond with the oversight and maintenance, respectively, of the kitchen, domestic spaces, administration, and archives. Art students from schools in the greater New York area, often fill the positions, sometimes on a temporary and sometimes on a longer-term basis. The visitors whom these staff members oversee include fellows, visiting artists and lecturers, and "Social Saturday" dinner guests.

Fellows are often students and artists who express interest in and willingness to contribute to this collaborative domestic experiment and who apply to participate in one of a series of three-week summer residencies. During their stay, these fellows, many of

whom are young artists seeking mentorship opportunities, must put their own studio practice "on the shelf" and fully engage in the physical and social maintenance of Mildred's Lane, as well as the presentations and workshops hosted by a changing roster of more established visiting artists and scholars, including people such as Allison Smith, Amy Yoes, Robert Williams, and Leon Johnson. Fellows, who accept the performance of chores as more mandatory than courteous because of the extended length of their stay, are more integrated into maintenance routines than visiting artists. The boundaries between their space and that of Puett, Dion and their son, Gray Rabbit are also more clearly defined. Fellows stay in vernacular structures that surround the main house, while visiting artists often stay in the main house and thereby take on a role more explicitly constrained by our notions of what it means to be a temporary guest. But on "Social Saturdays," Puett, Dion, Gray Rabbit, staff, fellows and visiting artists all play host to guests of a large-scale dinner. These guests often include surrounding neighbors, community members, friends, friends of friends, and curious people (mostly artists from New York), but anyone who consults the "Social Saturday" schedule, posted on the Mildred's Lane website, and RSVPs to Puett in advance of the event, is welcome to attend.[282]

Upon arrival, both fellows and visiting artists of Mildred's Lane are given what Puett calls a comportment manual, the name vestigial of the "proper" Southern we might imagine Puett having had. This small instruction book, with photocopied pages that have been folded down the middle and stitched together with thread, is made up of several sections which include: "things," "as you go" "the buildings of Mildred's Lane," "food,"

[282] This and subsequent information about daily life and workings of Mildred's Lane is based upon the author's experience as a visiting fellow the summer of 2009, as well as a subsequent research trip to Mildred's Lane in July of 2011.

"textiles," and "project work." Each section outlines specific rules like: "make fires in designated areas only; treat the building installations respectfully; knock before you enter a space; return borrowed things; take your shoes off at the door; do not bring computers into the kitchen areas." Inadvertently, these rules recall methods of discipline that have historically been linked with performances of elevated social class. In Jacob Riis's famous photographs of New York City tenements from the late nineteenth century, for example, poverty was epitomized by the multifunctionality of kitchens that served also as sleeping and working spaces.[283] The instance on spaces being confined to designated usages reflects a distinctly middle- and upper-class sensibility. These rules interspersed with more abstract and philosophical tenets that remind people passing through that Mildred's Lane is

> a living, breathing contemporary art complex(ity), and all things (no matter how banal) are interconnected pieces of other projects, or someone's personal belongings, so please take great care with all things you may come across.[284]

Throughout the document there are also reminders that Mildred's Lane is foremost a home where visitors must be mindful of family privacy and comfort. By exposing her private life to public scrutiny and inviting public participation in her domestic experiment (by insisting upon its status as art), Puett relies on preexisting conventions of the "proper home," which constrain some conditions of possibility precisely so as to enable others, and which in turn succeed in ways that the commune manifestos often failed.

It may thereby seem that Puett disassociates from the commune only to invoke middle-class mass consumer culture of femininity and domesticity, and thus forecloses

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[283] Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2012).
[284] Puett, *The Comportment Manual, Including Orientation and Purpose*, a working document that guests receive upon arrival.

any of Mildred's Lane's radical promise, however naïve or utopic skeptical critiques might have deemed it. Since the 1970s, what Puett calls "inventive and creative domesticating" has developed into a major national industry that markets to well- and better-off-whites (à la Martha Stewart, Ralph Lauren, and Anthropology.) Undoubtedly, Puett's trafficking in the genre of "southern hospitality" has messy, contradictory, and serious stakes in terms of how it triangulates race and class (important questions to which I will return). While Puett admits that Mildred's Lane is, in part, about "providing a cozy place for someone to stay," she adds that it is not "just about creating a bed and breakfast," but rather about dwelling, shopping, gardening, cooking, eating, cleaning, repairing, caretaking, making, playing, and entertaining rigorously.[285] What Puett means by rigor and how this rigor might be a response to the domestic space as socially and politically charged is another related question I raise now, but will respond to later.

For now, as much as Puett might disavow any kinship with the likes of Martha Stewart, by her own admission Mildred's Lane's public is in part sustained by the widening-appeal of "inventive and creative domesticating" that is capitalized by women's lifestyle magazines, advertisements, and commodity culture. Her appearance in mass-distributed popular magazines such as *Food and Wine*, and her relative absence from critical journals, art historical or otherwise, makes the implications of her proximity to women's consumer/popular culture clear enough. [286] But without taking the aspirations of this mass-mediated community seriously, the stakes of Puett's participation, however partial/half-hearted/complex, remain unclear.

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[285] Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."
[286] Jen Murphy, "J. Morgan Puett: A Curator of Food Curiosities," *Food and Wine*, March 2011.

Lauren Berlant is one of the most prominent recent scholars to consider the desires, fantasies, and compromises of this public sphere of femininity—which coalesced around the emergence of "women's culture" and its commercial conventions in the nineteenth century, (and which persists in today's "home" industry)— as worthy of critical attention. She states plainly that this terrain remains academically unpopular and uninhabited because "academic progressives tend only to respect and take seriously what is convertible to their vision of politics." But she goes on to argue that "since most collective life takes place to one side of or under the radar of politics […] it seems important to understand what is absorbing the defensive, inventive, and adaptive activity of getting by, along with the great refusals to go through power to attain legitimacy."[287] The structure of power though which Puett refuses to measure her success as an artist is the contemporary/urban/global art scene, which Gordon described as "chilly" and exclusionary during the MoMA panel.[288] Mildred's Lane seems to be a place of coping with a general sense of exhaustion, failure of recognition, financial stress that calibrates the lives of marginalized people, including artists, but that feels increasingly ubiquitous in contemporary American life, and that implicates men and women asymmetrically, the stress compounded along unprivileged axes of class and race.

Furthermore, it is a place that requires and absorbs what Berlant calls "the adaptive energy of getting by," and what Puett, unknowingly channeling Berlant, calls the "vernacular tactics of getting by," or of "using what's on hand" in the face of material

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[287]Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke Univeristy Press, 2008) 27.
[288] Gordon, "Reinventing Artist Communities."

(namely economic and environmental) and emotional limitations.[289] These mechanics of household provisioning and management are a primary operation of Puett's "inventive and creative domesticating," and help explain why these strategies might register with guests as tools for coping with the "baggage" with which they arrived, and grounds for belonging that are not based strictly on family, hierarchy, or success. Even if Puett's identification with women's popular culture is "limited, episodic, ambivalent, rejecting, or mediated," her mobilization of domestic strategies of "getting by" is just one indication of many that she nonetheless reckons with the desires and complaints that shape it.[290] In fact, Berlant argues, disavowals and disassociations are part of the convention rather than transgressive or radical. Puett's inventive and creative efforts thereby enrich rather than challenge the "terms" of women's popular culture. Puett, I am arguing, participates in this culture that, as Berlant suggests,

> cultivate[s] fantasies of vague belonging as an alleviation of what is hard to manage in the lived-real—social antagonism, exploitation, compromised intimacies, the attrition of life. Utopianism is in the air, but one of the main utopias is normativity itself, here a felt condition of general belonging and as aspirational site of rest and recognition in and by a social world.[291]

While utopianism may be "in the air" at Mildred's Lane, it often circulates unevenly and unpredictably, and breaks-up under the pressures built-up by the mundane drudgery of the everyday and by inequitable distributions of labor across staff and guests, despite the many mechanisms in place, via comportment, that seek to keep things engaging and fair. By the end of the day, the unevenly distributed exhaustion that ensues from running an ever-fluctuating and demanding household can dissipate entirely that thing we might

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[289] Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 27 and Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."
[290] Ibid, x.
[291] Ibid., 5.

have taken as "utopic." Puett remains uncomfortable with the suggestion no matter how mitigated; she says: "every time the word comes up my hair goes up a little bit." She insists that to be utopic is "certainly not my intention."[292] This is perhaps because what may be called utopic about Mildred's Lane, in effect its aspirations towards generous and inclusive domesticating, towards alleviating "what is hard to manage in the lived-real" are fundamentally structured by an engagement and negotiation with domestic space, not as unladen but rather as deeply and inextricably charged, politically and socially. Rather than being strictly utopic, Mildred's Lane is a place that tries to corral its aspirations into something that does not just "sit around" but rather something that does real creative, emotional, and physical work.

Puett characterizes this work as "high maintenance involvement," a feminized labor that consists of "the nurturing, caring and feeding of one's friends and one's community."[293] In other words, this is the work of support, which, as Shannon Jackson explains, shifted from indicating the mere bolstering of a static object from below to include lateralized relational support of living things, at the end of the seventeenth century. Jackson gives the definition of this expanded understanding of support as: "the action of keeping from falling, exhaustion, or perishing, especially the supplying of a living thing with what is necessary for subsistence, the maintenance of life."[294] Defined as such, the notion of support gives shape to Mildred's Lane as an aesthetic experiment and structure with social and political stakes, and makes the range of actions which characterize its everyday activities— dwelling, shopping, cooking, eating, cleaning,

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[292] Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."
[293] Ibid.
[294] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works*, 30.

repairing, caretaking, making, playing, and entertaining—legible as laborious responses to a range of necessities required for emotional and physical subsistence. What distinguishes Puett's project from the commercial endeavors of Martha Stewart is that it takes labor as it central problematic rather than employing it for other ends.

To give further critical traction to Mildred's Lane as a place where social problems get aesthetically played out, it is necessary to cast this meditation on support in art historical terms. I turn then from the question of what Mildred's Lane is to the question of how it relates to art historical traditions. Gordon's assertion that Puett lives and works "in her own world" obfuscates the relation between Mildred's Lane and informing art historical practices and the relationship between the labor of the domestic and the mythically virile and autonomous labor of the artist, upon which her creative, emotional and physical labor insists. (Recall that in chapters one and two, I discussed the ways in which art historical narratives work hard to keep the supportive labor of the hostess, and the domestic laborer on whom she relies, out of sight.) The cost of designating Mildred's Lane as a domestic site of rest and generosity has enabled its terms to be oversimplified, if not misrecognized entirely.

To contextualize Mildred's Lane within long standing art historical narratives, and to query its critical assumptions, conventions and biases, is to problematize the grounds for its dismissal as sentimental refuge or impractical fantasy. More precisely, I turn to Jackson's important book *Social Works* to complicate art historical narratives that couple performance and dematerialization, radicality and social disruption, and creativity and autonomy at the expense, respectively, of materiality, social coordination, and support. She does this, in part, by interrogating the way in which "the visual" borrows the

tactics of duration from "the theatrical" to mark disruption of its (static) traditions, while stubbornly maintaining certain art historical biases that are antitheatrical.

On the most basic level, we can understand Mildred's Lane as an example of experimentation in artistic practice that represents what Jackson calls the "social turn," a catch-all term for practices, trending in contemporary art, that are engaged in questions of the nature of sociality and that have received much recent critical interest. As I discussed in chapter one, this "social turn" was preceded and enabled by what Nicolas Bourriaud controversially described as the emergence of relational aesthetics in the early nineties. (Among those artists Bourriaud cites as exemplifying the artistic trend to move away from the static art object, celebrated by Greenbergian modernism, into social space, by the way, is Mark Dion.)[295] Because both relational aesthetics and "socially-engaged" art are imprecise categories, made up of very heterogeneous practices, the terms according to which Mildred's Lane participates in this turn are initially unclear. Jackson's engagement with the social turn establishes a set of critical tools and frameworks that reconfigure the relationships between performance and materiality/dematerialization, radicality and social coordination/disruption, and creativity and support/autonomy. This recalibration helps to makes Mildred's Lane legible within this ever expanding and complex field of experimentation as an apparatus of labor, a collaborative relational network, and an infrastructure of support.

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[295] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002), 35. More specifically Bourriauld claims that Dion is among artists who "model a professional activity" to create "a make-believe phenomena" through which they explore the tension and ambiguity between "the utilitarian function of the objects he is presenting, and their aesthetic function."

The "social turn," while characterized broadly by its social engagement, inter-relationality, cross-disciplinarity, and mobilization of diverse media, is often defined by its refusal of "the static object conventions of visual art" and by its embrace of "the durational, embodied, social and extended spatiality of theatrical forms."[296] Although challenges to the bounded integrity of the art object have been integral to the expansion of art practices over the course of the twentieth century from Constructivism to Minimalism, it was in the 1960s that artists explicitly turned towards performance as a means of disrupting the materiality of object-based art practices. Thus performance artists of this period—such as Vito Acconci, Hannah Wilke, Adrian Piper, Robert Morris, and Carolee Schneemann, to name a very small but very famous few—anticipated Peggy Phelan's conception of performance as ephemeral and "becoming itself through disappearance," and thereby imagined performance as a vehicle for dematerialization.[297] Broadly speaking, the hope was that in its ephemerality performance might resist capitalist commodification in a way the material art object could not, but Jackson is not the first scholar to note that these aspirations "seem increasingly hard to maintain," and that "such shape-shifting might actually enable rather than stall the flexibly de-referentialized spirit of new capitalist formations."[298] By this, Jackson means that within a highly adaptive capitalist system, conceptual art, in its attenuated relationship with materiality, can actually turn out to be a more convenient, thereby more saleable and efficient, commodity than cumbersome traditional/material art forms such as paintings and sculptures. Jackson circles back to insist that Phelan's understanding of performance

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[296] Jackson, *Social Works*, 2.
[297] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.
[298] Jackson, *Social Works*, 38.

does not necessarily foreclose our recognition of what I have been describing as the physical, emotional and creative labor that is required to stage a performance, however fleeting, but the strange result of this systematized discourse of dematerialization has indeed been a disavowal of laboring support structures (predominantly made up of women or, in their stead, feminized labors) within postwar art historical discourses. These discourses emerged amid frenetic social upheaval and cohered around no single name or manifesto, but rather around many forms of expression including conceptual, environmental, process, performance, body, installation, and intermedia art.

The practices that make up the "social turn" are aesthetically and politically heterogeneous, but are often assumed to have socially progressive/disruptive agendas. Again, the notion that artistic radicality should be measured by its degree of anti-instutionality was not new to art movements of the1960s, but rather was a long-standing hallmark of many twentieth-century artistic movements that characterized themselves as avant-garde, including, but not limited to Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Constructivism, and the Bauhaus. French for "advance guard," avant-garde was a term that artists borrowed from military vocabulary so as to liken themselves to armies advancing into battle and thereby to put themselves forth as innovators who were ahead of the majority, and opposed to the norms, mores, and commercial values of the mainstream. Despite many critical interventions and recalibrations, this framework has had real staying power in terms of dictating not only the goals of artistic pursuits but also the grounds for evaluating the success and worthiness of those pursuits.

For Jackson, though, "when a political art discourse too often celebrates social disruption at the expense of social coordination, we lose a more complex sense of how art

practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining."[299] It strikes me that we also lose a sense of art's long-term utility. That said, Jackson remains committed to activist oriented art practices, but laments the way in which this tendency to overemphasize social disruption has worked against "art forms that help us to imagine sustainable social institutions."[300] It is here that Jackson sees the usefulness of a performance/theatrical perspective that does not oppose "freedom and expression" to "obligation and care," on aesthetic or social terms. (She argues that interdependency of these things "is the daily lesson of any theatrical ensemble.")[301] It is important to point out that freedom, expression and, by extension, autonomy, do not just animate artistic discourses, they are also the most basic tenets of theories of democracy, and are routinely contrasted with obligation, care and dependency in wider political discourses.

The ways in which these terms work to devalue feminine labor, and to cast Mildred's Lane outside the terrain of worthwhile art making should be increasingly clear. For one, Mildred's Lane participates, however reservedly, in women's popular consumer culture against which, as I discuss at greater length in chapter one, progressive art making has positioned itself over the course of the twentieth, and it seems, into the twenty-first century. But it is also, as Puett put it, a project based on "the nurturing, caring and feeding of one's friends and one's community."[302] What makes this feeding complicated, politically speaking, is that it happens according to highly precise standards of deportment and domesticity, and thus suggests a relation between obligation, care, and support, on one hand, and discipline, labor, and order, on the other.

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[299] Ibid., 14.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."

In many ways the social extension of artistic production has sought, above all else, to disrupt the symbiotic relationship between creativity and autonomy, and yet in most discussions of postwar American art, the coupling of creativity and autonomy still exerts a heavy gravitational pull. This is not only because the concept of artistic autonomy has been central to longstanding Western conceptions of the artist as creator, it is also because staunch individualism marks postwar American and art cultures with a particular fervor. Mildred's Lane has not fit neatly into triumphal postwar art historical narratives in part because it is a project that is complexly authored. While Puett presides over this domain as caretaker and hostess to the many guests who come and go, she invites her visitors to inhabit the Lane's various spaces only on the condition that they partake in her domestic labor of shopping, gardening, cooking, cleaning, repairing, caretaking, making, and entertaining. She insists that her guests register the creative, emotional, and physical demands of the domestic labor that makes their cohabitation, coordination, and social and physical production and consumption possible.

Aesthetic conceptions of the autonomy of the art object have often accompanied and bolstered understandings of the artist as an autonomous creator. In the nineteenth century, as Jackson explains, "transcendent art achieved that state by appearing to exist independently from its material, that is, it seemed to exist autonomously from the conditions of its making." "This is to say," Jackson asserts, "that for some, the 'disavowal of support' was the illusory trick needed to create the effect of an autonomous work of art."[303] Over the course of the twentieth century, various art-worker movements and, famously, Marcel Duchamp, sought to question the autonomy of the art object and to

[303] Ibid., 31.

expose its dependency on supporting infrastructures, but in the late fifties and sixties the rise of modernist art criticism, and the Abstract Expressionist movement it celebrated, marked the enduring resonance of figurations of the artist and his object as autonomous in postwar American culture. Despite Michael Fried's anxiety and dismissal of Minimalism on the basis of its theatricality and dependency on the body of the viewer, Jackson affirms that Minimalism opened-up de-autonomizing ways of understanding the art object by redefining the supporting conditions of sculpture. In effect, Minimalist sculpture did away with the undermounted pedestal in order to make its objecthood and materiality visible, as well as the contingent spectatorial relation that supported and enabled it.

At this point, Jackson's account of the history of the avowal and disavowal of support, both aesthetic and social, within art historical narratives skips to the present moment during which her book was written. She cites the emergence of a host of post-Minimalist artistic practices, including body art, institutional critique, and relational aesthetics as marking an expansion of the art object that, as W. J. T. Mitchell and many other critics agree, has "fundamentally altered our ability to locate a stably autonomous art object."[304] Jackson's project is motivated by a desire to remember various episodes of the avowal of support within the history of art, and to engage with a proliferation of contemporary artistic practices that help make disavowed labor visible. But this narrative, which suggests a general trend towards avowal via the social turn, does not give a clear indication of the persistence of disavowal, as the very necessity and urgency of Jackson's own work attests.

[304] Ibid., 33.

To give an expedient example of the way in which assertions of autonomy have persisted in art practices that have moved away from the static conventions of the art object towards theatrical conventions that extend its spacio-temporal bounds (in effect a movement from object towards event), I return to Allan Kaprow's iconic *18 Happenings*. As we discussed in chapter one, Kaprow announces the coming of Happenings in his 1958 eulogy to Jackson Pollock, in which he argues that Pollock's death marked, on the one hand, the end of art (by which Kaprow means art as bounded to the canvas or the pedestal), and on the other, the beginning of "happenings" (by which he means the spacio-temporal extension of art). By placing his large-scale works on the floor and "dripping, slashing, squeezing, [and] daubing," Pollock, according to Kaprow, "created some magnificent paintings, but also destroyed painting."[305] [Figure 3.3] So according to Kaprow's account, it is Pollock's death that inaugurates the expansion of art practices in the sixties, but Pollock remains a kind of specter of performance art. Kaprow suggests that Pollock is a watershed figure, but one who represented longstanding and fundamental characteristics of the artist. Effectively he was "the embodiment of [the artist's] ambition for absolute liberation and a secretly cherished wish to overturn old tables of crockery and flat champagne," and his work displayed "extreme individuality."[306] In his descriptions of Pollock, Kaprow mobilizes the standard-fare verbiage of freedom, innovation, and autonomy as what drives, rather than what gets attenuated in, the turn towards performance. When we think of the ways in which Happenings are so indelibly linked to Kaprow as author in art historical narratives, and

[305] Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelly (Berkley: University of California Press, 2003), 2.
[306] Ibid., 1, 5.

the ways in which it was still only him who had the authority to mark their beginning and end, (however unbounded they were from the canvas in between these two points), it seems obvious to insist that the notion of the artist as autonomous has been one of the most impervious to destabilization within the field of art history. [307]

In 1973, almost twenty years after Pollock's death, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, an artist for whom the concepts of freedom and creativity meant something quite different, was making a another kind of "floor painting" at the Wadsworth Athenaeum. While Pollock stood above his "floor paintings," Ukeles created hers on her hands and knees as she scrubbed and mopped the floor of the museum as well as the steps leading up to it over the course of a day. [Figure 3.4] By stabilizing the domestic tasks of sweeping and mopping—that is presenting them as a coherent set of movements that enact and claim a "standard" of domesticity—Ukeles's project makes explicit the relationship between durational maintenance and creative production. In other words, her performance of denigrated and mundane labor and her designation of this labor as a "floor painting," query the grand painterly gestures of Jackson Pollock while provoking consciousness of invisible domestic and service labor. She makes viewers contemplate this labor in aesthetic, rather than merely in abject, terms. The Wadsworth Athenaeum, ironically, kept no records of this performance, it is part of a larger body of work that Ukeles calls "maintenance art," an artistic practice that not only explored and exposed domestic/service labor through its public enactment as art, but also that critiqued

[307] See chapter one for a discussion of Gavin Butt's essay "Happenings in History or the Epistemology of the Memoir," *Oxford Art Journal 24*, no. 2 (2001): 115–126, in which he describes Samuel Delany's discussion of the event in his memoir, *The Motion of Light in Water*. According to Delany, Kaprow had to come into his cubicle and indicate that the event was over before Delany knew it was appropriate to leave.

political, feminist, and artistic notions of radicality. Because these two operations are at work in Ukeles's artistic practice, it serves as a central case study for Jackson of "a feminist and class-based exploration of public infrastructure before such terms as institutional critique and social practice had been coined."[308] An examination of Ukeles "maintenance art," via Jackson, helps give historical continuity to the concerns to which Mildred's Lane addresses itself as well as to situate these concerns within key debates of feminist art history.

As Jackson points out, Ukeles's practice does not begin with the maintenance art for which she is best known, but rather with her reckoning with the techniques and aspirations of Minimalism as an art student. As Jackson describes it, in the early sixties Ukeles was creating sculptures from found objects which included not only "window frames, doors, [and] bedsprings," but also " baby furniture—bibs and playpens." Ukeles was disconcerted by her attraction to baby furniture, so, according to Jackson "she found herself trying out a social movement discourse of liberation to redefine her relationship to this increasingly scary material."[309] In effect, in order to feel less burdened by these objects that at once repelled and allured her, Ukeles came up with the idea to create inflatable sculpture, a kind of sculpture that could be big (read Minimalist), a kind of sculpture that she could put on view, but that, when she was finished with it, she could "fold it up, put it in [her] back pocket, and […] be free." Ukeles explains further: "I wouldn't have to take care of these works, schlep them around and worry about them."[310]

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[308] Jackson, *Social Works*, 39.
[309] Ibid., 84,
[310] Ibid.

So freedom for Ukeles is not (as it was for Pollock) freedom from bourgeois conventions, independence or transcendence, but rather freedom from worry and care of the material world that she feels as an artist who wants, but also feels anxiety about the limitations and burdens of motherhood. Given that Ukeles' inflatable sculpture is her response to anxieties incited by baby furniture, her hope that when she deflates her sculpture she will be unfettered from it also seems to express a wish that the needs and demands of children and housewifery could be similarly inflated and deflated, in effect that she could be, contrary to art school ideology of the day, both a mother and an artist. Ukeles would soon discover that neither her inflatable sculptures nor her future motherhood could be unencumbered. Her hope that dematerialization (de-inflation) was a movement towards liberation was, as Jackson explains, deeply informed by revolutionary rhetoric of the sixties, a decade during which, as Ukeles, via Jackson, reflects, "materiality was suspect. There was something wrong with occupying space, something imperialistic about it […]."[311] And yet, those inflatable sculptures that occupied, admittedly, less space, were still nonetheless tied up with material processes, including systems of labor. (Ukeles outsourced their production and relied on manufacturers for technical support.) And of course the inflatables, however compact, were still subject to cracks, tears and required maintenance and repair. She was henceforth suspicious of the liberating rhetoric of dematerialization.

As she had feared, Ukeles's assumption of the roles of wife and mother shortly thereafter did marginalize her from "ideal" participation in late 1960s revolutionary activity, while the demands of housework and childcare posed a threat to the

[311] Ibid.

requirements of being an artist. But rather than give up one for the other, Ukeles decided that she would, as Jackson describes it, "use her relative autonomy as an artist to make her own decisions about what qualified as art." She would define her daily chores of "cleaning, sweeping, washing, changing diapers, cooking and bed changing" as "maintenance art," and would thereby refuse the qualification of her labor as uncreative and subsidiary.[312] In this move, she not only troubled avant-garde notions of radicality but feminist ones as well. For rather than parody or reject the work demanded of a housewife and mother, as Martha Rosler did in her well-known video performance, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* from 1975, Ukeles took on this classed and gendered labor in earnest, while insisting upon it counting as labor through its enactment as art.

As Berlant has noted, to accept, rather than refuse, certain terms of domestic labor is not to disavow that the domestic sphere is politically and socially charged; it can be to insist upon it.[313] In *Feminist Theory*, bell hooks also points out that in calling for the liberation of housewives, feminists, such as Martha Rosler, did not consider "who would be called in to take care of the children and maintain the home if more women [like herself] were freed from their house labor […]."[314] As I discuss at length in chapter two, this work was routinely relegated to women of color and of the working-class. Drawing on the work of Saba Mahmood, Jackson notes how Ukeles's performance of "maintenance art" thereby makes visible the blind spots feminist thought creates when it "conceptualize[s] agency [only] in terms of subversion."[315] This vein of thinking about

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[312] Ibid., 85.
[313] Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 237.
[314] bell hooks quoted in Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 51.
[315] Jackson, *Social Works*, 86.

radicality runs through much of white feminist thought, and has led to the dismissal of not only Ukeles and Puett, but also of Charlotte Moorman, the avant-garde cellist whom I will discuss at length in chapter four.

While not a precise, gestic, or even conscious reenactment of Ukeles's "maintenance art," there are many ways in which Puett's insistence on her homemaking—which includes the upbringing of her son, Gray Rabbit—as art, cites Ukeles. Puett likens her conflict with Ukeles's when she describes herself as "an artist becoming, through being a mother having to spend much time at home."[316] But while Ukeles describes herself as *feeling* "out-of-step" with her contemporaries, Puett, according to a number of cultural commentators at least, seems to be "out of step" with time.[317] Could, in fact, the one sort of "out of stepness" have something to do with the other? To answer that question, I suspect, we need to say something about the trajectory and momentum of postwar American feminism and subsequent "postfeminist" reactions.

Of the many pathologies that journalist Susan Faludi argues underlie American feminism, she claims that the "generational breakdown" is one of the most virulent.[318] As much as feminist and postfeminist thinking has worked variously and to different ends, most of this thought has directed itself toward the future for the obvious reason that it has

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[316] Puett, "Reinventing Artist Communities."
[317] In the introduction to *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows note that in the seventies there were strains of feminism that celebrated femininity and domesticity as sources of power, pointing to Catherine Beecher as a figure who represents this tendency. See *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, ed. Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows (Routledge: New York, 2009), 5. Within the art world, West Coast feminism associated with Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts has historically been linked with this tendency. Both examples, in claiming there to be inherently feminine characteristics to be celebrated, also represent the essentializing tendencies of the seventies-era movement.
[318] Susan Faludi, "America Electra: Feminism's Ritual Matricide," *Harper's Magazine*, October. 2010, 29.

aspired to and pursued better lives for women, (even as the terms of what "better" might look like have always been contested). The result of this forward orientation and desire to "move beyond" has often manifested in antagonism towards what came before. As Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollow note in their introduction to *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, many, although by no means all, seventies-era feminists construed themselves in antagonistic relationship to the "the housewife" and the domestic sphere to which she had been relegated.[319] It is important to note here that what we often describe as second-wave feminism was not a monolithic or homogenous movement: there was a diversity of thoughts among self-described feminists about the value of conventionally feminine tasks. Some feminists did celebrate them, and sometimes to essentializing ends.

Art historians often describe the West Coast feminist movement, most commonly associated with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Feminist Art Program at California Institute of the Arts, as one that sought to valorize and redeem those images, materials, and processes that had historically been dismissed as "feminine" and domestic.[320] Yet, this assertion has at times been based on a misreading of West Coast feminist projects, including one of the most famous, *Womanhouse* (1972), which Chicago, Schapiro, and their students at CalArts worked together to create. Although the feminist art installation and performance space made use of feminized materials such as crochet, bras, lipstick, high heels, and aprons, these objects were not celebrated so much as they were suggested to have an oppressive and subjugating effect on women. In Camille Grey's *Lipstick Bathroom*, for example, the artist painted every surface in the room bright red, including

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[319] Gillis and Hollows, *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, 7.
[320] Rosika Parker's *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1984 repr., New York: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd., 2012) outlines seventies-era feminist recuperations of domestic materials and craft.

not just the walls, ceiling, mirror, and light bulbs, but also the stockings, bras, panties, and towels that hung from them. [Figure 3.5] Feminism scholar Jane E. Gerhard writes that the wall, on which hung two hundred tubes of lipstick, "drew the viewer into the relentless ritual of face painting." She describes the room's overall effect as alternating between "claustrophobia and horror."[321]

Gillis and Hollow argue that while there were certainly feminists who emphasized the need to reevaluate or celebrate domestic work, some who claimed that it needed to be more equally distributed between men and women, and others who emphasized that it should not be the only available or always assumed path for women to attain fulfillment, for many seventies-era feminists, achieving liberation from the home and domestic roles was a necessary condition for the realization of gender equality.[322] Those feminists who were committed to the latter belief emphasized that the confinement of women to the domestic sphere had resulted in the financial dependence of women on men, and related to their exclusion from the valorizing "public" sphere of paid labor. Many of the second-wave feminists who "privilege[d] women's roles as paid workers over their roles within the home," took their cues from Betty Friedan's widely influential 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* in which she claimed that domestic work was a Sisyphean task that promised women no real satisfaction.[323] The persistent notion that feminism and domesticity are mutually exclusive is an idea that comes down to us from this strain of feminist thought.

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[321] Jane F. Gerhard, *The Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism 1970–2007* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2013), 53.
[322] Gillis and Hollows, *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, 6.
[323] Ibid.,10.

Feminists of the subsequent two generations brought the insights of French poststructuralist thought to bear on US debates about gender. This critical strain of feminist scholarship is sometimes referred to as third-wave or "constructivist," because, as the name suggests, one of the key arguments it advanced was that gender is culturally constructed. By assuming the category of "woman" to be a fixed and stable identity, constructivist feminists added, feminists of the previous generations had discursively called this entity into being and thereby work in the service of maintaining a binary gendered system. These arguments might be said to have culminated in Judith Butler's important book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, which was published in 1990.[324] Artists working in the eighties, including Cindy Sherman and Catherine Opie, explored the ways in which the performativity of gender could be represented visually. Meanwhile the decade also ushered in what Faludi and other feminist writers, including Sheila Rowbotham and Naomi Wolf, later characterized as a backlash against feminism, and more specifically against the entry of women into the workplace and their exit from the home.[325] Inaugurated by the election of Ronald Regan and a return to "family values," Faludi and other feminists claimed that the backlash sought to "renaturalize the relationship between women and the home," and thus to return women to their "proper" place.[326] While there were attempts to question the opposition between feminism and femininity that had structured much second-wave feminist

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[324] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
[325] See Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War on American Women*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1991), Sheila Rothbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Viking, 1997), and Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (New York: Bantham: Doubleday Dell, 1990).
[326] Gillis and Hollows, *Feminism, Domesticity, and Popular Culture*, 2.

thought, against the backdrop of rising tides of political conservativism, constructivist feminists were also suspicious of calls to celebrate traditionally feminine roles and spaces. As Gillis and Hollows put it, given the political turn of events, "[t]here was little hope of reevaluating the home as a site which might have something to offer to feminism."[327]

In the nineties, Faludi and Amelia Jones were among critics who argued that the emergence of postfeminism (which supposedly signaled the death or at least redundancy of the movement) within popular culture was in fact an antifeminist discourse only half-heartedly disguised.[328] While it was the conservative right wing that cast the feminist legacy as having left women unhappier than it found them, it was the press, as Faludi explains, that helped to popularize "the backlash beyond the New Right's wildest dreams."[329] In academia, its less monolithic take-up has been associated with other "post" discourses and has, in general, sought to decollectivize a discourse that assumed too unified and too stable a subjectivity for its subjects, one that was indelibly based upon the experiences of straight, white, middle-class, American women, whose hardships were nonetheless mitigated by cultural and economical privilege.[330] While an interrogation of the norms that continue to police, judge, manage and produce sexual difference got absorbed into the vast and proliferating field of gender studies, "women's problems"

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[327] Ibid.
[328] See Faludi, *Backlash* and Amelia Jones, "Feminism Incorporated: Reading "Postfeminism" in an Anti-Feminist Age," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2001), 314–329.
[329] Faludi, *Backlash*, 91.
[330] For a discussion of the ways in which postfeminist thought has variously manifested in art criticism as well as wider academic discourses see, respectively, Jones, "Feminism Incorporated," and Tania, Modleski, *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*, (New York: Routledge, 1991).

quickly became academically passé sites of inquiry. This is largely because of the compelling criticisms, articulated by Butler and other gender studies scholars, of a representational politics that unproblematically invoked the category of "women."[331] Some readers, informed either by popular culture or certain strains of academic thought, may, while drawing on vastly different evidence and bodies of thought, come to the same conclusion: "that women in the United States are subordinated no longer."[332] In response to this assertion, Berlant puts forth a different view. She retorts that:

> In modern liberal democratic societies, most inequality is partial, contradictory, and contested: it is often more informal (in behavior) than formal (in law or policy). Yet these complex contradictions are not so complicated that their negative impacts are unpredictable. Disrespect for women is not unpredictable, *enough*. [333]

Jane Blocker has also insisted that many women—whose lives play out beyond the auspices the academy— "are still fighting what [academia] considers to be old battles."[334] But even if we concede to Berlant and Blocker, and thereby take seriously the ways in which postfeminism obfuscates more than it elucidates, the question remains, how do women, however unstable a category of signification and however heterogeneous and conflicted as they may be, fight these battles now, after the feminist 'waves' have ebbed? How do we confront a set of problems that, according to many, if they remain, remain only partially, problems predominately associated with a bygone era, without seeming to be out-of-step or stepping back, and without getting stuck on whether or not there are essential ways of relating to or being in femininity and without resisting knowing what

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[331] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 7–8.
[332] Berlant, *Female Complaint*, xi.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Jane, Blocker, "Woman-House: Architecture, Gender and Hybridity in What's Eating Gilbert Grape?," in *Camera Obscura* 39 (November 1998):128.

happened after these debates? With what critical language can we read Puett's (re)negotiation with domestic practices as more than mere anachronism given the seeming out-of-stepness of feminism and the seeming obsolescence or at least uninteresting-ness of "women's problems"? If we neatly divide our experience of the world into the past, present, and future, Puett's interventions are easily lost upon us, but if we can unloosen prevailing ways of telling time as singular, original and unidirectional we might recalibrate these questions so as to move through time differently, in effect to move in such a way that can absorb rather than flatten out contradiction, tension and complexity.

It is here then that I begin to make my way towards the third question I outlined at the outset, the question of how we might read Mildred's Lane and determine its meanings. In her discussion of reenactments of other battles seemingly quite out-of-step with the feminist wars of the more recent past, those of the Civil War, Rebecca Schneider finds not only that Civil War reenactments, surprisingly, have something to do with feminist performance art practices, but also that there might be something more than anachronism at work in what many think of as a campy pastime.[335] We too will find the battles of the Civil War getting re/played somewhere in the Pennsylvania woods. Not only was artist Allison's Smith's reenactment of a Civil War battle encampment, *The Muster*—which Schneider takes up at the opening and closing of her book *Performing*

[335] In the forward of *Performing Remains* Schneider wonders what kinship could exist between the unapologetically masculine, often politically conservative, practice of Civil War reenactment and feminist performance art (the focus of her previous book, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, (New York: Routledge, 1997). She suggests that: "…the questions [she] brought to the battlefield concerned the pose, imposture, imposition, and the replay of evidence (photographs, documents, and archival remains)—something [she] had argued that feminist artists of the explicit body had been engaging in." Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 9.

Remains— "rehearsed" at Mildred's Lane, but Puett, who participated in Smith's "rehearsal" call to arms in 2004, had ancestors who fought as generals for the Confederacy and died in Sherman's March.[336] [Figures 3.6 and 3.7] The confusion here between past and present wars, performances and re-performances makes a mess of any attempt to locate "the singular" or "the original."

In her examination of Civil War reenactments, Schneider draws upon Elizabeth Freeman's concept of "temporal drag" to suggest the "queerness of temporal reenactment," by which she means to evoke "its nonlinearity" and "its refusal to run straight."[337] As Schneider describes it, through temporal drag, time may be "touched, crossed, visited, and revisited." For Freeman, as for Schneider, the past is never "merely" cited, but rather the past might appear to us as "genuine pastness" and, simultaneously, as "*on the move*" (also of the present and future). In a gesture illustrative of this idea, I cite the same passage by Freeman, exactly as it appeared in Schneider's text, having myself already partially cited it, in the hopes of replaying it as it was and as it comes to be again when we insert it in the context of Mildred's Lane. Freeman, via Schneider, writes:

> To reduce all embodied performances to the status of copies without originals [the past as gone] is to ignore the interesting threat that the genuine pastness of the past sometimes makes to the political present. […] Might some bodies, in registering on their very surfaces the co-presence of several historically specific events, movements, and collective pleasures, complicate or displace the centrality of *gender*-transitive drag to queer performativity? Might they articulate instead a kind of temporal transitivity that does not leave feminism, femininity, or other "anachronisms" behind?[338]

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[336] J Morgan Puett, interview by the author, Narrowsburg, New York, July 10, 2011.
[337] Schneider, *Performing Remains,* 14–15, 174.
[338] Ibid., 14–15.

In asking if some bodies might register "*on their very surface"* the co-presence of several historically specific events, movements and collective pleasures," Freeman suggests how we might reimagine Gordon's first impression of Puett as a "tousle-haired woman […] dressed like Huck Finn in baggy linen pants and blue suspenders […] somehow untethered from the present" in terms of temporal drag rather than anachronism. In her dress, lifestyle, and domestic installations, Puett seems performatively to affirm the co-presence of the past, present and future. In so doing, she complicates the centrality gender-transitive drag (although not entirely supplanting it; after all, Gordon describes her as boyish before he describes her as untethered) by performing a simultaneous act of temporal drag, through which "feminism, femininity, or other anachronisms" are not left behind. In other words, Puett *crosses* between adolescence and adulthood, masculinity and femininity, past and present, all while insisting we register the enduring emotional, physical, and creative costs of feminized labor across time and space.

Puett has her own way of speaking to the centrality of temporal transitivity in her project when she asserts that Mildred's Lane "is not about nostalgia or re-enacting," rather she "believe[s] that all of these time periods and histories are pressing in on us at once."[339] In this statement, however, she leaves us to wonder: which time periods? Which histories? And to what ends to they "press in on us?" Or as Rebecca Schneider, gesturing towards the other signification of drag, as tactile as well as performative, and the ways in which temporal drag can take on weightiness, puts it, "if time (re)turns […] [w]hat does it *drag* along with it?"[340]

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[339] Gordon, "In Her Own World."
[340] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 2.

Well, in a word, dust. [Figure 3.8] Consisting of a mélange of dead skin and foreign matter, dust is that abject, but also mysterious residue of commodity that is neither only of the past nor only of the present, but rather something sticky that crosses between the material and immaterial, the domestic and industrial; something that accumulates across time on things like artworks and bookshelves, something that makes a mess for invisible/disavowed laborers to clean-up, and as, Carolyn Steedman explains, something that keeps anxious historians up at night. In her book, *Dust*, the historian's apprehensive relationship with this proliferating particle helps Steedman to complicate the way in which Jacques Derrida conceives of the historian's propensity for a particular illness: archive fever. For Derrida, archive fever is a preoccupation with origins, an attempt to instate a "domiciliation," a "house arrest," in the service of maintaining a place of order and closure from which erasure and forgetting are sustained, in the name of history and memory. But for Steedman, the historian's sickness, archive fever, is not something so empirical and has less to do with recovering beginning or origins as it has do with the fact that, whether the historian wills it or not, the dead creep into her skin. In Steedman's words, archive fever is something that

> comes on at night, long after the archive has shut for the day. Typically, the fever—more accurately the precursor fever—starts in the early hours of the morning, in the bed of a cheap hotel, where the historian cannot get to sleep. You cannot get to sleep because you lie so narrowly, in an attempt to avoid contact with anything that isn't shielded by sheets and pillowcases. The first sign then, is an excessive attention to the bed, an irresistible anxiety about the hundreds who have slept there before you, leaving their dust and debris in the fibers of the blankets […]. The dust of others, and of other times, fills the room, settles on the carpet, marks out the sticky passage from bed to bathroom. This symptom—worrying about the bed is a screen anxiety. What keeps you awake, the sizing and starch in the thin sheets dissolving as you turn again and again within their

> confines, is actually the archive, and its myriads of dead, who all day long, have *pressed* their concerns upon you.[341]

Dust, for Steedman, not only indexes the passage/accumulation of time, it is also a sign of the dead, a material way in which the dead remain, return, get *dragged* along, and *press* in on us. By describing her "excessive attention to the bed" as what gives way to archive fever, Steedman suggests that it is through texture and material that she becomes aware of her affliction, in effect that the dead, despite their supposed immateriality, impinge upon her. Steedman forgets, though, that it is not only the dust of the hundreds who have slept there before her who keep her tossing and turning, but also the residues of the hundreds of low-paid/invisible laborers who have, at least perfunctorily, tried to keep the dust out of sight.

While cheap motels do not always boast cleanliness and dust-freeness, most still keep up appearances. Of course, unlike expensive hotels— which go to greater lengths (for a greater price) to make invisible (again by means of low-paid labor) the evidence of previous guests—cheap motel rooms are more likely to have stained bead-spreads and dust-saturated carpets. The glossy manufactured side tables and starched white sheets in the guestrooms of expensive hotels are marked by what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, via Renu Bora, describes as texture with one x: texture that "defiantly or even invisibly blocks or refuses […] information" about how it got that way.[342] More of this perceptual information gets conveyed, or "slips through the cracks," at a cheap motel, a slippage to which Steedman was vigilantly attuned. But even Steedman, as she lay awake, was not

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[341] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 17. Emphasis mine.
[342] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativty*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 14.

wondering who cleaned her room or who sat on the assembly line where her sheets were made.

It is the other kind of texture, texxure with two xxs to which Puett, via her domestic installations at Mildred's Lane, seeks to shift our attention, in effect "the kind of texture that is dense with offered information about how, substantively, historically, [and] materially it came into being."[343] For Puett, not only does "texxture" perform temporal drag, in that it registers the co-presence of multiple times at once, but also, as Sedgwick points out, we perceive an object's texture in the liminal space between the haptic and the visual. And, of course, to touch is always also to feel, so we cannot maintain dualistic understandings of agency and passivity, causes and effects, conceptions useful to dismantle when we are trying productively to (re)configure the relationship between the living, the dead, and dust. Thereby through attention to texture, Sedgwick argues, we might shift our preoccupation away from epistemology towards phenomenology and affect. In the pursuit of this shift, Sedwick explores the trajectory of anti-essentialist discourses that extends from J. L. Austin's seminal linguistic work on performative utterances to gender and queer studies, via Derrida and Butler. It is simplistic, but not untrue, to say that Derrida, and later Butler, took up Austin's argument that *some* language is performative to insist upon the ways in which *all* language constructs, rather than merely describes, reality. In her early work on the social constructed-ness of gender, Butler added that it is when the performativity of language is most inexplicit that it is most actively at work.[344] For Sedgwick textural attention helpfully unloosens the hegemony of the linguistic and moves us away from suggestions that

[343] Ibid.
[344] Butler, *Gender Trouble.*

"perfomativity/performance can show us whether or not there are essential truths and how we could, or why we can't, know them," and towards questions about "what motivates performativity and performance," and of course, to a kind of materiality.[345] What Sedgwick describes here, a sidestepping of questions of essentialism via texture, might go a long way towards making Puett and her project legible to us.

Puett has said that she "loves the hypocrisy of a hotel room," by which she means that she is attuned to the ways in which the histories/residues of hotel rooms have been sublimated.[346] But in response to this blockage/refusal of information, every time she travels to one she brings her own textiles, some musty and stiff, others faded and worn through. With these textiles she does not seek to further "cover-up" what *appears* to missing—what historians like Steedman can still *feel* in the middle of the night—but rather to (re)dress/(re)texture the room, to layer her own material history and the other material histories that she has *dragged* along with her upon those who came before her. Puett expresses her receptiveness to what has been there before and what will come after through her performance of temporal drag (the mechanics of which I have alluded to in terms of her personal and domestic aesthetic, but will examine more precisely in my discussion of her staging of domestic spaces at Mildred's Lane), but it is worth mentioning here that this attitude toward time as nondiscrete is also part of what drives her insistence on comportment. When we graft her conceptions of time upon her ideas about household management, we complicate what seemed at first to be Puett's mere proclivity for good manners or effective domestic social coordination, and come to understand comportment also as a kind of care and attention to who has come before and

[345] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 17.
[346] J Morgan Puett, interview by the author, Narrowsburg, New York, July 10, 2011.

who will come after, an attention that *requires* perceptiveness towards, and not obliteration of, traces and residues. We must not forget though that "southern hospitality" carries its own traces and residues from its shadowy antebellum past, a past towards which this chapter continues to work.

Across the course of her career, both in art and in fashion, Puett describes Mildred's Lane as the place where all of her work gets threaded up, and textiles have always been the formal language through which she aesthetically works out the social problems that preoccupy her. Although Puett studied filmmaking, painting, and sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, upon graduation she turned to fashion in frustration with the dearth of opportunities in and limitations of the art world. In 1989, she started a small mail-order catalog business through which she sold handmade, hand-dyed, and hand-laundered natural fiber clothing. While Puett had no formal fashion training she had been designing her own clothes since she was seventeen, sometimes out of old sheets and blankets.[347] She even had experience with mail-order business, as her father had sold his queen bees via mail-order. Puett subsequently opened a tiny makeshift East Village storefront with floors packed with red clay straight from Georgia, where she not only sold, but also created her unusual, loosely fitting tunics and dresses. Despite the attention she received as a fashion designer in the early nineties, she never considered herself a designer, but rather an installation and textile artist exploring and negotiating the landscape between art and fashion.[348] As her retail experiment formalized, (she moved

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[347] Maureen Jenkins, "Sewing Trends: Designer Turns to Rural Roots for Influences," *Chicago Sun Times*, April 30, 1995, in the Style section.
[348] *The New Yorker Magazine* (1991), *The New York Times* (1991,1992, 1993, 1995), *Harper's* (1994), and *Chicago Sun Times* (1995) are just a few of the publications that ran articles featuring Puett's work and retail experiments.

her shop to Soho and then to Tribeca to escape increasing overhead costs caused by gentrification), she felt increasingly constrained by its profit-driven model and removed from the questions that had always driven and sustained her work.[349] In the late nineties, she turned her attention away from her retail space towards smaller scale installation projects, and eventually closed her storefront to reinvestigate textiles, not only in their historical sited-ness, but also as a means of telling history.[350] Whether it was framed as art or fashion, in interviews, Puett describes her practice as one through which she is drawn to the sutures, the gaps and the frayed edges of the history of textile production and its shinier half, fashion. As Mary Jane Jacob points out in her essay on Puett's textile installation project from 2002, *Cottage Industry*:

> The relationship of women to cloth is an ironic one: just as women have been subjugated in the factory, they are also intimately associated with the endearing domain of the home, where comfort comes through cloth (soft baby blankets, lovingly made clothes, handcrafted toys). Additionally, women are identified with fashion and dress as expressions of the feminine.[351]

It has largely been the narrative of cloth as an expression of femininity, luxury, and comfort that has dominated the history of textile and fashion in the United States over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Puett encountered these canonical histories she wondered why material evidence of the textile workforce, including

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[349] Lynn Yaeger, "The Shopping News: Cruising and Perusing Tribeca," *NY Mirror*, date unknown. Accessed via J. Morgan Puett's website and press archives on January 19, 2012, http://www.jmorganpuett.com/writings/Puett_New_York_Mirror.pdf.

[350] Puett closed the original Duane Street store in Tribeca in 1998 and moved around the block into another location on West Broadway where she set up a new corporation under the same name, Shack, Inc., but for this location she had different aspirations. Her hope was to redirect the project to be more explicitly driven by her concerns as an artist, but because Puett and her partner increasingly struggled to reconcile their visions for the space, and because she was also overwhelmed with early motherhood, she decided to close it in 2001.

[351] Jacob, "Material With a Memory," 306.

domestics, slaves, and industrial factory laborers, were largely absent from institutions devoted to the history of textiles. She came to realize that it was in part institutional disavowal—of the sort that Mierle Laderman Ukeles sought to make visible in her practice—but that it was an institutional disavowal that was facilitated by a seeming absence of material traces. Puett came to discover that these ghostly figures of fashion and textile history, while they worked hard and long hours to produce the garments that did end up in museums and history books, had worn their own garments first to rags and then to dust.

In several earlier installation projects, including *Cottage Industry*, Puett has attempted to excavate these histories that make visible the uncomfortable relationship between cloth and its invisible/disavowed makers, a group that has been predominantly made-up of female domestics, slaves, and factory workers over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has done this by researching threads of their missing histories, by finding documented examples of their clothing, by making the collaborative and laborious (re)production of their garments visible, and by staging these (re)productions in spaces that are both socially charged and that are marked by histories that are contested and subject to erasure.[352] This kind of history requires a kind of circular sense of time through which we might imagine that the past is still happening.

A brief description of Puett's *Cottage Industry* project, which she created for the 2002 Spoleto Festival, an annual performance art festival in Charleston, South Carolina, helps to give a more precise sense of this process. For this project, she set up a clothing

[352] Other Puett projects of this structure have included: the *Manhattan Tartan Project* (1998, New York), *RN: The Past, Present and Future of the Nurse's Uniform* (2004, Philadephia), and *The Lost Meeting* (2005, Jenkintown, PA).

factory in a small clapboard house located in what was once a largely African American community known as the Borough. The narrow two-story house, with its peeling paint and Southern-style porch, is one of only two remaining homes original to the downtown port-side neighborhood. [Figure 3.9] It first belonged to Willis Johnson, Sr., a former slave who purchased the house at 35 Calhoun Street when he moved to the Borough from Drayton Hall, one of the local plantations, after Emancipation.[353] The home is now abandoned, but has nonetheless remained in his family and survived the neighborhood's tumultuous history and eventual demolition. In the 1930s, New Deal government funds went to the construction of a low-income all-black housing project on the site that came to be called the Ansonborough Homes.[354] In 1989, the city closed the housing project, claiming the soil to be contaminated, and by 1993 all but two of the area's homes had been leveled. The state subsequently purchased the land and in the years following re-sold it for redevelopment to tourist driven industry.[355] Shiny hotels, condominiums, and restaurants have risen up in disavowal of the area's history of slavery and ongoing racist urban development, burying these histories beneath concrete and metal. On a vacant field, adjacent to the port that once anchored the transatlantic slave trade, the two dilapidated postbellum structures stand, side by side, in ghostly defiance of those encroaching monuments of capitalism.

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[353] The website for the nonprofit organization devoted to the preservation of the Drayton Hall plantation, a Historic Site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provides research information on the enslaved Bowens family, including information on the eldest son of Catherine Bowens and Friday Johnson, Willis Johnson, Sr. Accessed on January 12, 2012, http://www.draytonhall.org/research/people/bowens_wjsenior.html.

[354] Stephaine E. Yulh, *A Golden Haze of Memory: the Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 46–49.

[355] Eleanor Heartney, "Report from Charleston: History in the Remaking," *Art in America,* December 2002, 69–71.

Willis Johnson, Sr.'s granddaughters, Catherine Braxton and Rebecca Campbell, inherited these improbably extant relics after the death of their uncle in the late nineties. Puett obtained the sisters' permission to set up her temporary clothing factory in their uninhabited family home, as well as to install it with the original furniture, family photographs, handmade quilts and clothing that had been kept in storage. [Figure 3.10] Puett employed local weavers, seamstresses and dyers to create a line of textiles and garments of her design, many of which were amalgams of slave garments she had encountered in her research of the family and Drayton plantation. Visitors encountered residues of the family's post-slavery domestic life, along side the garment production process, as they moved through a design studio, a sewing room, and a weaving and dying area. In the shop, they could place orders for garments or textiles, or buy patterns for less money. Proceeds from the garments went to pay for the local artisans' time and labor.[356]

For Puett, (re)dressing/(re)texturing these histories are acts of repair, but it is important to note that these acts do run the serious risk of romanticizing, and thereby smoothing over the devastations of slavery, industrialism, capitalism, nationalism and imperialism. Puett's limp dresses, smocks, and aprons— eerily suspended from hooks on the ceiling and walls of the abandoned ex-slave residences— might too readily pull the fraying edges and seams of history closed. While there is something ghostly and affectively immediate about them, they also seem to worm out of the ugliness, degradation, and violence that is wrapped up with the histories to which they want to give "texxture." These objects raise a number of difficult questions: was participation in these

[356] *Cottage Industry* sales were very minor, and not computable toward any given thing or person, but in all cases the proceeds either went to artisans working on the project, or towards materials. All Puett's art projects are not-for-profit.

events meant to act as penance for historical sins? Were buyers expected to see these garments as aesthetically beautiful? What was their motivation as viewers and consumers? It seems that there is only a fragile and loosely woven stitch that separates the act of mending (making a few small repairs as a means of "getting-by" and coping with loss), from the act of transmogrification, which covers-up and reenchants.[357]

Sedgwick casts her related warning about the risks of (re)texxuturing as a strategy for resurfacing lost histories in terms of fetishism. She explains that:

> The narrative-performative density of the other kind of texture [the kind with two xxs]—its ineffaceable historicity—also becomes susceptible to a kind of fetish value. An example of the latter might occur where the question is one of exoticism, of the palpable and highly acquirable textural record of the cheap, precious work of many foreign hands in the light of many damaged foreign eyes.[358]

By this warning, Sedgwick means to suggest that in our global economy, sustained by cheap, unregulated, outsourced labor, we encounter a proliferation of objects palpably marked by the hands of under-paid workers. The fact that these familiar objects convey something about their making through their textural/narrative density, or "texxture," does not necessarily sensitize us to laboring conditions (nor ought the sensitization make owning them more palatable). Rather, it can lead us to exoticize, and thereby make other or distant those conditions as well as the laborers who endure them. In other words, Sedgwick's example effectively demonstrates how a shift in attention toward the textural, in the hopes of disrupting the hegemony of the visual in Western culture, can obscure rather than attune us to the ways in which the material world has been a source of

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[357] For more on repair as a critical strategy for coping with loss and history see: Stephen Bottoms and Matthew Goulish, eds., *Small Acts of Repair: Performance, Ecology and Goat Island*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).
[358] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 15.

violence and oppression at the expense of "damaged foreign eyes." Exoticism is a problem that we also have to consider when we engage with domesticating and collecting as practices, prevalent at Mildred's Lane, which cannot be understood outside of imperialism or as natural and distinct from social relations to power. A closer examination of how these problems play out at Mildred's Lane gives necessary texture to the historical baggage with which Mildred's Lane grapples and helps us to hone in on the strengths and limitations of (re)texturing as a strategy of making perceptible the disavowed and abject.

The domestic spaces that make up Mildred's Lane, filled with botanical and natural historical specimens—some of which is detritus from Mark Dion's natural history-themed contemporary-art installations—recall in many ways the Victorian middle-class home, which was, as Anne McClintock describes in her important book *Imperial Leather*, "a space for the display of imperial spectacle and the reinvention of race."[359] [Figures 3.11] By this McClintock means that not only was the domestic space one in which the exotic spoils of colonial conquest were put triumphantly on display, but it was also one in which this imperial bric-a-brac was made less threatening and more familiar. Which is to say that in the over-stuffed parlor, furnished with velvet couches, potted ferns, and aquariums, these "exotic" objects were "domesticated," and "civilized" and thus, according to McClintock, women and colonized people were "inducted through

[359] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 34. Mark Dion's art project *Blind/Hide* (2000–2001), a camaflouged mobile bird watching hut he istalled along the Tijuana River estuary in Imperial Beach for inSITE2000, is now installed on the Mildred's Lane property and houses guests.

the domestic progress narrative into a hierarchical relation to white men."[360] As much as it is a slippery task, Mildred's Lane offers to disrupt the semiotics of imperialism that the Victorian middle-class home it references sets up. For the Victorians, dust was a sign of domestic failure, a denotation of "one's very lack of modernity," an abject object that got tracked into the house and betrayed the ways in which the home was, in fact, neither natural nor discrete from the "outside" world of the market, industry, and empire.[361] Over the course of the nineteenth century, women in household service were charged with keeping the dust and themselves (as evidence not only of dust, but also of trafficking between the heavily policed boundary between public and private) out of sight. Dust was a sign of lassitude and degeneration that disrupted the imperial narrative of progress, and so by letting it accumulate, along with mold and decay, Mildred's Lane, makes a claim similar to one that Walter Benjamin sought to make in his unfinished large-scale *Arcades Project.* Susan Buck-Morss articulates this argument for us in her book dedicated to Benjamin's project. She claims that for Benjamin:

> The phantasmagoric understanding of modernity as a chain of events that leads with unbroken, historical, continuity to the realization of social utopia [is a futurist myth]. Where the myth imagined the force of machines as a power driving history forward, Benjamin provides material evidence that history has not budged. Indeed history stands so still that it gathers dust.[362]

While Puett's practice seems also to seek to provide material evidence that time does not simply move forward, she also produces/fabricates this evidence. In other words, her domestic installations are marked by real *and* staged dust/pastness, the boundary between

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[360] Ibid., 35.
[361] Brian Dillon, "A Dry Black Veil," *Cabinet* 35 (Fall 2009): 61.
[362] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 95.

which she does not police (I will discuss more specific examples of how she does this, shortly.)

In Puett's practice there is always a tension between her use of textiles that through wear, staining, aging and deterioration actually carry the traces of sublimated histories and those garments she creates to evoke missing historical traces. She makes perceptible and admissible the tension between real and staged textural records and does not deny the extent to which fiction and invention play their role in her production of material evidence of the interwoven-ness of the past and present. Rather, she questions the extent to which fragments are ever threaded through history without the means of fiction and invention. Certainly the factory she set up in that small clapboard house in Charleston, while grounded in a kind of material analysis, was in most every way removed from the nineteenth century London dress-making factories in which women such as twenty-year old Mary Anne Walkley died of overwork. (Walkley is a famous example because her obituary caught the attention of Karl Marx as he was writing the first volume of *Capital*.)[363] But despite the lack of verisimilitude, and the lack of requisite ugliness and hardness, as Puett has let the muslins, crinoline skirts, and slave aprons she created in Charleston and throughout her career collect and subsequently turn to dust in closets and attics at Mildred's Lane, something of that house in Charleston, Mary Anne Walkley, and the Victorian domestic got dragged along.

The vernacular spaces and rooms that make up Mildred's Lane are each prominently outfitted with Puett's collection of textiles, and these textiles structure nearly all its

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[363] Maureen P. Sherlock, "Piecework: Home, Factory, Studio, Exhibit," in *The Object of Labor: Art, Cloth, and Cultural Production*, eds. Joan Livingsone and John Ploof (Chicago: School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2007), 12.

domestic activities, including cooking, cleaning, dressing, mending, entertaining, and sleeping. [Figure 3.12] They serve as a way of making felt disavowed feminine labor, but one that indeed risks fetishizing and romanticizing the material traces of that labor. The claims that Mildred's Lane is a place of reenchantment, romanticism and nostalgia for a past that never quite existed, are, as I have suggested, the ways in which it is most often dismissed as an artistic practice.[364] I have, in many ways, already complicated these types of critiques—for their disavowals of systems of support held up by feminized laborers, for their dependence on unidirectional conceptions of time and for their instance on the finality, accessibility and authority of history. But in order to give these tensions more critical structure and to address fully the relationship between temporality (nostalgia) and materiality (the commodity object) I need to give a brief overview of the ways in which the relationship between labor and the commodity object have been theorized in nineteenth and twentieth century thought on commodity culture.

As is well known, changing modes of production, as well as social conditions of labor, broadly characterized by systemization, mechanization, and mass-production, brought about modernization. Karl Marx negatively described these changes in terms of the take-over of what he called the use-value system by the exchange-value system. In

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[364] Several critics who have cursorily engaged with Mildred's Lane have, perhaps unwittingly, perpetuated the idea that Mildred's Lane is a place of reenchantment, romanticism and nostalgia. When Senior Program Specialist at the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative and Art 21 blogger, Daniel Fuller, visited Mildred's Lane in August 2009, he described his experience on the Art 21 as "A Day at Art Disneyland." After her visit to Mildred's Lane that same summer, professor of nineteenth and twentieth century art history at University of College London, Petra Lange Berdnt, wrote an article in which she described Mildred's Lane to be a "mental fairyland," where "a bohemian life can be lead today." Petra Lange Berdnt, "Test Site Bohemia. On *Mildred's Lane* by J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion, Pennsylvania," in *Texte zur Kunst*, vol. 21, no. 81 (March 2011), 173–175.

other words, the system of production under which people had direct connections with the things that they made gave way to one in which people became alienated from their labor, labor which, through dissociative fragmentation and segmentation, no longer bore the trace of their hand. As Kevin Hetherington explains in his book, *Capitalism's Eye*, for Marx, "fetishism occurs where the value of a commodity, the product of real social relations that are the outcome of sensuous human activity, comes to appear as a thing independent of the labor that produced it."[365] While Marx warns us that it is the distortions of capitalism and the alienation of the object from its maker that give it its illusory power, it is *by means* of these objects, which have so quickly passed from novelty to detritus in the service of the narrative of progress, that Puett seeks to make disavowed labor visible and to transform the boundaries of the self across space and time (temporal drag). Similarly for Benjamin—who was, at times, a more reluctant Marxist than Marx—these discarded objects were haunted by "the ghost of humanity's past dreams (and labor) manifest in the material form betrayed."[366]

In describing capitalism as illusionistic, Marx evokes a visual metaphor that suggests the way in which the system perpetuates itself is by making people *see* falsely. As Hetherington explains, Marx "was very fond of using metaphors of optical tricks, ghostly apparitions, and mechanical visualizing apparatuses when discussing matters of knowledge and ideology."[367] He privileged vision in his prescribed response to capitalism, for he suggested that its illusionism needed merely to be *seen through*. In his discussion of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, Hetherington suggests that the

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[365] Kevin Hetherington, *Capitalism's Eye: Cultural Spaces of the Commodity*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 58.
[366] Ibid., 96.
[367] Ibid., 61.

metaphor at the center of Marx's understanding of the operation of fetishism within capitalist society is the phantasmagoria and that an investigation of phantasmagoria, both as a form of popular spectacle that emerged in the late eighteenth century and as an enduring Marxist visual metaphor, might gesture towards some important limitations of Marx's conceptualization of the relationship between subjects (laborers/consumers) and objects (materiality).

The phantasmagoria was a magic lantern show in which ghostly shadows and silhouettes were projected onto a translucent screen in a darkened room. As a theatrical genre, the popularity of the phantasmagoria began to wane after 1820, but it retained for Marx its usefulness as a metaphor for commodity fetishism because, in these shows, the mechanism that produced the ghostly figures was concealed so as to give the impression of an apparition and thereby to produce bewilderment among the audience members. While Hetherington notes that the phantasmagoria seems, at least at first, to serve as an apt metaphor for Marx and his understanding of the commodity fetish as illusionistic, he points out that Marx doesn't consider the way in which these spectacles must have been consumed. While audiences would have undoubtedly been "shocked and amused" by spectral visions of the phantasmagoria, Hetherington argues that:

> We have to assume, given the skilled reception shown within a long history of theatrical entertainments and spectacles, that audiences were not so credulous that they couldn't see through these phantasms and recognize them for what they were—a source of entertainment.[368]

While vision was decorporealized in the early modern period and technological apparatuses of vision like the camera obscura served as emblems of the rationalization of sight, the human body re-entered configurations of seeing in the early nineteenth century

[368] Ibid., 64.

when human desires and powers of imagination were understood to play a role in the way in which one construed the world. All this to say that at work in the phantasmagoria was a new kind of subject/object relation in which subjects came into being through an act of consumption in which they were called upon to make certain imaginative leaps so as to make sense of the world.

Ghostly shadows, as particularly ambiguous figures, when projected without a visible source of production, threw into doubt visual sense. The appearance of a visual "market-place" of specters could only be resolved through the imaginative energies of the viewing/consuming subjects. Ultimately, Marx, so attuned to the changes in the functioning of the object, neglected to consider that the subject might also function differently. He also imagined a subject who "realizes him- or herself through labor alone," an assumption that certainly implicates men and women asymmetrically: for not only were women the primary consumers in the nineteenth century society but as producers, their labor was never not "hidden, invisible and cyclically forgotten."[369] Among the ghostly shadows of the phantasmagoria "the specter of women's work," David Staples tells us, "haunts capitalism."[370]

Marx was suspicious of ghosts as optical illusions to be seen through. Perhaps because he was so preoccupied with the visual he neglected to consider how ghosts might be presences that are felt, through residue, texture *and* imagination, more than they are seen. Puett imagines the various buildings that make up Mildred's Lane as a collection of

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[369] Ibid., 69 and David Staples, "Women's Work and the Ambivalent Gift of Entropy," in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* ed. Patricia Ticineto Clough (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 119. See also Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Methuen Inc., 1985).
[370] Staples, "Women's Work," 119.

vernacular structures—"the hut, the shed, the Thoreau cabin"— that are each saturated with objects and marked by residues and that open up space for haunting.[371] In the final stage of this chapter, I will engage with two of these spaces, Mildred's Steffen's farmhouse and the Grafter's Shack, and explore the ways in which these spaces were designed to conjure specific ghosts, as much as they serve to open up space for those "specters of women's work," alienated from history. Close readings of these spaces suggest that in her aspirations towards creating a home that is hospitable not only to the living, but also to the dead, and towards transforming the boundaries of the self not only across space but also across time, Puett, albeit unintentionally, emulates the mid-nineteenth century women's Spiritualist movement in America. Through such practices as séances and "spirit photography," and in the face of many skeptics and social changes across the antebellum, wartime, and postbellum periods, women of the Spiritualism movement, through empathy and hospitality, sought to transcend the barriers dividing the American body politic, including the ultimate barrier death, but also social barriers of gender and race.

We begin to set up the generative possibilities of reading Puett's practice against those of nineteenth century American Spiritualism when we explore Mildred's farmhouse, the conceptual epicenter of Mildred's Lane. [Figure 3.13] From neighbors and surviving family members, Puett learned that it was in this farmhouse where Mildred Steffens, the woman from whom Puett's project takes its name, was born in 1902. Of Mildred's nine siblings, she was the only one to stay on the farm into her adult years, except for her younger sister who died there when she was an infant and who is buried

[371] Gordon, "In Her Own World."

somewhere in the field adjacent to the house. Mildred lived and worked without electricity or running water, and mostly alone, until she died at 86. The farmhouse was left empty after she died and appraisers of the land considered the house—which stood as evidence of years of wear, use, weather, and the life of a strange woman—to be useless if not detrimental to facilitating a sale of the ninety-six acre compound. In 1998, when Puett, Dion, Nils Norman, and Renee Green learned that the property was for sale, it was the rotting house that interested the four artists in the compound and ultimately compelled them to purchase it.[372] Shortly after Puett and Dion moved onto the site they began an excavation project they called *Mildred's Archeology*, for which they enlisted an architectural preservationist, Richard Pieper, to come out to do a "reading" of Mildred's Steffen's farmhouse. He dated the tiny homestead back to at least the 1830s, but also noted that the hearth in the basement dates back to at least the 1790s. Parts of the house burned down in the early twentieth century and Pieper peeled back layers of beaverboard to demonstrate the way in which the walls could be read as a layered/textural record of at least five restoration stages the house had passed through and by which it remained marked. For *Mildred's Archeology*, Puett and Dion at once wanted to let time take its toll *and* to restage the house based on the fragments, which according to Puett are undoubtedly both real and invented, that she and Dion had collected over the course of their habitation on the property and research. The tension between real and staged pastness is one that Puett and Dion seem to want to im*press* upon visitors to this

[372] J. Morgan Puett, interview by the author, Narrowsburg, New York, July 10, 2011. Nils Norman and Renée Green were friends of Puett and Dion, but were only briefly involved in the project.

affectively immediate space that they both came upon and selectively (re)created. In other words, they make evident the ways in which their artistic interventions are at work.

Visitors much taller than five feet must crouch down to pass through the creaky screen door that quickly swings shut behind them, cutting off the light and air, as they adjust their eyes to the dimness of the room. The roofs of the two small adjoining eating and sitting rooms that make up the first floor are slumping; the bats have nested in the eaves; the dank smells have seeped into the curtains and bed linens. In addition to Mildred's simple wooden table and chairs and her tattered and faded upholstered furniture arranged around the fireplace, the first floor also now serves as a repository for the remains of other Mildred's Lane projects, like the rules of comportment for Allison Smith's rehearsal of *The Muster* that are propped up in a glass-paned cabinet in the sitting room. Visitors must climb a creaky, nonrailed, wooden staircase to reach the gabled attic where Mildred once slept. In this stark space they find only thick wooden floorboards patched with tin cans, a cast iron wooden stove, a couple of wrought-iron beds swathed in mosquito netting and piled high with tattered quilts, and a wooden desk, upon which sits a Ouija board with which to conjure Mildred. Dion and Puett repainted the beaverboard walls in a shade of teal that Mildred had at one point applied to emulate the atmosphere of the Caribbean as she imagined it from descriptions in books. These brightly painted boards and the book that inspired them become another set of references to colonialism/imperialism, even as we might be inclined to narrate Mildred's life as one isolated from the "outside world," one that played out beyond the realm of politics.

It is worth mentioning here, also, that "the homestead" itself is an icon for the American ideology of Manifest Destiny, a nineteenth century doctrine that cast US

territorial expansion across the American continents as natural and inventible, the land beyond the frontier as empty and waiting to be "discovered," and America as a country without a past or even a present, only a future. [Figures 3.14 and 3.15] In their take-up of the Steffens's family homestead, Dion and Puett interfere in this ideology through a practice that insists upon the presence (and labor) of others, even and especially the dead, and one that seeks to make visible the ways in which the past, present, and future cannot be located on a unidirectional line. As Joseph Roach explains in *Cities of the Dead*, since the "rationalizing projects of the European enlightenment," and in the name of hygiene and order, there have been systematic campaigns to segregate the living from the dead, "their bodies […] removed to newly dedicated and isolated cemeteries" and their ghosts exorcised from the spaces occupied by the living.[373] In a contemporary culture that is at once necrophobic and necrophilic, Puett and Dion's engagement with this abandoned and condemned domestic space is an attempt to establish an ethical relationship with the dead that works against processes of erasure. Again, to put these practices up against Spiritualist ones will, I argue, help us to give these strategies more critical dimension, but in order to make this conceptual leap readers will have to suspend their disbelief, as many skeptics of Spiritualism were unable to do, as I attempt to perform my own act of temporal drag.

As Molly McGarry explains in her book devoted to the analysis of Spiritualism as a religious and political practice of the nineteenth century, in 1848, about two decades after Mildred's house was built, and just a few hundred miles to the northwest, the first convention for women's rights met in Seneca Falls, and two young girls claimed to

[373] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 50.

establish communication with the dead in their farmhouse in Hydesville. This specific episode of communing with the dead, against a rising tide of enthusiasm for reform that was making its way across the United States, marks the beginning of many accounts of the emergence of what would become a widely practiced "sitting room-religion" and aspirational vehicle for social reform. It was practiced almost exclusively around tables in dimly lit domestic settings, where women, and less frequently feminized "gentle" men, would open up not only their homes to a spirit-conjuring circle, but also their bodies to the voices and bodies of the departed. As McGarry describes it, during the Spirituaist séance, by opening up the home as well as the body, "not only did furniture levitate […], but the materialism of the Victorian home was itself haunted."[374] Two primary beliefs motivated this practice: the first was that the past was not over, and the second was that through sympathy, feeling, and, I will add, hospitality, they could reintegrate damaging social dualisms of the ante and postbellum United States, by crossing between living and dead, material and immaterial, present and past, young and old, male and female, white and nonwhite.

Of course it also served as a means of harnessing power for women not only in religious contexts, but also in social contexts. In effect, the mostly female group of believers tried to translate what they described as their proclivity for freer emotion into spiritual and social authority on personal and political matters. Via occupation by the dead, women could make their bodies less legible while they sought to make the bodies of the socially abject more legible, and via messages from the dead, women could claim privileged knowledge about, and thereby negotiate with prevailing ideas about female

[374] Molly McGarry, *Ghost of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 2008), 11.

sexuality, marriage, and motherhood as well as abolition, temperance and women's suffrage.[375] As a means of coping with death and division, its practice grew during and directly after the Civil War in response to profound losses of life sustained over the course of the war and seemingly unbridgeable divides ossifying amongst the living.[376]

Spiritualism was a practice with many contesting genealogies that lacked both authoritative texts and structures and contended with the relevance of religious hierarchy and expertise, but for these and other reasons it was demeaned by both ends of the religious spectrum, by evangelicals and antievangelicals alike, as "feminized," "commercialized," "weak," "effeminate," "middlebrow," and, of course, fraudulent. By the 1870s doctors routinely pathologized mediumship and pronounced it to be "a particularly female disease akin to hysteria."[377] Spiritualism has been a movement largely marginalized in historical accounts of nineteenth century America, despite that by 1850 it had a reported two million followers. This is in part because it seems as preposterous, and thereby trivial, to contemporaries as it did to nineteenth century skeptics, and in part because it complicates prevailing narratives that "the tide of capitalist secularism 'disenchanted' the world."[378] It was actually in the face of industrial technologies that increased the pace of geographic and social mobility and could bring disparate times, places and people together, including the telegraph, the train and the photograph, that communication with ghosts came to be seen by some Americans as no less incredible. [Figure 3.16] McGarry describes the history of Spiritualism as the "ghost story of the

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[375] For a study that discusses the linkages between women's rights movements and Spiritualism see: Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
[376] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past*, 9.
[377] Ibid., 11, 15.
[378] Ibid., 11.

long nineteenth century."[379] An acknowledgement its growing prominence up until the last decades of the nineteenth century often gets relegated to a short footnote that reads something like: Spiritualism represented the brief and fleeting "feminization of American religion." Its place within the history of women's suffrage and rights reform movements has also been disavowed, particularly by second-wave feminists who, in trying to establish continuity between their efforts and efforts made by women over the course of American history, and to excavate lost expressions of female solidarity and aspiration, felt, as McGarry describes it, "a certain squeamishness […] in imagining that religion might be a reasonable font for politics and that religious feminists might be rational and political rather than women suffering from false consciousness."[380] This is perhaps a similar kind of squeamishness progressive academics might feel about taking seriously Puett's domestic homesteading project as a productive site of resistance.

The claim that strange echoes of Spiritualist concerns and techniques seem to reverberate across time (but not that much space), and that its ghosts seems to "press in" on the inhabitants of Mildred's Lane, would probably make Puett as uncomfortable as second-wave feminists were with including the movement in their historical narratives. It is not only does Puett fall vehemently to one side of a religious divide that increasingly marks the American political and social landscape. It is also, I imagine, that she would also want to protect a project that is already trivialized on the basis of its associations with femininity and pathological attachment to the past from associations with a movement critiqued on these grounds but also on the basis of its fraudulence, a dismissal to which I will shortly return. But I think the grafting of nineteenth century Spiritualist

[379] Ibid., 1.
[380] Ibid., 4.

concerns onto the practices at Mildred's Lane is much more helpful than not, although, as with all grafts, it adheres better in some places than in others. Indeed, the scope of Puett's aspirations are narrower and have no religious cadence; the world she hopes to make better is more contained; her belief that, as much as we can feel the dead, they can be legible to us is much less equivocal. But the world with which she reckons is, in many ways, no less divided or socially and politically stressed, the proximity of her project to radicality and conservativeness is no less contested, and the possibilities she opens up for occupying the site of the feminine are no less transitive.

I look to Spiritualist practices and beliefs as much to articulate the limitations of various strategies of transforming the boundaries of the self in time and in space, as I do to give more extended shape to what Puett's project *and* it critics and skeptics might drag along. We begin to gesture towards the limitations of these strategies of transcendence by pointing out, as Robert S. Cox did in his book *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism*, that the Spiritualism movement was less coherent and homogeneous than scholars such as McGarry have suggested and that in fact Spiritualist social and political expression "ran the entire mid-Victorian gamut."[381] Although if we focus less on the tensions and contradictions within the movement and more upon the central ideas around which the movement cohered, we still must be wary of the ways in which its practice often reinforced social relations of power more than it disrupted them. Cox complicates traditional readings of Spiritualist reform efforts as radical by putting forth several ways in which the movement actually worked to conservative ends. As he argues, its practitioners radically simplified the means by which social wounds could be

[381] Robert S. Cox, *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism,* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 4.

mended and divisions could be collapsed, while its practices could distract from the struggles to become legible faced by the living by focusing too hermetically on those struggles to become legible faced by the dead. It could be said that Spiritualists turned the dead into ghosts so as *not* to be haunted by them.

Drawing from a claim by Nell Irvin Painter, Cox writes that, "far from abetting reformist causes such as antislavery, Spiritualist ethics 'mellowed abolitionists' opposition to slave power and its minions in the US Congress,'" and goes on to suggest that "a focus on the afterlife 'diverted energy from the struggle,' displacing, deferring, and dampening, rather than radicalizing its adherents."[382] While speaking to the limitations of a broader nineteenth century sentimental culture, in which Spiritualism might be said to have participated, and which Berlant defines as a nexus of belonging based on one's capacity for pain and suffering and utilized predominately by the culturally privileged, she argues that "sentimentality […] is the only vehicle for change that neither produces more pain nor requires much courage, unlike other revolutionary rhetorics."[383] The performance of the séance could also be described in Berlant's terms as a source of entertainment through which participants could "encounter the scene of national trauma and […] have the right feelings about what is wrong in it, so that the light, frothy remains of the violent history can be consumed as a meringue, a dessert made of air and sugar and just a few broken eggs."[384]

One of the other ways in which compassionate emotion, sympathy, and hospitality express their limits is that they travel most naturally along affective ties. In other words,

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[382] Ibid., 19.
[383] Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 66.
[384] Ibid., 54.

as Spiritualists themselves believed, the space dividing the living and the dead was most likely and credibly bridged through exchange between bodies (living and dead) in which these feelings had previously developed through habit and kinship. As Cox puts it, "a person sympathized more powerfully with those with whom he or she was most frequently in contact and much less powerfully with others."[385] Beyond ability, the politics of a medium's identification with her dead son or husband would not be convertible to the politics of her identification with a dead slave, even as her sympathy would be as inadequate for standing in for their physical pain in both cases. Sympathy is an emotion that is understood to attenuate as familiarity and affection dissipate, and thereby, in this sense as well, Spiritualist practice could sometimes reinforce, more than it disrupted, preexisting social bonds and rifts.

The extent to which the critiques leveled towards Spiritualism can by applied to attempts at Mildred's Lane to recalibrate the relationships between the living and the dead, the past and present, the feminine and the nonfeminine, the mother and the artist, the object and the labor that sustains it, is complicated and mitigated by the way in which frustration, disappointment and failure structure these desires as much as does aspiration. The Grafter's Shack, a small wooden structure on the grounds at Mildred's Lane devoted to the practice of bee grafting (which involves the production of queens from by bee larva), is marked more prominently by the absence of the figure the space serves to conjure than by his presence. Bee grafting is a trade that has passed through four generations of the Puett family and was practiced by Puett's father before his untimely death in 1971 when Puett was fourteen years old. The wad of bee veils, homemade wax

[385] Cox, *Body and Soul*, 27.

cups, grafting frames, bee gloves, boxes of queen mailing cages, diagrams of reproductive organs, and images of beekeepers' clubs in the nineteenth century, all evoke what is for Puett the affective immediacy and irrevocable loss of her childhood and the figure who looms largest in her accounts of its simultaneous nearness and farness, her father Garnett G. Puett. [Figure 3.17] While Puett describes the textures, smells and emotions she has dragged along from her childhood as being the most visceral in her daily life and domestic work, she also explains this visceral-ness as tenuous. She and her siblings cannot even agree on the material with which the Grafter Shack on their family farm in Georgia was made, even as they all swear to remember it vividly. Puett experiences time as something that folds in on itself and that splays open, through which experiences of transcendence and eminence oscillate, fact and fantasy get tangled, and present wars get replayed in the time and space of past ones. [Figure 3.18] During an interview with me during the summer of 2011, Puett's account of her father as gentle and learned and of herself as a "wild being," running bare-footed across her father's bee farm that got burned down by the Klu Klux Klan, crossed in and out of her retellings of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird.*[386] The place where she begins and the book's main character Scout ends is never something upon which Puett insists or in which expresses much interest. But the smells of wax and wood that are at once homey and musky, strange and familiar, near and far-off, drift between the objects that clutter the shack and

[386] J Morgan Puett, interview by the author, Narrowsburg, New York, July 10, 2011. Puett recalls that because her father was an active civil rights advocate and spoke out in support of pro-civil rights political candidates, her peers called her names at school and her father's farm was attacked on several occasions. As I discuss, and Puett forewarns, these are childhood memories more than verified facts.

the narrative that attempts to subsume and capture those objects, making felt the way in which Garnett G. Puett is forever gone and forever not gone.

Puett actually performed the role of medium at Mildred's Lane in 2009 in a performance piece by British artist Robert Williams. Williams's ongoing project enlists a changing cast of participants to (re)perform his (imperfect) transcription of a séance scene from the 1956 British cult-classic, *Night of the Demon* (renamed *Curse of the Demon* in America), directed by Jacques Tourneur and loosely adapted from M.R. James's frequently adapted for TV classic ghost story, *Casting the Runes.* Puett's playful (re)performance of a Spiritualist medium who appeared in this classic horror film makes clear the way in which the tension between theatrical hauntedness and real hauntedness, which gets staged and (re)staged at Mildred's Lane, disrupts any sense that something real/pure gets recovered over the course of its activities.

In the séance scene, starkly (re)staged and (re)filmed by Williams, Puett played a medium named Mr. Meek (the name of course indicative of the fact the mediumship was feminized and that men who took on the role, even *if* they were somehow taken seriously, were thought to be weak because of how easily "penetrated" they were by others). The protagonist of the film, an American psychologist named John Holden, reluctantly and skeptically enters the séance circle at the bidding of his love interest Joanna Herrington who hopes Mr. Meek can connect them to her dead uncle, Professor Henry Harrington. [Figure 3.19] At the time of his mysterious death Professor Harrington was working with Holden to debunk claims about the supernatural made by a prominent cult leader, Julian Karswell, and Joanna hopes that her uncle can impress upon Holden the seriousness of Karswell's warnings/threats that Holden will meet the same fate as Professor Harrington

had. For Williams's project, Puett read from a script, which dictated that when the lights went down Mr. Meek, seated around a table with Holden and Joanna, enters a trance,

> shaking in his seat and banging his hands on the table. He first assumes the personality of a Native American chief, then a Scotsman and finally a little girl. Then Holden listened incredulously as another voice, unmistakably that of Henry Harrington, comes through.[387]

When the London-based producer, Marcel Hellman, submitted the "original" screenplay to the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC), the examiner, and subsequent examiners with the BBFC and Motion Picture Association of America where Hellman resubmitted it, expressed concern about the séance scene. The concerns particularly related to the scene's suitability for children, its "phoniness," and somewhat contradictorily, its seemingly equivocal credibility. As one examiner noted "the medium at the séance was never unmasked as a fake—indeed the evidence is all the other way." The fact that the séance was not a part of James's "original" text led one examiner to add that in addition to being misleading, and to some blasphemous, the scene was gratuitously spectacular and not true to the ghost story. Ultimately, it was Holden's unequivocal dismissal and the producer's acquiescence to the stipulation that the climax of the séance scene be "reasonabl[y] restrain[ed]" that made it "pass" for fake-enough to be included in the final, much edited, version of the film's script.[388] The scene nonetheless left open the question of its realness or fakery, within a text that, despite its hokeyness, played to the tension between the real and the invented. To play this story out across the backdrop of Mildred's Lane seems to demonstrate the unproductiveness of trying to parse out realness from fakery (and the essential from the nonessential) and helps us to see the way in which

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[387] Tony Earnshaw, *Beating the Devil: The Making of Night of the Demon*, (Sheffield: Tomahawk Press, 2005), 43.
[388] Ibid., 18.

realness and fakery get dragged across the temporal and spatial registers of the other. Puett's somewhat parodic performance of Mr. Meek as a place where dust settles into the bed sheets, muslin dresses, and bee veils, helps to dramatize this point.

We can't move away from the unnamed examiner's concern that the transitivity of the medium's body was never clearly announced as fake within the framework of the film, without making a few additional points about Spiritualism and the way in which skeptics and critics perceived it in the nineteenth century. Daphne Brooks takes up Spiritualist performance as well as a host of other genres including "phantasmagoria shows […] Victorian pantomime, extravaganza, magic and minstrelsy," as a "fanciful sphere, familiar to audiences on either side of the Atlantic [that] was a fertile zone for ingenious figures to experiment with alternative ways to critique presumably fixed notions of cultural identity."[389]

But Brooks goes on to explain that these practices did not go on without contestation and devotes particular attention to a little book, published by Reverend Hiram Mattison in 1853, called *Spirit Rapping Unveiled!*. Mattison's manifesto claimed to debunk the Spiritualist movement and to call-out its mostly female practitioners for being not only fraudulent but also malicious. According to Brooks, Mattison was most offended by "Spiritualist practitioners who claimed to summon multiple spirits in rapid succession through their bodies while in the throes of dance." To see an "imaginative encounter" between women, Indians, slaves, dead presidents, played out across the bodies of mostly white women, whose gestures, Brooks points out, were nonetheless haunted by African

[389] Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom*, 1850–1910, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 7.

religious practices, produced for Mattison "a horrifying taxonomic crisis."[390] On the one hand it was the way in which these women were so easily penetrable and served thereby as "vehicles of impurity" that stirred to Mattison to fire and brimstone, but on the other, he insisted with equal vehemence that the encounter was fake, and made possible only by the *seeming* "naturalness" and guilelessness of the female sex that also needed urgently to be "unveiled." As Brooks explains, "Mattison conflates his naked suspicion of Spiritualism with his more subtle paranoia of women," and "translate[s] his anxieties into racial terms."[391] In the next chapter, I will take up the way in which the feminine façade continues to be a site where aesthetic and intellectual ambiguity get written over, even as mobilizations of the conventions of femininity often gets anxiously talked about as working in the service of deception and manipulation. It is here that the questions and problems Puett's practice raises *cross* into chapter four. In the following chapter we can imagine Puett as playing a kind of "host" to the avant-garde cellist and performance artist, Charlotte Moorman, whose provocative, and often topless, performances of male-authored compositions incited the intense criticism of her second-wave feminist contemporaries and whose artistic labor has been negated, trivialized and marginalized within postwar art historical narratives.

Although Ingold's concept of wayfinding might feel far behind us, I want to recall it to memory now. We make our way to the next chapter by reimagining that long, winding, unpaved path, choked by trees that Gordon described as leading us "out of the present," via a famous opening passage from Daphne du Maurier's "novelette" *Rebecca,* recited by

[390] Ibid., 14.
[391] Ibid., 18.

its unnamed heroine.[392] In the passage, the heroine describes her imaginative encounter with Manderley, a house that, while it stood, was indelibly marked by the oppressively present absence of her husband's deceased first wife, Rebecca. This young girl, who remains nameless throughout the text, and who is only ever referred to as the second Mrs. de Winter, feels herself to be a ghost skulking in the shadows of a woman whose presence is still viscerally felt in every room, despite having mysteriously drowned the year before on a ship called *Je Reviens* ("I will return"). It is by means of the fastidious labor of Rebecca's housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, that time's workings are kept at bay and Rebecca remains, seemingly impervious to the living. Domestic labor for Mrs. Danvers becomes the work of fossilizing Rebecca's traces and maintaining the house just as it was under Rebecca's purview. And yet, despite, or perhaps because of the second Mrs. de Winter's sensitivity towards the persistent presence of the dead, the present seems to act upon the past *as much* as the past seems to act upon the present. When she fails to persuade the second Mrs. de Winter to give into the gravitational pull of death by committing suicide, Mrs. Danvers, who seems keenly aware of the mutually disruptive threat the past and present pose to each other, decides she would rather burn the house

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[392] Upon the publication of Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* in 1938, the author and her publishers received criticism in the British and American press that the story was derivative. The London *Time's* wrote that "the material is of the humblest [...] nothing in this is beyond the novelette [...]." And many commentators claimed that the story plagiarized Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. See: Margaret Forster, *Daphne Du Maurier: The Secret Life of the Renowned Storyteller*, (New York: Doubleday, 1993). Brontë's *Jane Eyre* had received similar critical reception, and was depreciated by contemporaries like Mark Twain as "feminine" and as never going beyond the artificial confines of the parlor. On similar grounds Twain lambasted Jane Austen's novels as "unreadable…domestic productions" and could not even bring himself to spell her name correctly. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 109.

down than see the omnipresence of the past in the present (Rebecca) attenuate through surrogation (the second Mrs. de Winter.) In the following passage, after the house's ashes have settled, the unnamed heroine comes upon and reckons with the house as a specter of the past. She explains:

> Last night, I dreamt I went to Manderley again**.** It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter for the way was barred to me. Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me [*sic*]. The drive wound away in front of me, twisting and turning as it had always done. But as I advanced, I was aware that a change had come upon it. Nature had come into her own again, and little by little had encroached upon the drive with long tenacious fingers, on and on while the poor thread that had once been our drive. And finally, there was Manderley—Manderley— secretive and silent. Time could not mar the perfect symmetry of those walls. Moonlight can play odd tricks upon the fancy, and suddenly it seemed to me that light came from the windows. And then a cloud came upon the moon and hovered an instant like a dark hand before a face. The illusion went with it. I looked upon a desolate shell, with no whisper of a past about its staring walls. We can never go back to Manderley again**.** That much is certain. But sometimes, in my dreams, I do go back to the strange days of my life which began for me in the south of France.[393]

Through what Reverend Mattison would disparage as an imaginative leap, this unnamed woman transgresses the seemingly impermeable barrier that separates her from the house, the present from the past, but only to find this tension (re)played across of the façade of Manderly that at once "time could not mar" and that remains only as a "desolate shell, with [not even a] whisper of a past." The narrator alludes to an erasure that has taken place here, but an erasure that remains nonetheless tenuous. Mere tricks of light, like those of the phantasmagoria shows of the early nineteenth century, reanimate "its staring walls," however fleetingly, and as the light retreats and passes into darkness, a ghost

[393] The abbreviated text is drawn from the opening lines of Alfred Hitchock's adaptation of the book to film. *Rebecca*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock (1940; Burbank CA: Warner Home Video, 2008), DVD. For the full text see Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (1938, New York: Harper, 2006), 1–5.

seems to appear, as "a dark hand before a face." And when the illusion seems to lose its luster there is still all that dust. The unnamed woman accounts for the way in which the past presses in on us only to pull away, and the way in which it passes into and moves through the present, by insisting that: "we can never go back, but sometimes, I do go back." This, it seems to me, is not only the paradox of Manderly and Mildred's Lane, but of history itself: we can never go back, but we do go back, and just as we leave (re)traces of our comings and goings, so have those who have come before and those will come again. If, as Atticus Finch says in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, there are "other ways of making people into ghosts," it is also true that there are other ways of refusing the disavowal of labor than being seen.[394] However trivialized by histories that seek to smooth out its roughness or to sever it from the living and dead bodies (of flesh, material and knowledge) it supports, the labor we might succeed in keeping from view, nevertheless leaves traces that creep into our skin and cannot be shaken off. This is an assertion that I hope we will drag with us into chapter four.

[394] Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (New York: Warner Books Edition, 1960), 11.

Four

The Entertainer: Shadows of Charlotte Moorman's Apotropaic Cello

Wendy saw the shadow on the floor, looking so draggled, and she was frightfully sorry for Peter […] but she could not help smiling when she saw that he had been trying to stick it on with soap. "How exactly like a boy! [...] It must be sewn on," she said, just a little patronizingly […]. She got out her housewife and sewed the shadow onto Peter's foot […]. Soon his shadow was behaving properly, though still a little creased. "I should have ironed it," Wendy said thoughtfully, but Peter boylike was indifferent to appearances and he was now jumping about in the wildest glee. Alas he had already forgotten that he owed his bliss to Wendy. He thought he had attached the shadow himself. "How clever I am […] oh the cleverness of me!

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

It is not that the past throws its light on the present or the present its light on the past, but the image is that wherein the past comes together with the present in a constellation.

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

[Photography is] "the art of fixing a shadow." Where race meets the photograph, desire (punctum) resides in the shadows.

Carol Mavor, *Black and Blue*

[T]he commodity who speaks, in speaking, in the sound—the inspirited materiality—of that speech, constitutes a kind of temporal warp that disrupts and augments […] the mode of subjectivity […]that capital both allows and disallows.

Fred Moten, *In the Break*

On November 8, 1991, the last day of Charlotte Moorman's life, she called her husband, Frank Pileggi, to her bedside at Roosevelt Hospital in New York City. After Moorman's death, Pileggi explained to their longtime mutual friend, art historian Barbara Moore, that in her final moments he expected Moorman to say something tender. Rather, as he leaned in towards her, she voiced an unequivocal demand: "don't throw anything away."[395] According to Pileggi, these were her last words.

[395] Conversation between Barbara Moore and Joan Rothfuss in New York City on February 6, 2010 for which the author was present.

The things to which Moorman referred on her deathbed crowded their cavernous loft at 62 Pearl Street in Manhattan. Here she housed all the physical traces of her life that she had accumulated over the course of her three-decade long career as "the only avant-garde cellist in the entire history of performance art" and the founder and organizer of the annual New York Avant Garde Festival, which ran almost uninterruptedly from 1963 until 1980.[396] And yet, this place, even in all its abundance, makes for a confounding archive, for the documents and objects from which the historian might hope to construe a "significant" and "coherent" narrative are piled amongst the banalities and junk of her everyday life. In the space Moorman left behind, boxes of soup can labels, kitschy porcelain figurines, unmailed Valentine's Day cards, travel souvenirs, receipts, shopping bags filled with purchases from the television shopping network QVC, greasy napkins, and old syringes threaten to overwhelm the press clippings, avant-garde festival programs, musical scores, letters, and, above all, artworks by avant-garde icons such as Nam June Paik and Joseph Beuys. For the reader who hopes that these things will merely to be sorted, organized, and evaluated in order to make Moorman legible, this chapter begins with a promise to disappoint and fail.

One of my aims here, in fact, is to question the habits of mind and systems of value (not only economical, but also cultural and historical) that compel us to make sense of the scene I describe above by singling out "important" objects for preservation and study, and thereby "sanitizing" them so that they appear autonomous and independent from the (often dirty) supportive emotional and physical labor upon which these objects

[396] Barbara Moore frequently described Moorman as such in interviews after Moorman's death. See: Jill Johnson, "Remembering Charlotte Moorman," *Village Voice*, December 10, 1991, 41.

(physical/historical) actually crucially depend. This process is one with which I have been concerned over the course of this project, and is one through which Moorman has been deflated, whittled down, and written over within the broader contexts of the history of postwar performance and art. As in previous chapters, I continue to deploy a historical method that enables me to construe history's objects in dissonance rather than coherence (fittingly not exactly antonyms). I approach the objects that occupy the bounds of my study not as rarified fossilized clues that serve to reveal hermeneutically divined truths, but rather as making up a dense network of affect, constituted by textural and sonic materiality. This network is sustained by routinely disavowed, but never traceless labor, and is one within which objects pile up, drag across space and time, masquerade, make discordant noise, and refuse fully to reveal themselves as they fall back into shadow.

My argument begins by way of the historical method I seek to unsettle. In its service, *Wire* magazine journalist, Brian Morton suggested that the question we should ask about Moorman is this: was she a "virtuoso, muse, catalyst, artist's plaything, [or] victim of subtle abuse?"[397] This list of options constrains, as Jill Johnson evidenced in her eulogy, "Remembering Charlotte Moorman," for the *Village Voice*, which she concluded with an unfaltering, albeit contradictory, answer to Morton's question: "I saw a valiant victim in Charlotte, ever a champion of the forces that felled her […]. If Barbara Kruger ever remade *Your Body is a Battleground*, Charlotte's image would surely be an appropriate image for it."[398] In her reflection upon the recently deceased Moorman, Johnson evokes one of Kruger's iconic feminist billboard artworks, which Kruger made

[397] Brian Morton, "Candy-coated, Gravity-Defying, Streamline Baby," *Wire* (283), September 2007, 25.
[398] Johnson, "Remembering Charlotte Moorman," 41.

two years before Moorman's death in 1989. [Figure 4.1] The work, a tightly cropped, large-scale, black and white photograph, features the made-up face of a generically idealized woman and mimics the visual lexicon of the golden age of postwar advertisements. The coherence of the image is disrupted, however, by its visual splitting. The left side displays the positive photographic image, and the right the negative. Three bright red banners bridge the divide along the image's center vertical axis and offset the white san serif text within them, which reads: "Your body/ is a/ battleground."

The splitting here references what Craig Owens describes in his analysis of Kruger's work as "a binary logic that divides the social body into two unequal halves in order to subject one to the other"— in military terms, "to divide and conquer."[399] By replicating, yet denaturalizing, the mechanics of the gaze, Kruger presents back to us the gendered underpinnings of commodity exchange, in effect that it is predicated upon the femininization of the viewed objects (often literal images of women) that are looked upon, desired, and mastered by a male viewing subject. As Rebecca Schneider explains in her discussion of Kruger's *Untitled (Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face)*, this exchange requires that "the viewed does not (must not) engage actively, does not see back, but rather vanishes."[400] As many scholars, including Schneider, have noted, Kruger intervenes in the process of looking (and splitting) by positioning collaged typeset slogans—*Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face*—across the photographic display of women's faces. These slogans, like the images across which they are splayed, take their formal cues from advertising, but call out and implicate the viewing subject, thereby

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[399] Craig Owens, "The Medusa Effect, or Specular Ruse," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*, (Berkley: University of California Press), 191.
[400] Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (New York, Routledge, 1997), 89.

"talking back," refusing objectification, and undermining the gendered separation of viewer and viewed that commodity culture seeks to naturalize and maintain.[401]

What Johnson meant by casting Moorman in the image of the woman represented in Kruger's *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)* was to suggest that Moorman exemplified the objectification of women to which Kruger's work addressed itself. And because this particular work calls out not to the viewing male subject, but rather, as Schneider puts it, to "the woman viewing the woman's face hit by the gaze," and who is in turn "hit […] by the manifestation of her own mimetic representation as given to service the 'hit' [or lure] of the commodity," Johnson thereby seems to be trying to get Moorman herself the message, that *her* body is a battleground.[402] While this message comes both too late and too soon, (*if* Moorman wasn't dead, and "[*i]f* Barbara Kruger ever remade […].") it expresses Johnson's wish that Moorman be revealed to herself as victim, so that she might "talk back" and become a participant rather than a mere object given to service and host the battles of others. Edgar Varèse, an elder statesman of the avant-garde music scene, indicated the battle to which Moorman was most devoted when he dubbed her "the Jeanne d'Arc of New Music."[403] Ultimately, Johnson's claim only serves to seal what she understood to be Moorman's inevitable fate: that she be remembered as a victim of the "heroic" avant-garde who used her body to wage masculinist cultural and artistic wars, and to be split, like Kruger's image, in two, divided from her subjectivity into objectivity, and from her cognition into flesh. And yet, to declare Moorman a martyr of the postwar avant-garde (and thereby also a figure of

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[401] Ibid., 89–90.
[402] Ibid., 91.
[403] See Joan Rothfuss, *Topless Cellist: The Improbable Life of Charlotte Moorman* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2014), 106.

feminist critique, consternation, and disappointment) is to write over the traces of other simultaneous, contesting, and contradictory battles, across which Moorman refuses to split.

Subsequent to the publication of Betty Friedan's bestselling feminist polemic, *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, and the emergence of second wave feminist movement over the course of that decade, which, however variously, called for women's galvanization, feminist scholars of wide ranging methodological persuasions faced the question of how women divide across lines of resistance and passivity.[404] In art historical contexts, Kruger, an artist who came to prominence in the nineteen-eighties, created works that represent a prevalent visual response to the second-wave feminist movement that bridged the previous two decades. Along with iconic works by her contemporaries— including artists such as Cindy Sherman, Laurie Anderson, Mary Kelly, and Catherine Opie— Kruger's billboards marked a critique of the celebratory images of innate womanhood and calls for collective mobilization as deeply essentializing and homogenizing, and thereby also racist, classist, and homophobic. In conjunction with poststructuralist scholars such as Judith Butler and Eve Kosofy Sedgwick, these artists sought to deconstruct the social processes and apparatuses through which gender norms and binaries are produced and maintained.

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[404] For a discussion of the way in which Friedan's work oversimplified the plight of postwar American women see Joanne Meyerowitz' "Introduction," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 1–16. For a discussion of the "happy housewife" that takes Friedan as a starting point, but helpfully complicates and reorients it see Sara Ahmed, "Feminist Killjoys," in *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 50–87.

I have generalized and simplified the feminist debate here (a debate that I have already addressed in the previous chapter), both in terms of trajectory and content. I have done so not with the intention to misrepresent it, nor to offer forth any one set of ideas as anachronisms that we have cleverly moved beyond, but rather because it is necessary for me to point out the way in which the rigid manifestation of both second-wave and antiessentialist feminist ideas, have dictated and prescribed Moorman's trivialization and dismissal. Several prominent second-wave feminists, including Martha Rosler and Andrea Dworkin, rejected Moorman because her willingness to perform sexualized works by avant-garde composers without question seemed to them unacceptably complacent and passive. While antiessentialist feminists of the 1980s did not, to my knowledge, engage explicitly with Moorman's work, they approached femininity as "a cultural construct to be deconstructed" by "employing […] explicitly theoretical tools," rather than something to be "reiteratively performed," as Moorman could be said to have done.[405]

As I alluded in chapter three, both second-wave and antiessentialist feminism are umbrella terms that refer to widely different ideologies and strategies. The so-called second-wave feminist movement, which in its associations with essentialism has, since the early eighties, been an easy critical target, is in fact currently under scrutiny and reevaluation as scholars more closely investigate its heterogeneities and contradictions, and even "reconsider the complexity of essentialist positions."[406] In her book *Tidal Wave*, one such scholar, historian Sara M. Evans, argues that the story of second wave feminism

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[405] Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 172.
[406] Susan Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," *Art History* 30, no. 1 (2007): 67.

"is a history rife with contradiction: growth and fragmentation, innovation and internal conflict," and that therefore "one cannot understand it without exploring the interplay of these contradictory tendencies," a task she sets out to accomplish over the course of the book. Evans does suggest however that the multiplicity of views that came together under the banner of second wave feminism shared a central problematic: a desire to trouble the boundary between the "personal" and the "political" and that:

> The linkage of personal and political led some to search for purity, for 'true' feminism in the realm of ideas and the formula for a perfectly realized feminist life. The pursuit of perfection made it difficult to entertain complexity, sliding easily into dogmatism.[407]

Many scholars, including Diane Fuss, Naomi Shor and Elizabeth Weed, have worked to complicate the terms of this feminist debate, in part by questioning the extent to which essence and inessence can be so easily parsed across the slippery terrain of identity.[408] This is a scholarship from which I draw, but my aim here is not so much to take-up these preoccupations in relation to Moorman's ambivalent performances of femininity, as it is to step back from them, into their shadows, by mobilizing and engaging an emerging scholarship that Judith Halberstam has called "shadow feminism."[409]

In calling for "shadow feminism," Halberstam builds upon the work of postcolonial feminists, including, most prominently, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Saba Mahmood. Spivak and Mahmood have called for an alternative feminist project in

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[407] Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 3.
[408] See Jane Blocker, *Where is Ana Mendieta? Identity, Performativity, and Exile* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 30–33, for an overview of the essentialism and antiessentialism debate as well as a more specific discussion of how "Mendieta's art spills over and exceeds this feminist framing."
[409] Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 124.

response to what they have shown to be the "prescriptive[ness] [of] Western feminist theories of agency and power, freedom and resistance" theories that "[have made it] hard for us to see and understand forms of being and action that are not necessarily encapsulated by the narrative of subversion and reinscription of norms."[410] In this chapter, I attempt to answer Spivak, Mahmood, and Halberstam's call for a "female intellectual" who relinquishes the desire to rescue her subject by singling her out and pronouncing her an agent of resistance or a "valiant victim," and will situate my inquiry rather in the shadowy spaces of Moorman's undecidability, starting with the space with which I began and Moorman ended.

Rather than attempt to bring Moorman into "the light of history" where she can be seen and known, I seek to write a history of shadows by lingering in the fleeting shadows Moorman has cast, as they flicker among the long shadows postwar art history has cast upon her legacy. As a form that indicates obscurity *and* materiality (while being itself immaterial/representational), a form that demonstrates how visibility and invisibility are intricately interlaced rather than antithetical, shadows, I argue, give way to promising methods of analysis that make rethinking Moorman's relationship to history possible.[411] [Figure 4.2] Enacting shadow feminism means at least two things: looking at what has lain in the shadows of feminism, eclipsed by its dominant concerns with white, western, straight politics (shadows in this sense refer to what has been excluded); and second, adopting a subaltern strategy: to shadow, meaning to follow and surveil. That is, on the

[410] Ibid., 126–127.
[411] For a discussion of the way in which contemporary installation artists have used bright light as a means of producing sightlessness, rather than enlightenment, and thus how lightness and darkness do not neatly correspond to visibility and invisibility respectively, see Jane Blocker, "Blink: The Viewer as Blind Man in Installation Art," *Art Journal,* Vol. 66, No. 4 (Winter 2007), 6–21.

one hand it draws our attention to what has been eclipsed; on the other, it draws our attention to what can be accomplished at the margins. A third meaning, which I introduce now but return to later is the idea of shadows as ghosts, remnants of once living things.

That Moorman herself evoked the iconography of shadows to describe her later object-based works, and that shadows, as indexes and representations of the real, are a longstanding trope within the history of art, with which I am negotiating, give further resonance to this approach. Just as shadows are tied, stuck even, to the body, as Wendy's gendered labor of sewing Peter Pan's lost shadow to his foot with her "housewife" in J.M. Barrie's novel *Peter and Wendy* evokes, shadows are indelibly tied to other things: racism, illusionism, and photography, which form the lining of the shadows that I will trace against the pages of this chapter.[412]

To mobilize Spivak and Mahmood to think in terms of shadows, I need first to consider the parameters of their "counterintuitive feminis[t]" project.[413] Because Mahmood and Spivak both seek to question "a concept of woman that […] presumes the universality of desires for freedom and autonomy," specifically in relation to Western scholarship on the Subaltern, I must attend to a very sticky question that Halberstam asks, but does not, to my mind, take-up rigorously enough: is this critical mode of ambivalent feminist inquiry "reserved for the colonized and the obviously oppressed? What happens if a woman or feminine subject who occupies a privileged relation to dominant culture occupies her own undoing?"[414] Halberstam unknowingly invokes Moorman in this question by turning to Yoko Ono's performances of her iconic work, *Cut Piece,* which

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[412] J.M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy*, ed. Peter Hollindale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 226.
[413] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 126.
[414] Ibid., 133.

Moorman claimed to have performed more than 700 times. Although the figure is almost certainly an exaggeration, she did perform the work more than Ono ever did.[415] [Figure 4.3] Ono's performance accommodates a number of readings, as Halberstam notes when she summarizes Julia Bryan-Wilson's interpretation of the piece as "a gift, a gesture of reparation, or ritual of remembrance," in the wake of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[416] But for Halberstam the work is exemplary of the radical passivity that characterizes her vision for an "antisocial feminism that refuses conventional modes of femininity by refusing to remake, rebuild, or reproduce," and that rather "dedicates itself completely and ferociously to the destruction of self and other."[417] Famously, the script of Ono's piece is an open invitation for anyone to reenact the performance at will, simply by following Ono's instructions: the performer sits on a stage, dressed in her finest clothes so as to make a true sacrifice, places a pair scissors in front of her and invites audience members to come forward and use the scissors to cut off a piece of her clothing as the performer sits, motionless. This work became for Moorman, who was a longstanding friend of Ono's, one of the most consistent and important works in her repertoire.

Moorman though, a woman whose performance of radical passivity slips in and out of her performance of what Halberstam might call conservative passivity (the conventions of femininity), does not fit into the mandates of shadow feminism as Halberstam has conceived of it. This is true, even as Moorman, in her seeming docility—emblematized by, but much more pervasive than her performances of *Cut Piece*—seems

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[415] Paul Taylor, "Charlotte Moorman," *Yoko Only* 25 (summer 1989): 10–11.
[416] Ibid. See Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Remembering Yoko Ono's "Cut Piece*," Oxford Art Journal, 26.1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99–123.
[417] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 138, 139.

to represent the problem to which shadow feminism addresses itself. Undoubtedly, accommodating the conceits of shadow feminism to Moorman, a member of her high school's hostess club, a beauty queen from a longstanding white Southern family, and a devotee of the postwar male-driven avant-garde, feels politically uncomfortable. Yet, this discomfort, which fills the silence that follows loaded questions, is, I argue, one of shadow feminism's most basic features. As its name suggests, *shadow* feminism coheres around something less definitive than complete antisociality, negation, and refusal, and Halberstam forecloses this murkiness in forgetting that shadows do not emerge from complete blackness, but rather require a play between dark *and* light, neither of which, in any case, have a fixed or certain relationship to seeing/visibility.[418] And yet, while I want to "murk-up" her premise, I am not so much suggesting that we dismiss Halberstam's arguments, nor for that matter, that we dismiss the preceding, "positively-oriented" feminist ideas against which she positions herself, as much as that we accommodate ourselves to temporal, sonic, visual, and even political dissonance. As noncommittal as this approach may initially sound, it represents a very definite methodological project that takes seriously Moorman's final request not to throw anything away. In order to show what the imperative of Moorman's directive might be for the historian, and how from it emerges dissonances that unsettle the melody of settled canons of history, I turn briefly away from shadows and towards the "real" body from which the shadow takes its form.

Effectively, Johnson's reflections on Moorman, and predominant readings of Kruger's billboard artworks, cohere around the universalizing "Western feminist theories of agency and power, freedom and resistance" that Spivak, Mahmood, and Halberstam

[418] Blocker, "Blink," 6–21.

seek to disrupt.[419] Johnson and Kruger are concerned with questions of agency in relation to the act of looking, and subsequently *seem* to open up only two possible ways in which the feminine subject could relate to this act: either by being looked at (and as Schneider explained, thereby vanishing) or by "talking back." And as Johnson made clear, this framework casts Moorman firmly to one side of the divide. But drawing on the work of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, Craig Owens, and Amelia Jones after him, expand upon the possibilities of looking/being looked at by arguing that there might be something strategic at work in reiterating, rather than deconstructing, the norms of femininity, and thereby gesture towards other ways of reading Moorman via Kruger. In his now iconic 1984 essay, "The Medusa Effect," Owens calls this elusive strategy of deflection striking a pose. Drawing on Owens and Jones, I will show how this is a strategy Moorman effectively mobilizes. Importantly with regards to my discussion of Moorman, striking a pose is a reiterative process, which means that it is not characterized by splitting, but rather by repetition and proliferation. Over the course of this process "the female body infinitely reproduces itself, like a photograph," and we find that there is "no singular woman hiding behind the masquerade of womanliness."[420] While Owens's critical insights and recalibrations of the act of looking/being looked at undoubtedly help unloosen prevailing ways of approaching Moorman, we expect that for Halberstam they would still be too invested in recuperating a kind of agency for the disavowed, rather

[419] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 126.
[420] Carol Mavor, *Becoming: The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 37.

than, as Halberstam would have it, constituting a complete refusal "to be or become woman as she has been imagined in Western philosophy."[421]

But as I have insisted, the approach I am working to outline is not based upon "throwing out," but rather upon accumulation, and, I now add, repetition and proliferation. No image better exemplifies the usefulness of these practices to my project than Kruger's iconic image *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground),* to which I here return, again. This image appeared also in chapter one, in reference to Rebecca Schneider's discussion of it her recent book *Performance Remains.* As a point of reference, Schneider reminds the reader of her analysis of Kruger's work in her earlier book, *The Explicit Body in Performance,* in which she discussed it, as I mentioned and we might have expected, as a representation of "a moment of feminist art and indicative of the 'war at home.'"[422] Schneider subsequently explains though that shortly after she finished *The Explicit Body in Performance* she found herself attending Civil War reenactments and unexpectedly wondering if Kruger's adage "Your body is a battleground," "might have an inverse, twisted kind of resonance in historical reenactment" and thus wanted "to travel backwards through Kruger's aphorism" to ask:

> What kinship could these gritty war game players—chewing on salt pork and marching about battlefields in games where, often, "an unapologetic masculinity" was romanced and even legislated—share with my previous studies? What could supremely conservative notions of authenticity—wanting to control and correct events from beyond the grave to resemble a romantic notion of men as men and women and women—have to do with feminism?[423]

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[421] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure,* 124.
[422] Rebecca Schneider, *Performance Remains: Art and War in the Age of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.
[423] Ibid.

Schneider posits that while politically these two objects of study (Civil War reenactment and feminist performance art) are at odds, they nonetheless share certain concerns and tactics including posing, and, as she puts it, "the replay of evidence (photographs, documents, and archival remains) back across the body in gestic negotiation."[424] In addition to the strange resonance Schneider notices between Civil War reenactment and feminism—provoked for her by Kruger's untitled work, *Your Body is a Battleground*—she also observes that Civil War reenactments are sites of slippage/crossing between seriousness and frivolity, realness and fakeness, past and present. Curiously, Moorman, also a kind of reenactor with a tenuous relationship to feminism, shares much with these slippery "error-ridden" practices, not least a tendency to make mistakes/"get it wrong." John Cage frequently lambasted Moorman as a performer on the grounds that her interpretation of his time-based work, *26'1.1499" for a String Player* was not true enough to his notation. He was particularly critical of her distortion and slowing of time, and, of course, of her theatricality, which was too bodily.[425] A New York music critic gives a more vivid sense of how her performances of Cage's work was both slow and bodily (sexed) in his review of Moorman's second Avant Garde Festival in 1964. He writes:

> Miss Moorman looked quite fetching ensconced behind a transparent gauze curtain and surrounded by color balloons, her cello, gongs and assorted noise-makers. Her ability to draw unlikely sounds from her

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[424] Ibid.

[425] In a collection of John Cage's writings, *John Cage, Writer: Previously Uncollected Pieces* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1993), selected and introduced by Richard Kostelanetz, Cage says that he is "sure that [Nam June Paik's] performance with Charlotte Moorman of my *26'1.1499" for a String Player* is not faithful to the notation, that the liberties taken are in factor of actions rather than sound events in time." By actions he goes on to give the example of when "Paik, stripped to the waist, imitates a 'cello, his back being bowed by Charlotte Moorman," 156.

> instrument was remarkable. No two glissandos were alike, as the cello seemed to be sighing, whining or moaning […]. The only trouble with Miss Moorman's interpretation was the tempo. It was inordinately slow. What should have taken 26'1.1499" lasted 41" 2.0001."[426]

These grievances were to Cage so severe that he expressed these sentiments to musical historian Gisela Gronemeyer a month after Moorman's death: "The striking thing was to take this piece of mine and play it in a way that didn't have to do with the piece itself. I didn't like it at all. And my publisher said, the best thing that could happen for you would be that Charlotte Moorman would die."[427] The temporal tangle of Cage's words—that speak of the past in relation to a conditional future, made biting by Moorman's "present" death—expresses a belief that her death could seal off the threat she posed to the integrity of Cage's work in the past, from his future reputation within the history of the avant-garde. But Moorman's sense of time was in discord with Cage's; she got *side*tracked and *back*tracked.

Perhaps no incident more evocatively gestures towards her refusal of time's linearity and coherence*, and* her unexpected kinship with Civil War reenactments, than her interview with research assistant Elliot Caplan for the Nam June Paik retrospective at the Whitney in 1982, for which she dressed up like Scarlett O'Hara and rode around New York City's Central Park in a horse drawn carriage.[428] Her southern drawl, proclivity for make-up, Balenciaga evening gowns, the disciplinary conventions of classical music

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[426] Raymond Ericson, "Avant-Garde Music Festival Opens," *New York Times,* August 31, 1964, 20.
[427] Gisela Gronemeyer, "Seriousness and Dedication: The American Avant Garde Cellist Charlotte Moorman," in *Charlotte Moorman Cello Anthology*. Alga Marghen Plana-M27NMN.064 (6 CDS), 2006, n.p.
[428] Elliot Caplan, phone interview with the author, July 5, 2012. Caplan explained that during an earlier conversation he had remarked to Moorman that she reminded him of Scarlet O'Hara, a suggestion to which Moorman smilingly agreed.

(including seemingly complete deference to the composer), as well as the conventions of Southern feminine comportment, were unquestionably anachronisms within the New York avant-garde, burgeoning feminist movement, and even the broader environment of social unrest and dissatisfaction that characterized the late sixties and seventies. And yet, while she adopted many markers of pastness/by-goneness, she simultaneously insisted upon her situatedness within the present. When she explained why she abandoned her classical music career in pursuit of an avant-garde one during a performance on the nationally syndicated talk show, *The Mike Douglas Show*, in 1969, she stated that "as an artist I should reflect and do reflect the life that I'm living and the century that I'm living in. So as a twentieth-century cellist I just can't imagine being satisfied by only playing pieces that are 100 years old." It was with this same self-evident tone that she would frequently announce that by creating the iconic *TV Cello* for her in 1971, Nam June Paik had created "the first innovation in cello design since 1600."[429]

Moorman thereby seems to be another one of the bodies (which are accumulating across these chapters) that Elizabeth Freeman posits might "register […] on their very surface the co-presence of several historically specific events, movements, and collective pleasures, [and thereby] complicate the centrality of *gender*-transitive drag to queer performativity." "Might these bodies," Freeman subsequently asks, "articulate instead a kind of temporal transitivity that does not leave feminism, femininity, or other 'anachronisms' behind?"[430] Moorman is a figure of temporal transitivity and confusion upon which the past, present, and future are not discrete, but rather rub, sometimes harshly, up against each other. As an avant-garde cellist, she nonetheless vehemently

[429] See Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 267.
[430] Quoted in Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 15.

refused the idea that she, or avant-garde music, were *ahead* of their time, but rather insisted that they were "*of* their time."[431] What time she really meant by "*of* their time" though, seems transitive and difficult to pin down, given her proclivity for trafficking in multiple times at once. In response to Freeman's text, Schneider remarks how in Freeman's formulation, "the past can simultaneously be past—genuine pastness—*and on the move*, co-present, not 'left behind.'"[432]

As I noted also in chapter three, the implication is then that the past has not entirely gone and that the present has not entirely come, but rather that they pass through each other coextensively, generating "mutually disruptive energy." This "mutually disruptive energy" might also be called dissonance, a word that takes on particular significance in reference to Moorman as a classically trained cellist, who made an unlikely turn to avant-garde, sonically dissonant, music early in her career. Given that Moorman brought with her many vestiges ('anachronisms') of classical music performance and training, most prominently subservience to the composer and a desire to follow his scores with literal precision, along with maintenance of traditional performance attire and a serious performance demeanor, suggests that Moorman turned to avant-garde performance not so much to liberate her from the conventions and dictates of traditional music (and inextricably femininity), but rather because avant-garde musical practice better accommodates itself to dissonance than does classical musical practice.

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[431] Moorman made clear her rejection of the idea that avant-garde music was ahead of its time in many contexts and on many occasions. For an example, and an explanation of why Moorman nonetheless used the term avant-garde to describe her annual festivals, see: Stephen Varble, "Interview with Charlotte Moorman on the Avant-Garde Festivals" in *Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus, Performance Intermedia, and Rutgers University 1958–1972*, ed. Geoffrey Hendricks (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 173.

[432] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 15.

Freeman's claim is obviously not just about understanding some bodies differently in relation to time, nor just about registering temporal labor where we might tend to read anachronism (although these two insights are crucially important), but more specifically about how we understand bodies in relation to theories and movements of gender, in time. By putting forth the concept of what she calls "temporal drag"— a play on "*gender*-transitive drag" that does not "leave feminism, femininity, or other 'anachronisms' behind," but rather *drags* them along— recall that Freeman seeks to formulate a way of thinking that might make perceptible "what the language of feminist 'waves' and queer 'generations' sometimes effaces"[433] in its syntax of linearity and progression. In effect, the scholarly impulse to move beyond, so as to make things better than they were, can distort time, obfuscating our perception of various, and contradictory, (re)articulations of gender politics across a single, but nonetheless incoherent, porous, and palimpsestic body.

"Don't leave 'anachronisms' behind" might also be another way of saying "don't throw anything away." Here we see how Moorman's attitude toward bodies of objects might be a recallibration of Freeman's attitudes towards bodies of flesh and ideas. Moorman's emphasis on physical objects though, and not throwing them away, is known in psychology as hoarding, a source of both fear and fascination in our contemporary culture of insatiable desire, fueled and perpetuated by the consumption of commodities. As scholars and critics have well established, consumption has unduly characterized modern life since the nineteenth century when mechanization and systemization transformed production. The massifying systems of manufacture that emerged produced

[433] Quoted in Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 15.

objects that came to pass quickly from novelty to detritus at the expedient hands of progress. The logic of the commodity became clear: *all* commodities will become useless and undesirable. What differentiates hoarders then from consumers is not their tendency to accumulate, but rather their "failure to discard possession which appear to be useless or of limited value."[434] According to this commonly cited definition of hoarding in clinical studies, we would look upon photographs of Moorman's loft from the final years of her life and see in them pathology and compulsiveness, not a useful model of meaning-making. [Figure 4.4]

The "useless" objects that piled up in Moorman's loft hold more promise though, if we begin by looking at them through the lens of Walter Benjamin's famously enigmatic work, *The Arcades Project (Das Passagen-Werk)*—itself a work of accumulation and excess—that he conceived in 1927, but had not yet finished when he died tragically in 1940. According to Susan Buck-Morss, the preeminent scholar to undertake the (re)construction/extrapolative realization of *The Arcades Project*, in it Benjamin "took seriously the debris of mass culture as the source of philosophical truth."[435] While contextualization and a full account of Benjamin's project is much beyond my scope here, one of Benjamin's key ideas is not: that *unresolved* juxtapositions of objects (material culture) of the past and present, what he called "dialectical images," could disrupt the myth of history-as-progress, a belief that, to Benjamin's mind, was at

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[434] Frost, Randy O., Rachel C. Gross, "The Hoarding of Possessions," *Behavior Research and Therapy* 31(4) (1993): 367.

[435] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), viiii. Although Benjamin's conception of truth is complex—he says that "[a] final abandonment of the concept of 'timeless truth' is in order"— to reveal the truth, through transitory material and images of history, is nonetheless his ultimate pursuit, whereas, as I stated initially, the pursuit of an ultimate truth is something I seek to question.

the heart of bourgeois false consciousness. (This is also a belief— as stale as it may now seem—that exerted much influence on the ideological framing of the avant-garde, with a slight modification—art-as-progress). According to Benjamin, "it is not that the past *throws its light* on the present or the present its light on the past, but [the dialectical] image is that wherein the past comes together with the present in a constellation."[436] For Benjamin, this juxtaposition produces a "shock of recognition."[437] "In the small discarded objects […] the 'trash' of history," we see "the ghost of humanity's past dreams (*and labor*) manifest in the material form betrayed" and in the new commodities of the present we see "the relentless *repetition* of their form of betrayal: the same promise, the same disappointment."[438] Benjamin hoped that his "materialist philosophy of history" and the dialectical images at its center could awaken the collective consciousness of humanity from the dream-state of capitalism, a project that is of much larger scale and greater ambition than mine. Yet his central methodology, to look to the forgotten and discarded objects, to make the past and present touch, not to resolve or to create from their juxtaposition a coherent narrative, but rather to create, from their disparateness, a "shock," or what we have been calling "mutually disruptive energy" and dissonance, that disturbs our sense of historical and temporal linearity, is of much use to us here.

Although I quickly passed over the clinical definition of hoarding in an attempt to reframe the way in which we imagine Moorman's stockpile of stuff, via Benjamin, clinical studies of hoarding as pathological actually give helpful insight into my method. In 1993, two psychology professors from Smith College published the first systematic

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[436] Ibid., 291. Emphasis mine.
[437] Ibid., 250.
[438] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 93; Heatherington, *Capitalism's Eye*, 93; Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 293. Emphasis mine.

study of hoarding, in which they identified several key features of and motivations for what was, up to that point, a relatively unstudied condition. At the most basic level, as I noted, hoarding is characterized by a reluctance to discard objects, especially those objects that "others would perceive as 'trash' or 'junk.'"[439] To be considered pathological, though, the objects must produce household clutter that "interferes with an individual's ability to utilize their home [normatively]."[440] Despite all the analytics, this "possession disorder" lacks formal diagnostic criteria, and is signaled by sticky and evasive feelings, not definitive symptoms. The most commonly cited motivations for hoarding include emotional attachment and the assignment of sentimental value to things, again, even things with value that is not corroborated by others. In its associations with sentimentality, emotion, the domestic realm, and the "housewives' disease" agoraphobia, it is a feminized condition, although studies have evidenced no definitive demographic correlation with gender. The emotions that drive compulsive hoarding are also inextricably wrapped up with temporal concerns. Hoarders safeguard possessions both because they fear that otherwise they might forget the past *and* because they believe that the object may be useful or needed in the future. In feeling a heightened sense of responsibility for material objects, through which they bring the past, present, and future into disorienting and uncomfortable proximity, hoarders, like Moorman, offer a compelling alternative to keeping the "trash bin" of history, from which historically "valuable" objects are rescued and sterilized, out of sight.

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[439] Gilliam, Christina M., David F. Tolin, "Compulsive Hoarding," in *Clinical Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders in Adults and Children*, ed. Robert Hudak et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 122.
[440] Ibid.

Importantly, using hoarding as a model for historical study does not in fact mean that objects (physical/historical) go completely undifferentiated, but that, rather, we can hope to find the object we need, as the hoarder anticipated, in the moments when we most need it. This method is thus driven by a logic of *provisional* usefulness, not teleology. One such example, of a seemingly inconsequential object that is of provisional use to me now, is a letter from 1980, addressed to Moorman from Mierle Laderman Ukeles, the "maintenance artist" whose work I discussed at length in chapter three. The letter does not say much. In it, Ukeles simply explains that she had tried to reach Moorman on the phone "1000 times," but that the line was always busy, and that she was calling to coordinate her participation in Moorman's fifteenth, and although unbeknownst to either of them, final, festival.[441] Ukeles also explains that for the festival she wants to conduct a follow-up performance to *Touch Sanitation*, a project through which she extended her work from domestic maintenance to public maintenance by following 8,500 New York City sanitation workers, those individuals charged with clearing away public garbage, as they conducted their work at " garage[s], section[s], transfer station[s], [and] landfill[s]."[442] In an attempt to " counter the public's disavowed and aggressive relation with their garbage," as well as their public maintenance workers, Ukeles shook hands and exchanged stories with these workers over the course of eleven months.[443] For the festival, she proposed to shake hands with, and thereby pass along the energy she absorbed from these workers, to participants in the festival, as a way of implicating them

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[441] Letter from Mierle Laderman Ukeles to Charlotte Moorman, undated. Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections.
[442] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 99.
[443] Ibid., 100.

in the disposal of their garbage as well as the lives of the disavowed people charged with this dirty work.[444] In effect, Ukeles argues for the contingency of "high" culture, upon "low." This letter then, in all its mundanity, gestures towards the disavowed labor of support of sanitation workers as well as our generally anxious attitudes towards trash, attitudes that I have been working to establish here. But it also gestures towards one aspect of Moorman's disavowed labor, for as the busy signal Ukeles mentions attests, Moorman spent hundreds of hours on the phone and unquantifiable energy, coordinating submissions and the logistics of her festivals. [Figure 4.5] This is not the kind of labor we take into account, or for that matter ever really register as labor, when we might discuss the significance of any of the works by the 650 artists who contributed to Moorman's festival in 1980, the names of which included, among the hundreds of others: of course, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, and also Takehisa Kosugi, Nam June Paik, Carolee Schneemann, Jackson MacLow, La Monte Young, Jean Toche, Geoff Hendricks, Dick Higgins, and Allison Knowles.[445]

As Moorman's friends attest, she kept *everything*, as well as fastidiously maintained a journal in which she noted not just significant appointments, but kept track of her moods and daily tasks, like when she washed her hair.[446] Eventually, she kept track of the pain she faced during her battle with breast cancer not in a journal, but rather on scraps of paper, crumbled paper towels, greasy sandwich bags, old motel stationary, and even the packaging from her hypodermic needles. There is evidence that Moorman had

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[444] Letter from Mierle Laderman Ukeles to Charlotte Moorman.
[445] Charlotte Moorman, "History of the Annual Avant Garde Festival of New York," in *Charlotte Moorman Cello Anthology*. Alga Marghen Plana- M27NMN.064 (6 CDS), 2006, n.p.
[446] Gurian, phone interview by the author, March 29, 2012.

aspirations of preserving documents for the future use of artists, students, scholars, and press researching the avant-garde, but the compulsiveness of her accumulation and the "disorderly" state in which she left her things suggests that Moorman's goal in keeping as many physical traces of her life as she could, was not so much to ensure systematic documentation of her work and her life, (in fact she made that quite an overwhelming and laborious task), but rather, more complexly, so as to provision, without discrimination, for future historians, who might find use in different, and unexpected, objects at different moments in time.[447] Of course hoarding, as I noted, is not just about imagining future usefulness in objects that, to most, seem useless in the present, but it is also about seeing in these objects residues and reminders that signal the past's ongoing presence. The objects Moorman accumulated, in their sheer mass, hedge against her disappearance and the erasure of her labor, so that even if she were to be "forgotten" she would never be "gone," to channel Joseph Roach's witty inversion of the standard eulogy "forgotten but not gone."[448]

Pileggi, it seems, wanted to honor Moorman's dying wish, but was nonetheless overwhelmed by her domestic remains, perhaps because, as Moorman suspected, even the most mundane thing carried with it the weight of the past into the future. And so, rather than "keep everything" as Moorman requested, or face the emotionally thorny task of sorting through the loft, Pileggi appointed Barbara Moore and Andrew Gurian as co-

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[447] In 1976 Moorman applied for a grant from the Rockfeller Foundation, in part to facilitate the proper storage of her archives. For more information see: Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 278.
[448] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 31.

administrators of his estate.[449] In this capacity, and despite Moorman's unambiguity, Moore and Gurian sought to differentiate between objects of historical or artistic value and useless stuff or trash. Gurian got pulled into Moorman's orbit one day in 1973 when he was working in the studio of New Yorkbased filmmaker Shirley Clarke and answered a phone call from Moorman. Moorman was trying to reach Clarke to coordinate her submission to Moorman's 10th avant garde festival to be held in the lobby and baggage cars of New York's Grand Central Terminal. (Her festivals were famous for their high-profile and complicated to secure locations, which also included the Staten Island ferryboat *John F. Kennedy* and Shea Stadium among others.) When Gurian answered the phone she struck up a conversation with him, during which she, in her customarily persuasive way, convinced him to help with the next avant-garde festival. Gurian volunteered for or participated in every subsequent festival she organized, and developed not just a professional, but also a social relationship with Moorman and Pileggi. He became a regular guest at their loft after they moved there in 1977.[450]

The loft was located in the historic Frances Tavern District of Manhattan, a square block of low-rise buildings that date from the nineteenth century and that stand in marked contrast to the twentieth-century sky-scrappers of the Financial District against which they are set. [Figure 4.6] The surviving buildings narrowly escaped a fire that leveled most of lower Manhattan in December of 1835 and then, thanks to successful appeals to local government by concerned citizens, evaded destruction once again in 1974 when the block was slated for demolition to make way for new construction. Moorman and Pileggi

[449] Pileggi's estate incorporated the estate of Moorman after her death as Pileggi was her sole heir.
[450] Andrew Gurian, phone interview by the author, March 29, 2012.

lived on the top floor of 62 Pearl Street, thus named because in the nineteenth century there were such plentiful oysters in the New York City harbor that pearls washed up onto the street. The building itself was an improbable surviving example of a warehouse in the Federal style that was erected sometime between 1827 and 1833.[451]

According to Gurian, after climbing three flights of stairs, passing through a doorway barely six feet high and less than three feet wide, and up another very narrow stairway, visitors found themselves in a large undifferentiated space with wooden beamed ceilings, pitched whitewashed brick walls, wooden planked floors, crowded with haphazardly arranged stuff, and interspersed with architectural oddities. Iron hoists and pulleys, as well as old equipment, remained from the days when the space probably served as a sail making and repair shop, before the water's edge, which the building originally backed, was absorbed in landfill that extended the city edge.[452] This place, like Moorman herself, is a site of temporal transitivity. A haphazardly framed photograph, which the artist Christian Xatrec took of the loft during one of his frequent visits during the final stages of Moorman's illness, captures forever a fleeting moment of the domestic disorder within.[453] The image represents a space filled to the brim with mundane incidentals. [Figure 4.7] The center of the room is piled high with crates, a cardboard Marlboro box stuffed with crumbled paper bags, bubble wrap, and what seem to be an

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[451] Matthew A. Postal, and Andrew Dolkart, *Guide to New York City Landmarks*. (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009).
[452] Andrew Gurian, phone interview by the author, March 29, 2012. Henry Moscow, *The Street Book: An Encyclopedia of Manhattan's Street Names and Their Origins* (New York: Hagstrom Compay, Inc., 1978), 82.
[453] The image is dated February 10, 1991. At this point Moorman was bedridden and Pileggi, who had become her full time caregiver, often relied on friends like Xatrec to deliver groceries or Moorman's prescriptions. Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 345–347.

array of domestic objects like the wooden cutting board with a heart shaped cutout. Upon this heap, two-stacked wicker chairs teeter. We can also see the profile of a household appliance against which some of the outlying piles of objects rest. Mostly though, the photograph fails to make the objects, which have overtaken the space within its frame, perceptible to us. In the background we can make out the presence of a floor to ceiling shelf, the side of which is covered in unidentifiable clippings, and the length of which extends into the darkness that frames the right side of the photograph. A wooden bookcase—upon which books, magazines, papers, and manila folders are stacked and interspersed—frames the left side of the photograph. Only two of the areas that the image captures are not completely occupied: the ceiling, from which hangs a few industrial light fixtures and an umbrella frame hung with six small mechanical devices; and the upper half of whitewashed brick wall, upon which hangs a cotton rope clothesline strung with faded women's nylon underwear.

Although indistinguishable from the rest of the bric-a-brac, the umbrella frame and the clothesline are works of art. I draw your attention to these objects not to emphasize their relative importance, but rather to emphasize how easily they came to pass for "mere" domestic stuff. In effect, crowded in Moorman's loft, these works, along with many others, came to be domesticated. I point them out also because, as I suggested, these objects, which I spotted within the frame of Xatrec's casual snapshot, are useful to me in this particular moment. The mobile, *Untitled* (1972), is the final work by expatriate artist/composer, and occasional participant in Moorman's avant-garde

festivals, Joe Jones.[454] The clothesline and underwear is a work by Japanese artist Takao Iijima, known as Ay-O. Entitled, *Rainbow Banner*, this work was Ay-O's contribution to the *9th Annual Avant Garde Festival*, which Moorman arranged to be held on the retired *Alexander Hamilton* riverboat, which during the festival remained docked at South Street Seaport. For the festival, Ay-O strung the clothesline, from which hung the multihued women's underwear, from one side of the ship's mast to the other. He then attached the line to a pole in between the two masts so that the line would rise up in the center and mirror the shape of a lighted suspension bridge across the way in New York City's skyline.[455] [Figure 4.8]

Ay-O publically displayed these everyday intimate objects, historically relegated to the private realm, and juxtaposed them with the formal appearance of a bridge, a symbol of industry and public infrastructure. The work, though, retained its resemblance to the familiar household clothesline that New Yorkers would likely see on a daily basis, hanging between brownstones. He thereby makes visible domestic labor as a supporting infrastructure, one that sustains public industry, and that, like the mechanisms in place to uphold bridges, often remains unregistered. He also thereby insists upon the instability of the boundary between the private realm of domesticity and the public realm of the market.[456] In effect, Ay-O "airs" New York City's "dirty laundry," by exposing the dependency of "public" industry upon the "private" labor that it trivializes and keeps out of sight.

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[454] Sotheby's (London*), Contemporary Art Including Property from the Charlotte Moorman Estate," Thursday, June 24, 1993*, 127.
[455] Ibid., 126.
[456] For more on the ways in which these boundaries are produced and policed as a part of the Western colonial project see: Anne McClintock*, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Like many participants in Moorman's avant-garde festivals, Ay-O gifted his piece to Moorman to thank her for all that she undertook to host and organize the event. The fact that the work ended up on the wall of Moorman's apartment helps gesture towards a more specific disavowal of support, one that, as I have suggested, has taken place within the history of postwar art. The supportive labor to which it attests wasn't domestic per se, but rather involved other forms of gendered labor that Moorman routinely performed, labor which is *also* signaled by women's underwear—most famously, and controversially, her performances of the compositions of avant-garde composers such as Nam June Paik and Jim McWilliams in various states of undress. We get a further sense of how this labor was a durational activity that extended beyond Moorman's performances in the foreword to Joan Rothfuss's recently published biography on Moorman, written by Yoko Ono. In it, Ono explains that in 1961 New York impressario, Norman Seaman, agreed to produce Ono's first major recital at Carnegie Recital Hall on the condition that she get Moorman, who was in New York pursuing a career as a classical cellist and working informally for Seaman at the time, to "do the dirty work."[457] By "dirty work" Seaman was referring to all of the supportive labor necessary to put on a major concert: mailing invitations, making phone calls to recruit musicians, writing press releases, gathering props, setting up sound equipment, and running dress rehearsals. In exchange for twenty-five dollars a week and a bottle of scotch, Moorman agreed, and subsequently took on the performance of "dirty work" as a central component of her work for the rest of her career.

[457] Yoko Ono, "Foreword," in Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, ix.

This was also the first avant-garde performance in which Moorman participated—late in the rehearsal process Moorman requested that Ono create a part for her in *A Grapefruit in the World of Park,* a request Ono accommodated. According to Ono's instructions, Moorman sat on a toilet seat with her back to the audience, holding her cello and, for the first, but of course not last time in her career, used the instrument to create "noncello" sounds.[458] Because Moorman was a late addition to the performance her name is not listed among the performers on the evening's program and while a few of the programs list her as "personal mgr. for Ms. Ono," her name is absent from the more widely publicized programs entirely, as it has been from subsequent discussions of the "now-historic" concert in Yoko Ono literature.[459] That her name does not appear is perhaps an incidental omission taken in isolation and given that this was an early episode in both artists' long careers, but acknowledgement of Moorman's supportive labor has been systematically absent within the history of the avant-garde for reasons that are complex, but not benign. That Moorman was only mentioned twice, in passing, and as peripheral to artists such as Joseph Beuys, in RoseLee Goldberg's seminal and pioneering history of performance art from 1979, is the first of many pieces of evidence I offer to support this fact.[460] In a more recent history of performance art, Kristine Stiles claims Moorman's longtime artistic partner Nam June Paik's significance within the history of

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[458] Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist,* 51.
[459] See program without Moorman's name listed as well as discussion of the "now historic" concert that does not mention Moorman in Alexandra Munroe, "Spirit of Yes: The Art and Life of Yoko Ono," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, eds. Alexandra Munroe and Jon Hendricks (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 20.
[460] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 133 and 150. Goldberg mentions Moorman once as an "organizer" of the first Avant-Garde Festival in which artists like Allan Kaprow and Nam June Paik participated, and once when she lists several performers who participated in a Fluxus event at which Joseph Beuys performed *Twenty-four Hours* (1965).

video art, and offers discussion of works on which he collaborated with Moorman, but does not mention Moorman by name. Rather an image of Moorman accompanies the text with a caption that attributes the work *Global Groove* to Paik, and lists Charlotte Moorman as "pictured."[461] In fact, virtually every single art history survey text about the period that includes images of "Paik's" work will never mention, and will only rarely identify Moorman at all.[462] To date, there have only been two very recent scholarly texts that give Moorman a prominent place: a thoroughly researched biography of Moorman, *The Topless Cellist: The Improbable Life of Charlotte Moorman*, by Joan Rothfuss (2014), and a chapter of Benjamin Piekut's book, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant Garde and Its Limits* (2011), in which he aptly argues, via Mahmood, that Moorman's performances of Cage's *26'1.1499" for a String Player* exemplify "a far more variegated process than narratives of liberatory transgression or careless irresponsibility will allow."[463]

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[461] Kristine Stiles, "IIEye/Oculus: Performance, Installation, and Video," in *Themes in Contemporary Art*, eds. Gill Perry and Paul Wood (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 215–216.

[462] For two more examples of many see also: Harvard H. Arnason, and Marla Prather, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 641, in which Moorman is identified only as a "classical cellist" for whom Paik made several pieces; Chris Meigh-Andrews, *A History of Video Art: the Development of Form and Function* (Oxford: Berg, 2006) in which the author devotes most of his chapter on the "the origins of video art" to Paik. Although he discusses several works in which Moorman participated, including the video *Homage to John Cage* (1959), he never once makes direct or indirect reference to her. When he makes note of screenings of Paik's work that took place at his exhibition at Galerie Bonnino in New York in November of 1971, he does not say anything about the fact that the biggest component of this exhibition was a "video environment" in which Moorman debuted *TV Cello*.

[463] Benjamin Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant Garde and Its Limits* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 143. I made a similar argument at these conference talks: "Highbrow and Lowbrow: Charlotte Moorman's Laughing Audiences," PSi16, Performing Publics, Toronto, June 9–13 2010; and "Charlotte

In effect, the stuff Moorman implored her husband not to throw away betrays what many histories of postwar art have not: that Moorman was a sustaining force in the avant-garde scene and that, as I will insist, even as I traffic in uncertainty and shadows, her gendered labor worked to support the work of the mostly male artists in whose shadows she has dwelt. I briefly move through the light—albeit a light that is blindly opaque and thus "[hides] more than it makes visible."[464] I do so to suggest how the things Moorman sought to preserve just before she died evidence the mechanisms of erasure that have marginalized Moorman within histories of the movement to which she devoted herself. In her essay that prefaced the Sotheby's catalog in which some of Moorman's belongings were offered for sale, Barbara Moore concluded by suggesting that, "Moorman's hoarding of mementoes epitomizes her fierce dedication to her work." Moore gave as an example of Moorman's "hoarding" the fact that she kept "[a]ll the scraps of clothing from her performances of [Yoko Ono's] *Cut Piece* […] packed into shopping bags, the ultimate dossier."[465] The scraps are not listed among the one hundred and fourteen page personal property estate appraisal generated by Abigail Hartmann Associates in preparation for the Sotheby's sale but, according to Moorman's wishes, they did get saved and are now housed, with the rest of her archive, at Northwestern University's Special Collections Library.

Moorman's Apotropaic Cello," The Art Institute of Chicago Graduate Student Seminar, Chicago, April 9–10, 2010.

[464] Carol Mavor, *Black and Blue: The Bruising Passion of "Camera Lucida," "La Jetée, Sans Soleil," and "Hiroshima mon Amour"* (Durham: Duke Unversity Press, 2012), 37. See Mavor's discussion of the luminously opaque light, as "anti-light" that made a glass of milk ominous in Alfred Hitchock's film *Suspicion* (1941).

[465] Barbara Moore, "Theme and Variations," adapted from "Eroticello Variations," *Ear* Magazine, May 1987, in Sotheby's "Contemporary Art Including Property from the Charlotte Moorman Estate," 117.

Those of Moorman's possessions with potential monetary value, Pileggi elected to sell at auction.[466] The sale was to take place at Sotheby's saleroom in London on Thursday, June 24th, 1993, and included seventeen artworks, most of which were gifted to Moorman by artists with whom she worked. Four of the lots though were cello-like objects Moorman herself created during the last decade of her life when she was unable to perform frequently because of her illness. She made these works at the suggestion of her friends including the artist Jean-Claude, who thought she had gained enough notoriety as an artist to sell objects related to her performance practice to collectors for profit to stave off financial difficulty, but she just as often gave them away as gifts.[467] While Moorman assigned these pieces various titles, she also called them, fittingly, "shadows of my cello," a play, perhaps, on the expression "shadow of my former self," that suggests her cello, a double of her body, no longer functioned as it had before her illness. In effect, it no longer made (dissonant) noise, but rather sat in silence, collecting dust. Emblems of loss and pain, these premonitory objects, six of which were Plexiglas cellos that Moorman painstakingly covered with hundreds of syringes that she had used to administer her morphine, speak not only to the way in which Moorman felt herself to

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[466] Pileggi had met Moorman when he was working as a clerk at the lobby desk of a residential hotel, the Hotel Paris, where Moorman had rented a room from 1962 until she and Pileggi married and moved into an apartment together in 1970. When he lost his job at the Hotel Paris in the mid-seventies, he became Moorman's full-time manager rather than seeking out new employment. He thereby became completely tied up in her precarious financial situation. She often took on personal debt in order to finance her festivals and, even at the height of her artistic activity, she struggled to secure steady sources of income. Pileggi hoped that the proceeds of the auction would help secure for himself a less financially uncertain future. See Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist,* 355. Gurian also spoke to Pileggi's motivations for offering Moorman's belongings up for sale in a phone interview with the author on March 29, 2012.

[467] Jean-Claude in Nam June Paik and Howard Weinberg, *Topless Cellist: Charlotte Moorman*, VHS (1995).

be falling back into the shadows of her life, and eventually the shadows of history, but also to the way in which the cello has often been read as a double of Moorman's body, and, in fact, of the female body in general. [Figures 4.9 and 4.10] For now, what I want to negotiate is the fact that none of these works sold, while all the works by the more prominent artists in the sale, including: Ben Vautier, Geoffrey Hendricks, Yoko Ono, Christo, and Nam June Paik did.[468]

According to the appraisal of Moorman's personal property by Hartmann Associates, by far the most valuable object in her possession, listed in the Sotheby's catalog for 200 to 250 thousand British pounds, was a heavy gray felt cello cover with two red strips of felt pinned to the center in cruciform.[469] The catalog attributes this object to German artist Joseph Beuys who, the entry goes on to explain, made it for Moorman with his signature felt to perform *Infiltration Homogen for Cello*, a direct transposition of his iconic and solemn work for piano.[470] Beuys premiered his original version in July of 1966 at the Düsseldorf Art Academy where he served on the faculty. Moorman was present for the performance because he presented it during a concert that he had hosted for Moorman and Paik at the end of their second European tour. When she returned to New York she premiered *Cello Sonata*, her initial unofficial shorthand title

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[468] Letter from Moorman's attorney, Jerald Ordover to Emily Harvey, June 25, 1993, Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library.

[469] Abigail Hartmann Associates, "The Estate of Charlotte Moorman: Personal Property Estate Appraisal," issued June 9, 1993, p. 28.

[470] Beuys's original piece, entitled *Infiltration→Homogen für Konzertflügel, der grösste Komponist der Gegenwart ist das Contergankink (Infiltraion→Homogen for grand piano, the greatest contemporary composer is the thalidomide child)* makes reference to the Thalidomide pharmaceutical scandal and health crisis. Thalidomide was a pharmaceutical drug widely administered to pregnant women to combat morning sickness in the 1950s, but its use resulted in serious and sometimes life threatening birth defects.

for the Beuys's piece, at her *4th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival* in Central Park on September 9, 1966.[471] [Figure 4.11] Although Beuys had granted Moorman his permission for her to translate the work into a piece for cello that she would perform in the United States, he was dismayed to discover that had she used flannel instead of his signature felt. To remedy the situation, he formally transposed *Infiltration homogen für Konzertflügel* into *Homogen for Cello* and made her the necessary felt cello covering, crafted from specially ordered felt, sometime in late 1966 or early in 1967. Moorman thus became the only artist for whom Beuys would compose a work.[472] That Beuys includes Moorman's 1966 performance in his artistic autobiography, *Lebenslauf/Werklauf*, gives some indication of the significance Beuys himself placed on her performance.[473]

It is well know that Beuys refused to set foot on American soil during the Vietnam War. But after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in January of 1974 officially brought an end to US involvement, he arrived at JFK airport, wrapped in felt, and was transported by ambulance to the Galerie Block at 409 West Broadway in New York. There he performed his famous action *I Like America and America Likes Me*. What is not well known is the instrumental role Moorman played in first bringing his work to

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[471] See: Barbara Moore and Andrew Gurian, *Dossier on Infiltration→Homogen für Cello* (New York, Bound and Unbound, 2000), unpaginated, in which *4th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival* program is reproduced. Program is also reproduced in boxed set: *Charlotte Moorman Cello Anthology* (Milan: Alga Marghen, 2006). For this performance Moorman used a grey flannel, because she had not yet received Beuys's signature felt, a presumption about which Beuys was angry.

[472] Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 170.

[473] See Rachel Jans, "I Love Germany and Germany Loves Me: Charlotte Moorman and the Transatlantic Avant-Garde," in *Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant Garde 1960s–1980s* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming) n.p. I've had the pleasure of reading Jans's forthcoming essay on Moorman's transatlantic exchange as a curatorial research assistant for the forthcoming exhibition of the same name that will open at Northwestern University's Mary and Leigh Block Museum in January 2016.

the States and cultivating an artistic relationship with him that facilitated not only the establishment of his artistic reputation in the United States but also subsequent transatlantic exchange.[474] A letter in the Moorman archives addressed to her from Ursula Block, indicates that she may even have helped to secure the coyote with which Bueys was confined during the action. Block writes: "[t]his performance will last for a week and he needs a coyote. Do you see any possibility where to get this beast?"[475] In her appointment diaries Moorman's indicated each of the four days Beuys shared a room with the coyote at Galerie Block, as well as the date and time of his departure from JFK. On May 25, she met him at the airport where Italian collector Francesco Conz snapped of photo of her and Beuys together before he caught his 9:30 p.m. Pam Am flight to London. [Figure 4.12] Over the course of her career, Moorman performed *Homogen for Cello* on many occasions, at locations across American and abroad.

To perform the piece, Moorman would approach an assistant on stage who held a cello encased in the felt covering, which represented, among its other complex iconography, the muffling of the instrument. When she reached the assistant and the wrapped cello, she would kneel down to pin two strips of red fabric onto the felt in the form of a cross, a signal of emergency. *Homogen for Cello* became a consistent part of Moorman's repertoire for the next two decades. During this time she would often bring the empty felt with her when she toured abroad for concerts, and then would sew a cello, often an inexpensive one that she purchased locally, into the casing for performances,

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[474] Ibid.
[475] Letter from Ursula Block to Charlotte Moorman, undated. Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University.

unstitching the fabric after the performance.[476] She used the felt so frequently that during a 1975 trip to Düsseldorf, during which she performed the piece at the Kunsthalle, Beuys remarked that the fabric was becoming worn and tattered and that he should create a new felt casing for her. During Moorman's performance of the Beuys piece in Düsseldorf, she was assisted not by Paik or by another fellow artist, but rather by a German collector of Beuys's work, a man named Wolfgang Feelisch.

Feelisch assisted Moorman with this piece on several occasions and for many years entreated Moorman to sell him the related object. Moorman though, as I have alluded, refused to part with her things, until unabated illness and escalating medical bills began to necessitate a few exceptions. At Beuys's suggestion, Moorman resigned to sell the work to Feelisch in 1982 for a monthly payment of $230 amounting to a total sale price of somewhere between 20 and 30 thousand dollars. After the sale, Moorman began to use the replacement-felt casing Beuys had made for her, the existence of which Beuys attests in an interview statement, quoted in the catalog that accompanied the 1979 Guggenheim Museum retrospective of his work, which reads, "I made several Infiltration-homogens for cello for Charlotte Moorman, which she still performs."[477]

In November 1992, almost exactly a year after Moorman's death, her first felt cello covering, held in Feelisch's collection, was presented at auction at Christie's in New York. But it appeared there altered, unencumbered by any trace of its history, for the catalog gives only the Feelisch Collection for the provenance, and makes no mention of the fact that Beuys created this object for Moorman who used it to perform the work he

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[476] Moore and Gurian, *Dossier on Infiltration Homogen for Cello*, n.p.
[477] Caroline Tisdale, *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979), 168.

wrote explicitly for her. Pileggi remembered that when Moorman sold Feelicsh the felt covering, she did so with a cheap, locally sourced cello sewn inside so that he could claim that the cello was one that *she* had actually used. Feelisch refuted this account and insisted that the cello inside his Beuys felt, was a new cello Beuys himself had sewn into the covering. In effect, Moorman was stricken from the history of this object, which, without Moorman's name to sully it, and with Beuys name to rarify it, sold for more than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.[478]

In the year following the sale at Christies, came the sale of Moorman's property at Sotheby's London, which Pileggi, Moore, and Gurian had organized, and which offered Moorman's second Beuys felt covering for sale. Several days before the sale, the staff at Sotheby's received a letter from Feelisch impugning the authenticity of the work as a Bueys original, and calling it instead "a relatively free recreation of a Beuys concept […] which should under no circumstances be designated as a 'Beuys work,' [but rather] is a work by Charlotte Moorman." He went on to say that all Moorman had obtained from Beuys was "performance rights for a concert piece," thereby relegating her to the status of an interpreter, or, less dignified still, a consumer of Beuys's work.[479] *Infiltration Homogen for Cello* was subsequently withdrawn from the sale, the implication being that the object, which was previously estimated to be worth between 200 to 250 thousand British pounds, if attributed to Moorman, was not worth enough to merit offering for sale. After the sale, directly and through intermediaries, Moore and Gurian appealed to

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[478] For more detailed information about the history of both the first and second Beuys felt cello coverings, see Moore and Gurian, *Dossier on Infiltration Homogen for Cello*, n.p., a document they produced to bring the question of the attribution of the felt covering in Moorman's possession up for public debate.
[479] Ibid., n.p.

Beuys's widow, Eva Beuys, who had been present for many of the conversations concerning the creation of the replacement felt casing, to authenticate the work. Perhaps as invested in Beuys mythologizing as Feelisch, or not wanting Pileggi to profit financially from the use of her husband's name, Eva Beuys refused to respond to the estate's many queries.[480]

In support of his claims discrediting the "authenticity" of the work, Feelisch asserted that Beuys neither supplied the cello, nor stitched the threads to secure the felt around it. Of course, as was known to Feelisch, who assisted Moorman on at least two occasions, the performance piece required that Moorman herself stitch open and closed the felt for every performance, a practice that necessitated the creation of the second felt covering in the first place, and one that Beuys both knew and accepted. Beuys's attitudes then, would have been in keeping with those held by many other artists working in the late sixties and early seventies as they sought to renegotiate, into less definitive terms, the notion of what it meant to be an artist *and* an object of art. Several decades later, Feelisch drew upon a very established and conservative idea about the relationship between artist (as genius), art object (as static), and the resulting "value" (economical, but also cultural and historical) that this relationship produces. In effect, the "great masters," like Beuys, work autonomously to create works that are "authentic" only because they created the object with "their own hands," a notion that has long worked to disavow the systematic contingency of this creation upon supporting structures of labor, intellect, and emotion. Feelisch's endorsement of this belief of course explains why he wrote Moorman out of the history of *Homogen für Cello*, or, more precisely, "sanctified" it by claiming that

[480] Ibid., n.p.

Beuys supplied a new cello, which Beuys himself stitched into the felt, *after* Feelisch had obtained it from Moorman. But of concern to me here is not just (or even foremost) that Feelisch proved the durability and persistence of these standards of "authenticity," long after we thought them to have been disrupted by the expansion of art practices, as well as criticism in visual art and performance discourses, over the course of the twentieth century. It would, in fact, be easier merely to dismiss Feelisch, and even the art market in which he participates, as anomalies and relics that stubbornly and stupidly refuse to catch up to criticism, rather than contend with the way in which economic systems of value are tied up with cultural and historical systems of value, an entanglement that the academic aversion to taking seriously the "art-market" works to evade.

Art historians and artists now resignedly accept the absorption of art by the art-market, even, and perhaps especially, those dematerialized art practices that artists of the late sixties and early seventies hoped could resist capitalist commodification.[481] Nonetheless, we remain reluctant to acknowledge or discuss the imbrications between these economic barometers of worth and more "lofty" cultural and historical barometers of worth. We do not want to contend with the fact that the market results of the sale of a work might relate to critical discussions of that same work, and we implicitly know that a discussion of art economics, in specific not theoretical terms, is too debased to be the subject of criticism. Some readers might even feel that in my discussion of *Infiltration Homogen for Cello,* I have gone on for an unnecessarily long time with seeming editorial and decidedly un-theoretical discussion of art market workings, and that these mundane

[481] Lippard famously describes this process of disenchantment in 1973 in *Six Years*.

details are tangential to rigorous art history. In anticipation of this criticism, I channel feminist body artist Hannah Wilke's *Memoirs of a Sugargiver* to proclaim: "I object."

The 1977–78 work, *I Object: Memoirs of a Sugargiver*, from which my objection is drawn, is a photographic diptych in which Wilke, with her head cast back and her legs splayed open, lies, nude and languorous, against a rocky terrain. [Figure 4.13] In the two respective images, one of which captures Wilke from above and the other from below, she mimics the pose of the "grotesque" reclining female nude visible through the peephole in Marcel Duchamp's three-dimensional tableau, *Étant donnés* (1946–1966). As Amelia Jones explains in her chapter on Wilke's "strategic use of narcissism" in *Body Art*, Duchamp's nude is "grotesque" because it has a "horrifying gash where the genitals should be" and thereby "aggressively solicits and simultaneously repels the uncomfortable gaze of the peeping viewer,"[482] while Wilke, who is openly on view, invites the unimpeded gaze to look upon her photographed body. This invitation though, comes with what turns out to be not just one, but at least two objections, announced by the boldly capitalized text "I OBJECT," set in the upper left-hand corner of the left-hand photograph, and beneath which reads "Memoirs of a Sugargiver." In titling the work thus, Wilke references Marcel Duchamp's presentation of himself as "Marchand du Sel," a play on and phonic rearrangement of his name Marcel Duchamp, which translated from French means, "Salt Seller." As Jones points out, Wilke transforms "the male promoter of commodities […] into a feminine/feminist giver of 'sugar,' […] and 'by giving her sweet body,' inserts herself—as an active 'giver' of her body as object, one that is not only

[482] Jones, *Body Art*, 176.

passively consumed— into 'the circuits of capitalist exchange,'" and thereby sets its workings a bit off-kilter.[483]

It is important to emphasize that, rather than reject the gaze here, Wilke invites it, even indulges it with desirable "sugar," because, as she has insisted in her discussion of this work, "objecting to art [and women] as commodity is an honorable occupation that most women," in their negotiations with the male-dominated art world find "impossible to afford."[484] Although this is a conceit that even feminist critics who have dismissed Wilke's work as "too pleasurable," "regressive," and "narcissistic," might be willing to accept in theory, Wilke, in her unabashed performances of the conventional codes of femininity and feminine attractiveness, (which as Jones notes have indeed gained her artistic notoriety and success, although from them "she hardly became a millionaire"), tests their willingness to accept it in practice.[485]

Wilke's work is not only a resignation to compromised realities of visibility and success— a resignation that some feminist critics have not found to taste particularly sweet. Wilke, recall, has a second objection. "I object" is also, as Jones argues, an insistence upon herself as both "'I' the subject/maker of the images, as well as 'object' of the gaze."[486] In this insistence, Wilke takes aim at the "unbridgeable" divide between "the functions male/artist/subject and female/object," produced and maintained by patriarchal models of art production and interpretation that are based upon male transcendence and female immanence.[487] What these dichotomized functions imply is

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[483] Ibid.
[484] Hannah Wilke, quoted in Jones, *Body Art*, 176.
[485] Ibid., 171.
[486] Ibid., 176.
[487] Ibid., 155.

that to be a "fully-realized" and coherent self in relation to a work of art, is not to be split between subject and object, between cognition and flesh. It is to look disinterestedly upon works of art rather than be tangled up within their optical field. It is to be firmly contained within the seeing body rather than the enframed body that is seen. In *I Object: Memoirs of a Sugargiver*, Wilke generates mutually disruptive energy by, as Jones puts it, confusing and "merging her exterior (body image) and interior (cognitive, emotive) selves," and thereby makes evident not only the way in which subjectivity and objectivity are "performative rather than fixed," but also the way in which subjectivity is never self-contained, and is always contingent and in flux. This maneuver "undermin[es] the claims of disinterestedness authorizing modernist criticism [and] profoundly threaten[s] the value systems underlying art critical models of interpretation."[488] These are, of course, the value systems that naturalize the stark difference between the valuation of *Infiltration Homogen for Cello* as a masterpiece worth multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars when attributed to Beuys, and as dispossessed of exchange value when attributed to Moorman. And to be emphatic, my aim here is not to reconstitute the exchange value of the cello, attributed to Moorman, in *light* of a "more nuanced" appreciation of her artistic achievements and contributions, but is rather to cast shadows of doubt upon these very systems of meaning and value making as I navigate around them.

But this is a simplifying train-of-thought that really misses the point by suggesting that what is at stake here is Moorman's ability to generate value through exchange (as if her ability to be a source of the creation of value was uncompromised), when, in fact, what is actually at stake is how value relates to personhood when that personhood is

[488] Ibid.

tightly tangled-up with object-hood. Within prevailing configurations of value, Moorman never even had possession of herself, was never fully operative outside of exchange. And as Marx teaches us, objects *only* generate value through their exchange; they do not possess it intrinsically. Wilke (and Jones) begin to open the possibility of critiquing these systems of value, but this critique is nonetheless dependent on Wilke's ability to claim for herself the status of object *and*, however contingently, the status of the subject. *If* Moorman crosses these visual codes she does so opaquely, not transparently.

Although less art historically well known than Wilke's performance of a "sugargiver," Moorman also staged the role of "sugargiver" in her performance of *Candy,* a work written for her by Jim McWilliams, an avant-garde artist who wrote a number of pieces for her in the late sixties and over the course of the seventies. In a short, and cheeky, article printed in the *Village Voice* on March 29, 1973, McWilliams quipped that he was "always trying to figure out what to do with Charlotte," and, in this pursuit, came up with the idea to create a limited edition "life-size chocolate cast of Charlotte and her cello," issued in time for Easter. He called these would-be "five-foot-two-inch chocolate Charlottes," The Ultimate Easter Bunny.[489] When the journalist asked McWilliams if these works would be signed, McWilliams replied that "maybe [he would] take a little nibble," before distributing the chocolate bunnies to buyers, for "everyone has a signature in their teeth."[490] Included in the article was information about how readers could purchase this limited edition Easter bunny for two hundred dollars. McWilliams, though, did not secure the funds to create these large-scale sculptural confections, and so instead staged an Easter day performance at a gallery in lower Manhattan for which Moorman,

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[489] *The Village Voice*, "Scenes," March 29, 1973.
[490] Ibid.

rather than have casts created in her likeness, became a living aphrodisiac, and "a living" sculpture of "The Ultimate Easter Bunny." For the performance she sat in the middle of an oversized Easter basket, her nude body, including her face and even her hair, thickly slathered with chocolate fudge, her chocolate-covered cello between her legs, and a candy land of jellybeans and chocolate colored eggs glimmering on top of green cellophane grass surrounding her. [Figure 4.14]

It seems that McWilliams, in scaling-up and eroticizing the conventions of Easter celebrations, meant to ridicule its saccharine commercialism, excess, childishness, and pseudo-religiosity. Perhaps, in his banter with *the Village Voice* journalist, he also pokes fun at the conventions of art production and interpretation that would treat a life-size chocolate cast of Moorman, as "The Ultimate Easter Bunny," as serious art, McWilliams as the "genius" artist who "signs" his sculpture with an impression of his teeth (and makes money!), and Moorman as the ultimate emblem of (straight male) desire, "a living sculpture," of a chocolate-covered Playboy Bunny. In "vulgarizing" and mocking these artistic conventions, McWilliams might make them taste a little less sweet, but with "a spoon full of sugar," and with McWilliams as administer, the medicine still goes down.

While Moorman remains figuratively opaque in this performance— an opacity this is literalized by the way in which the chocolate renders her body physically opaque, even in her corporeal "exposure"—I propose that her chocolate-covered body is marked by multiple social and historical inscriptions (as well as temporal transitivity). The sounding of these inscriptions produces a dissonant "sonic materiality," through which the ideologies and visual pathologies governing not only "womanhood," but also

"blackness" surface, along with the forces of their confusion and disruption.[491] To be clear, I am not suggesting the Moorman's performance of *Candy* was intentionally about race per say, but rather, that it is productively interpreted through that lens. By different, but not disparate, measures, "womanhood" and "blackness," are stained with chocolate. Here, we begin to track chocolate's mark on "womanhood" via Janine Antoni's installation and private performance, *Gnaw* (1992), and eventually chocolate's mark on blackness via Carrie Mae Weems's photograph, *Chocolate Covered Man* from her series *Colored People*.[492] I trace both Antoni's *Gnaw* and Weems's *Chocolate Covered Man* as marks on Moorman's chocolate-covered body.

In a gallery, during the hours it was closed to the public, Janine Antoni used her teeth to break pieces off of a 600-pound block of chocolate. [Figure 4.15] When she took the sweet substance in her mouth, she tasted all those chocolate-coated stereotypes of femininity, upheld by the cultural production of hetero-normative desire, before she spat it out. According to these stereotypes—which might strike readers as archaic, but which persist nonetheless—women consume chocolate either because it comes as a signal of masculine "erotic interest," which she eats to "acknowledge that interest," or because she is consumed by self-doubt, loathing, or hormonal "imbalances" (the onset of which, according to stereotypes of femininity, is caused by masculine disinterest).[493] Antoni gestures towards these associations more directly in the storefront display that she

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[491] I have adapted the term "sonic materiality" from Fred Moten, who in *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) argues that photographs have a "phonic materiality."
[492] Carol Mavor discusses the way in which Carrie Mae Weems's *Chocolate Covered Man* is "coated, even stained, with chocolate," in her book *Black Blue,* 40.
[493] Laura Heon, "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea" in *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, (Berkely: University of California Press) Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 2001), 5–8.

installed adjacent to the gallery, in which she staged the gnawed cube of chocolate, along with a gnawed cube of lard. (Lard is a substance also tied to femininity and chocolate, because it is "a stand in for the body," and more precisely to body fat, of which females typically have higher content, and, of course, chocolate turns to fat once inside the body.)[494] In the display case, suggestive of the display cases in high-end department stores, Antoni exhibits heart-shaped boxes, along side tubes of bright red lipstick. She cast the hearts from the gnawed bits of chocolate, and the lipsticks from the gnawed bits of lard that she combined with red-pigmented beeswax. Antoni thus transforms a visceral scene of physicality—biting, gnawing, and spitting of substances, that here sit on the threshold of desire and revulsion—into familiar objects of consumption, cogs in the wheel of the production of femininity, and the feminine conventions of attractiveness and desire. About these objects, Antoni has reminded us that, despite that they appear new (i.e. aseptic), "[t]hey've really been in intimate contact with [her] body and […] carry the traces of [her] body on them;" they have a kind of "oral history."[495] There is even, as Laura Heon has noted in her essay on *Gnaw*, something cannibalistic /self-destructive that the process of making them evokes. This evocation is most explicit in Antoni's gnawing of lard (as "a stand in for body," particularly fatter female bodies) that she spits out and from which she then creates red lipstick, a substance that goes back onto the body, to the mouth, to signal female sexual desirability.

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[494] Ibid., 8.
[495] Antoni describes her installations as "hidden performance." See: Sidonie Smith, "Bodies of Evidence: Jenny Saville, Faith Ringgold, and Janine Antoni Weigh In," in *Interfaces: Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance,* eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002), 151.

It is important to note that in this work Antoni interrogates the sexual politics of art making and interpretation, as much as she interrogates the sexual politics of femininity, through her intimate and alchemical engagements with chocolate and fat. Not only does Antoni make reference to subtractive sculpture by using her mouth as a chisel, she also emulates two divergent postwar artistic practices: feminist performance art and Minimalism. Subtractive sculpture has, for most of its long history, been understood as a cerebral practice performed by a male/artist/subject to create a feminized object, and yet in using her mouth and her teeth, Antoni confuses this distinction by making the process of carving an intensely physical, intimate (nondisinterested), and even carnal act. In so doing, she also plays on the "disequilibrium between her violent devouring of these cubes and the expectations of what a 'lady's' mouth [signaled by the red lipstick] should do."[496] In making these two interventions with the use of her body, Antoni draws on the tactics of, and makes reference to the practices of feminist performance art of the late sixties and seventies, and perhaps also to Beuys's *Fat Chair* (1964–1985), a work for which the artist covered the seat of an ordinary wooden chair with a wedge of fat. Her use of the large-scale cubes though, makes explicit reference to the spare, large-scale, machine-made, rectilinear sculptural icons of Minimalism, a masculinist practice that prevailed in America during a period that overlapped with the feminist performance art movement, over the course of the sixties and seventies. Antoni thus contends with the formalism of Minimalism that "eschewed the messiness of figural embodiment," and—as much as it invited "the viewer to see the object in context/[its site specificity]"—nonetheless assumed that viewer to be a universal, "constitutively male," "sexually indifferent

[496] Heon, "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea," 8.

subject."[497] While Antoni hereby intervenes in the legacy of Minimalism, she also—in a gesture not unlike Wilke's— "forces […] two lineages of art, one largely [associated with the] feminine and [the] physical, the other largely [with the] masculine and [the] cerebral, into uneasy confluence."[498]

Antoni's performance helps us to make legible Moorman's body (as female *and* as "living sculpture"), as already marked by chocolate, even before she slathered herself in it. To read Moorman's performance of *Candy*, against Antoni's performance of *Gnaw* though, also means to read it against the practices of feminist performance art that Antoni cites and emulates. While feminist performance artists were pushing up against the long-standing patriarchal and heterosexual conceptions of the emblematic female body, Moorman seemed to them to be shoring up the terms of excessive and stereotypical femininity. Valentine's Day, the day of the year most associated with heart shaped boxes of chocolate and red lipstick, was Moorman's favorite holiday.[499] She collected Valentine's Day cards for friends all year, and, throughout the year, she often drew hearts around her handwritten messages. Because she only sometimes got around to sending them, these cards and notes were among the things that were packed into her loft. As early as high school, Moorman was also known among her peers for wearing red lipstick, along with a snood (a kind of hairnet that women of the Civil War period are often portrayed wearing in movies, but, as historians have pointed out, that they did not wear

[497] Smith, "Bodies in Evidence," 153.
[498] Heon, "Janine Antoni's Gnawing Idea," 5.
[499] Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 361.

often in practice).[500] According to Moore, when Moorman was in the hospital dying from breast cancer, with which she was diagnosed in the late seventies, she was still grabbing for her make-up and hairspray […]. [For] she did want to be a plain person."[501] The way in which Moorman seemed very happy to consume (and regurgitate) the conventions of hetero-normative femininity, along with her willingness to put forth her body to realize the vision of male artists, like Jim McWilliams, puts her in uneasy proximity to Antoni's more clearly critical work, *Gnaw*.

We can evoke this proximity by imagining the chocolate on Moorman's body and the lipstick she often wore, like the chocolate and lipstick Antoni put on display, as carrying the traces of Antoni's body and physical exertion. Moorman's display of these characteristics also earned her the severe criticism of second-wave feminists. Feminist writer, Andrea Dworkin called Moorman a "harlot" and according to a writer for *the Wire* magazine, "declared her career […] a process of extended rape."[502] After Moorman died in 1991, Fluxus artist Alison Knowles described Moorman as:

> this girl from Arkansas, this wonderful child in a dress, holding flowers—so when someone tells her to take off her clothes, she takes off her clothes, and when someone tells her to go naked into the water, and she'll do it. It was thoughtless […]. And I find at a certain point for her to redo those pieces of Paik, again and again, was a bit sad.[503]

According to Knowles, we can read Moorman's performance of McWilliams's *Candy* only as evidence of her naïve willingness to offer up her naked body in the service of patriarchal expediency. But if we consider Moorman's performance of *Candy* along side

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[500] Karen Taschek, *The Civil War* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), 18. See also Annette Lynch and Mitchel D. Strauss eds., *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Lanham, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 276.
[501] Gronemeyer, "Seriousness and Dedication" *Charlotte Moorman Cello Anthology*, n.p.
[502] Morton, "Candy-Coated," 25.
[503] Gronemeyer, "Seriousness and Dedication," n.p.

her proclivity for that anachronism of hetero-normative femininity, make-up, we actually become less certain of Knowles's casting of Moorman in such unequivocal terms of transparency/knowability. The chocolate, by virtue of which Moorman's stripped body appears to us opaque, along with the make-up with which she routinely painted her face, are, importantly, historically laden/transitive substances through which the terms of Moorman's exposure (read as exploitation) might appear to us complicated. Such visual devices make Moorman's exploitation of femininity's quality of masquerade perceptible, but in this perceptibility we do not come to see Moorman more clearly, rather we start to un-see her. She appears before us, but only as "an opaquely excessive persona."[504]

Harking back to ancient rhetoric, make-up and ornamentation have long been thought to be not so much guarantors of femininity, but rather a particularly feminine means of masking and deception. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir suggests that a seemingly conformist performance of femininity can be an external condition that serves as a trompe l'oeil, when she states that:

> Even if each woman dresses in conformity with her status, a game is still being played. It is not only that girdle, brassiere, hair-dye, make-up disguise body and face; but that even the least sophisticated of women, once she is "dressed" does not present herself to observation; she is like the picture of the statue, or the actor on stage, an agent through whom is suggested someone who is not there.[505]

As Beauvoir argues, make-up is a strategy of deflection available even to "the least sophisticated of women." What makes Moorman's mobilization of this strategy

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[504] Daphne Brooks describes the antebellum actress, Adah Isaacs Menken, with whom Moorman shares certain similarities, in these terms in *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom*, 1850–1910 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 133.

[505] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1953), 533.

especially difficult to detect and decipher, is that she achieves its affects not by getting "dressed," but rather by getting "undressed." *Candy* is a visually explicit, but not isolated example of how Moorman puts forth her naked body only to ends that defamiliarize the correspondence between the overdetermined "stripped" female body and sexual and ontological knowability. For reasons that I will argue have as much to do with race as they have to do with gender, Moorman, as the "Ultimate Easter Bunny" with her body, face and hair covered in chocolate, unsettles more than she arouses. Because *Candy* seems first to be about visuality and the spectacle of excess, we mine the aesthetic devices operative in Moorman's performance, but, it turns out, at the risk of eclipsing the physicality of her efforts. While it might first seem that Moorman does nothing in this performance "except pose," in fact, as Pileggi frosted her body and her cello with twenty pounds of chocolate, Moorman displayed, above all else, physical stamina.

What *Candy* actually exposes then is not so much the female body, as the way in which feminized labor sustains the pose, but in so doing gets aestheticized, naturalized, and thereby negated. Moorman's performances are marked by not only the co-presence, but also the discordance of these two strategies, masquerading and substantiating labor. To register the presence of both, in dissonance, troubles Knowles's assertion that Moorman is transparent—an assertion she makes in part by infantilizing Moorman—and the obfuscatation of Moorman's performative labor that results. The underlying assumption of Knowles's assertion is that femininity (which she signals by describing Moorman as wearing dresses, holding flowers, and stripping clothes) is not something that can be deployed/used, strategically, as a resource, but is rather "thoughtless" (natural). Knowles's claim is structured by a problematic and routine move: to collapse

the distinction, and thereby assume a fixed/ transparent relationship between feminine exteriority and interiority.[506] In *Candy,* the way in which Moorman presented an exaggerated, even parodic femininity (in part by capitalizing upon the sexual connotations of not only bunnies and chocolate, but also her instrument), in fact, works against its naturalization (invisibility as labor).

It is crucial to note that critical dismissals of Moorman obfuscate not only the physicality of her efforts, but also, as becomes clear when we look more broadly at Moorman's work, another fundamental expression of her labor: her virtuosity. As an interlude to my analysis of *Candy*, I examine a performance that more comprehensively exemplifies Moorman's practice, so as to suggest the ways in which physicality and virtuosity are very often dual forces that sustain her exploitation of femininity's quality of masquerade. The controversy surrounding Moorman's infamous performance of Nam June Paik's *Opera Sextronique*, a performance that landed her on the front page of dozens of newspapers, in jail for a night, and that earned her the moniker "the topless cellist," enables me to establish that these forces go unregistered in the shadow of Moorman's sexual innuendo and her corporeal exposure. Moorman's semi-nude performance of *Opera Sextronique* thus reveals an odd contradiction that runs not only through avant-garde, and second-wave feminist thought, but also broader social discourses. Nudity, it is important to remember, was perfectly kosher within feminist body art of the era. In fact, feminist body artists were derided not for their exposure, but

[506] For a discussion of the way in which female identity in the workplace gets appropriated, asetheticized, and naturalized, to ends that do not allow women to make use of their identity as a resource in the way men can see: Lisa Adkins and Celia Lury, "The Labor of Performing Identity: Performing Identities, Performing Economies" in *Economy and Society*, 28(4) (November 1999), 598–614.

rather for exhibiting no skill or artistry. Oxymoronically, these very feminists criticized Moorman precisely because, in her performances, she displays both her body and her virtuosity. What makes Moorman's performances licentious then was not simply their nudity, but, more complexly, the dissonance between nudity and sexual suggestiveness and the conventions of classical music and femininity.

A few days before Valentine's Day in 1967, Moorman performed Paik's *Opera Sextronique*, originally titled *Cello Sonata Opus no. 69,* at the now demolished 41st Theater in New York City. That evening, she appeared on stage wearing an "eclectric bikini," made-up of three triangles of fabric, each outlined in 15 6-volt bulbs. Paik flashed the lights on her bikini by remote control as she walked gracefully, cello in hand, to her chair, sat down, and began playing Jules Massenet's lilting *Elegy*. When she finished the electric bikini section, Aria 1 of the composition, Moorman exited the stage, and returned to perform Aria 2, wearing only a floor-length black skirt, although she did supplement her ensemble with two small propellers that functioned as pasties towards the end of the section. [Figure 4.16] After that point, plainclothesman police interrupted the performance before two hundred guests and arrested Moorman for partial nudity, and Paik for orchestrating the transgression. While Paik was released, Moorman was subsequently tried and convicted of indecent exposure on the basis that her act was "born not of a desire to express art, but [rather] to get the vernacular 'sucker' to come and be aroused."[507] As a journalist suggested in his editorial on the trial, it was the way in which Moorman seemingly mocked the whole concert convention, and more specifically, the

[507] Milton Shalleck, "People of the State of New York v. Charlotte Moorman," *New York Law Journal* 157, no. 91 (May 11, 1967). Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University.

traditional comportment of a professional female cellist that most offended the presiding judge. The journalist critiqued the court's decision and dissented that:

> The crime has nothing to do with how a cellist dresses […]. It was not necessary, as Judge Shalleck did, to go to the constitutional issue of clothing. The theory that the artist must dress in the costume of his trade is one of the heaviest burdens the arts have to carry.[508]

As the columnist alludes, within the traditional concert convention feminine dress and behavior are completely naturalized elements of a professional female cellist's "repertoire," as is her relationship with the cello itself. English cellist, Jacquline du Pré, was one of the most famous female cellists to emblematize these conventions. When we consider Moorman's performance in relation to du Pré, we get a more precise sense of Moorman's disruption. Du Pré is widely considered one of the greatest cellists of the twentieth century, despite that multiple sclerosis cut short her career. Her illness forced her to cease performing at twenty-eight, and led to her premature death in 1987.[509] Like Moorman's, du Pré's career was overshadowed by associations with famous, "genius" men, particularly with her husband, pianist-conductor, Daniel Barenboim. Whereas sexuality and frivolity complicated Moorman's victimization, du Pré's characterized innocence, anxiety, and physical frailty reinforced her associations with victimhood. Moorman, in playing to the dissonance between sexual object and rarified virtuoso, calls attention to the erasure, naturalization, and aestheticization of the labor of traditional female musicians such as Jacqueline du Pré.

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[508] Russell Baker, "Observer: Seated One Day at the Cello," *New York Times*, May 14, 1967. Text reproduced in the program of Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik's *Mixed Media Opera* (1969), New York City, Town Hall. Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University.
[509] Elizabeth Wilson, *Jacqueline du Pré: Her Life, Her Music, Her Legend* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1999).

Nonetheless, Moorman's critics here again denied that she could utilize her sexuality, like her femininity, strategically. In her critique of Nam June Paik and the *TV Cello* that he created specifically for Moorman, Martha Rosler casts Paik as a puppeteer who pulls the strings that animate Moorman's titillating performances. She writes:

> And—oh yes!—he is a man. The hero stands up for masculine mastery and bows to patriarchy […]. The thread of his [Paik's] work includes the fetishization of the female body as an instrument that plays itself, and the complementary threads of homage to other famous male artist-magicians or seers (quintessentially Cage).[510]

In a willful act of erasure, Rosler does not make direct reference to Moorman, but tacitly alludes to her as Paik's object, a sexual plaything, an instrument who, in playing the cello, a double of the female body, plays *with* herself. What Rosler implies is that Moorman's sexuality gets appropriated, turned back on itself, and negated. Rosler reads the cello as a double of the female body, and so a sign of Moorman's promiscuity, but, in a posthumous letter addressed to Moorman that appeared in *Art in America*, David Bourdon also characterized the instrument as "the masculine voice that beguiled her."[511] The cello thus emblematizes Moorman's double bind: her promiscuous victimhood. From this contradiction, Moorman emerges, as the parenthetical title of the *TV Bra* (1969) Paik made for her suggests, as a "living sculpture," or to put it another way, "a woman immobilized—turned to stone, in fact by the power of the gaze."[512]

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[510] Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, eds. Doug Hally and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture/BVAC, 1990), 45.
[511] David Bourdon, "A Letter to Charlotte Moorman," *Art in America* 88, no. 6 (June 2000): 83.
[512] Owens, "The Medusa Effect," 195.

In his essay, "The Medusa Effect," Craig Owens writes of the way in which stereotypes reproduce ideological subjects who can be inserted into and confined within existing sexual identities. As Owens argues:

> Stereotypes treat the body as an object to be held in position, subservience, submission; they disavow agency, dismantle the body as a locus of action and reassemble it as a discontinuous series of gestures and poses—that is a semiotic field. There stereotype inscribes the body into the register of discourse; in it, the body is apprehended by language, taken into joint custody by politics and ideology.

Owens's description of this process of dismantlement serves to annotate Rosler's dismissal of Moorman. Drawing on Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish*, Owens's subsequently considers the way in which the masculine gaze works in the service of this process, in effect, marking and entrapping the woman as passive object ("living sculpture"). But ultimately Owens asks a question that Moorman too keeps raising: how "can we be entirely certain that this woman is the victim of the male gaze?" To give critical structure to his uncertainty, Owens revisits the classic myth of Medusa, via Freudian psychoanalysis. The myth of Medusa is well known: she possessed the power to turn anyone who looked upon her to stone, to create statues— an artist, if you will. Perseus however, imagines a way to turn Medusa's petrifying gaze back upon itself by means of a mirrored shield. Upon seeing herself, Medusa was immediately petrified. Owens recounts that, "turned against itself, Medusa's power turns out to be her vulnerability, and Perseus's vulnerability, his strength." What is of primary interest to Owens in this narrative is the way in which the myth collapses two distinct moments: first the moment in which Medusa sees and recognizes herself, and second the moment in which she is petrified. Drawing on Lacan, Owens's wishes to distinguish the moment of seeing from the moment of arrest and in so doing offer up a prescription or defense

against this moment of capture, in effect to reverse or invert the narrative's temporal order. Owens explains:

> [Lacan] is simultaneously describing the mechanism of pose: to strike a pose is to present oneself to the gaze of the other as if one were already frozen, immobilized—that is already a picture. For Lacan, then, pose has strategic value: mimicking the immobility of the gaze, reflecting power back on itself, pose forces it to surrender. Confronted with a pose, the gaze itself is immobilized, brought to a standstill […] a pose then is an apotrope. And to strike a pose is to pose a threat.

Importantly, the failure to recognize Moorman's "statuesqueness" as apotropaic has everything to do with linear temporality, which is endowed with a teleological force to which Owens alludes. As a figure of temporal transitivity, who refuses to resolve the dissonance between past and present, Moorman, "as if […] already […] immobilized," strikes a pose. Inflected in the pose Moorman strikes, are the gestural resonances of Medusa, and Wilke, along with those of other figures who refuse to resolve the dissonance between subjectivity and objectivity, (between sculpture and sculptor), via posing, and the opacity that surrounds it.

The tactics of feminine masquerade that Moorman employs have a black lining that I let lie, when I turned away from *Candy* towards *Opera Sextronique*. Going back, in *Candy*, what I have described as Moorman's practice of feminine masquerade is cut by not-so-oblique allusions to racial masquerade, known as blackface. McWilliams made the work's underlying reference explicit in his interview with the *Village Voice*, when he made a sardonic aside: "what could be more appropriate than a Southern girl in black."[513] Blackened by chocolate, Moorman evokes the white, typically male, practice of ventriloquizing blackness, that, as Daphne Brooks has argued, via Saidiya Hartman,

[513] *The Village Voice*, "Scenes," March 29, 1973. My thinking was facilitated by Rothfuss having read blackface into this comment in *The Topless Cellist*, 292.

served not to defamiliarize or confuse the categories of whiteness and blackness, nor to transgress racial boundaries, but rather to display a "spectacularly racialized different" in order to "possess" and "dominat[e]" blackness and to "shore […] up white supremacist ideology."[514] For a woman from a longstanding white Southern family, a family that fought for the Confederacy, to gesture towards the "grotesquely humorous and often erotic exhibition of racial transformation" was, effectively, to (re)present "the division between the races" that Hartman has argued was at the very heart of minstrelsy.[515] To do so in 1973—the year after Richard Nixon's landslide reelection signaled the consolidation of conservativism, achieved, in part, by capitalizing upon the backlash against the civil rights movement—makes the performance especially charged/barometric. In other words, in the year after the election result marked the potential eclipse of a movement that demanded Americans acknowledge their implication in the horrifying legacies of slavery and redress the persistence of deeply rooted racist ideologies and institutions, it is credible to read Moorman not just as signaling the ongoing presence of the "stereotypes born out of blackface popular culture" but also as working in the service of their reification. As Brooks explains, the deployment of these stereotypes in antebellum blackface performance "attempt[ed] to attack, deflate, and discount African American class mobilization in the antebellum era by mocking the credibility of black socioeconomic leadership and professionalism."[516] When they did not circulate openly, the stereotypes produced by antebellum blackface undoubtedly lurked in the shadows of a divided 1973 America, where they remained "calcified like plaque in

[514] Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 28.
[515] Ibid.
[516] Ibid.

the social unconsciousness."[517] In the wake of a decade marked by profound social insurrection, upheaval, promise, and uncertainty, Moorman's chocolate-covered body bears the traces of antebellum attempts to constrain and discount black social mobility. The damage of such efforts to foreclose the future for black peoples is the focus of my concern in chapter two.

Although, typically, white minstrel performers used burnt cork, and then later greasepaint or shoe polish, to blacken their bodies, that Moorman is here, anachronistically, blackened by chocolate recalls the ways in which "blackface jokes and songs revolved around the transmutation of black bodies" into things and "— quite obsessively— [into] food."[518] The transmutation makes explicit the way in which white males served up the racialized and objectified black body to be consumed, and thereby nourished the racist imagination. Chocolate though, while it is a substance that is meant to be eaten, has nothing to do with nourishment and everything to do with desire, a desire that Carrie Mae Weems demands we register when we look upon and consume her photograph, *Chocolate Colored Man*. [Figure 4.17] For as Carol Mavor has noted in her grappling with Roland Barthes's sometimes troublesome desire for and reliance up images of black bodies in his book on photography, *Camera Lucida,* "when race meets the photograph, desire (punctum) resides in the shadows."[519] As Mavor explains, Weems's photograph of a man "caught in strict profile:" emulates the distancing gaze of those medico-anthropological photographs on the nineteenth century that served to "prove through racist physiognomy that the black was lower, more animal-like, on a

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[517] Okwui Enwezor "Repetition and Differentiation: Lorna Simpson's Iconography of the Racial Sublime," *Lorna Simpson* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006), 109.
[518] Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 27.
[519] Mavor, *Black Blue*, 39.

Darwinian evolutionary model."[520] The naturalization and circulation of myths of black rudeness and white refinement across the transatlantic and Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was, of course, not only driven by photography. Photography was only one, very powerful, apparatus in "the anthropological machinery of imperialism," machinery that regulated "the complex flows of material, cultural, and ethical relations between producer, consumer, and consumed in the transatlantic world."[521] As Kay Dian Kriz argues in her book *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement*, the myths of white refinement, shored-up by myths of black rudeness, fundamentally structured the British state's construal of African slaves in relation to white British subjects. These myths were, of course, not uniquely British, for when European colonialists arrived on American shores they transplanted the racial paradigms that produced slavery and the plantation economy. In addition to being a racializing model for assessing civility, refinement was also, as Kriz points out, a process of erasure through which the relationship between "refined" domestic and luxury goods (like the sugar and cacao from which chocolate is made) and "the brutal exploitation of hundreds of thousands of human beings" was obfuscated.[522] For Cuban sociologist, Fernando Ortiz,

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[520] Ibid., 40. As Enwezor explains in his essay on the work of Lorna Simpson "though the profile has a long pictorial history, from Egyptian to Greek and Roman antecedents, and was broadly used for domestic portraiture in eighteenth-century paintings, with the rise of the human sciences in the nineteenth century it was adopted for more pernicious uses as a method for studying and categorizing criminality and racial inferiority." "Repetition and Differentiation: Lorna Simpson's Iconography of the Racial Sublime," in *Lorna Simpson,* 128.

[521] Enwezor, "Repetition and Differentiation," 128; Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (Routlegde: London, 2003), 3.

[522] Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies 1700–1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3. For a history of chocolate see: Cat Cox, *Chocolate Unwrapped: the Politics of Pleasure* (London: Women's Environmental Network, 1993).

who was working in Havana for the first half of the twentieth century, refinement is a process through which the myth of stable whiteness, unmixed with blackness, is perpetuated. In his book, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, Ortiz evokes this process in his description of the birth and life of sugar. He writes:

> Sugar changes its coloring; it is born brown and whitens itself; at first it is a syrupy mulatto and in this state pleases the common taste; but then it is bleached and refined until it can pass for white, travel all over the world, reach all mouths, and bring a better price climbing to the top of the social ladder.[523]

In effect, refinement is a measure of assessing both commodities and people, both a means and an end. More precisely, it is a material process of domestication through which the traces of blackness and the forced labor of African slaves are rendered invisible, and, connectedly, a bleaching mark of "elevated" social behavior, class, and culture that is hegemonically coded white, and that serves to conceal the violence upon which it depends. In both respects, refinement is a mythic emblem of whiteness that is tightly bound with the Southern femininity in which Moorman seems to indulge.

As a high school student in her hometown, Little Rock, in the early fifties, Moorman joined the "Southernaires," a social and service club that promised to "refine" girls into Southern "ladies." A journalist for the *Arkansas Democrat,* described this process of "socialization" with much enthusiasm in her full page spread on the group in which she writes: "Enjoyment replaces shyness, and the club members emerge with a veneer of poise and know-how that will take them through all later social demands with

[523] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 9.

flying colors."[524] Perhaps that Moorman was crowned Miss City Beautiful in 1952, just after she graduated from high school, signals her successful apprehension of the skills the Southernaires club promised to foster. During her two-week reign, which coincided with the city's annual beautification campaign, one of her duties was to wave at onlookers from a convertible during the Cleanup, Paintup and Fixup Parade.[525] On that day, nineteen-year-old Moorman—perched sweetly on the hood of the convertible, wearing a tiara and crinoline skirt that peaked out of her white over-coat— posed, demurely, for a photograph, and performed her refinement, against the backdrop of a neatly manicured lawn that paved the way to a little pitched roofed house with a striped awning. [Figure 4.18] She subsequently entered the Miss Little Rock contest, the first contest in a series through which finalists could advance to the Miss America pageant. Although her pursuit of beauty pageant success ended with her failure to advance to the last round of this competition, Moorman was indelibly marked by her seeming subscription, and even celebration, of the standards of beauty and comportment that these contests legislate. Many of her feminist contemporaries famously decried these standards in their picketing of the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, a decade and a half later. The hundreds of women who gathered outside the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City in 1968, denounced not only "the ludicrous beauty standards" to which women were held, but also, "the beauty contest's racism." As *The New York Times* reported in an article on the

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[524] Margaret Ray, "The Southernaires," *Arkansas Democrat Magazine*, May 28, 1950, 4. Her description continues as follows: "The Southernaires [have] been designated as official hostesses for all school functions, including the entertainment of guests. The girls, as pretty and fresh as a bunch of spring daisies, add to every occasion. Guests are delighted with their charm and friendliness…[B]eing a Southenaire is not only a lot of fun; it's the means of learning to meet people and to greet them, to serve them with tea or a full-course meal, as the case may be, and to develop aplomb."
[525] Rothfuss, *The Topless Cellist*, 18.

protest, since the inception of the Miss America pageant in 1921 there had never been a black finalist in the competition.[526]

Just as Moorman's chocolate-covered body carries traces of antebellum blackface performance, it also carries traces of the Jim Crow South, sugarcoated in beauty pageant myths of white refinement and beauty. These are myths that, as Mavor vividly describes in *Black Blue,* the " incredibly woundable" eleven-year old girl, Pecola of Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*, "gulp[s] up" from "the Shirley Temple cup that obsessed her."[527] When Pecola walks down Garden Street to Yacobowski's Fresh Veg. Meat and Sundries store to buy penny candies, she surveys the counter and decides she wants all Mary Janes, wrapped in sunny-colored cellophane. She points her "little black shaft of a finger at them," to indicate her desire for them, and does not speak. As she walks home, she washes down the shame she felt in the vacant stare of the shopkeeper, in his total absence of recognition of her humanity, with the sweetness that breaks open in her mouth. Morrison describes the moment in which Pecola takes solace in her little candies:

> Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. These eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats the candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane.[528]

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[526] Charlotte Curtiss, "Miss America Pageant Is Picketed by 100 Women," *New York Times*, September 8, 1968, 81. On that same day civil rights demonstrators gathered to crown the first Miss Black America, civil rights activist Saundra Williams. See: Judy Klemesrud, "There's No Miss Black America," *New York Times*, September 8, 1986, 54.
[527] Ibid., 41, 7.
[528] Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970 New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 50.

Pecola's mother, Pauline, goes to the movies to feed her dreams of the happiness, promised by the "world of clean comfort" unfolding behind the movie screen, and the "smiling white face[s]" of Jean Harlow and Clarke Gable.[529] But in a devastating and irredeemable moment, Pauline swallows and nearly chokes on those dreams as they transform, in her mouth, from consolation into bitterness. In the darkened theater, the larger than life image of Jean Harlow envelops her. Pauline takes a bite of candy, so that she might somehow, like her daughter Pecola, *eat Jean Harlow. Love Jean Harlow. Be Jean Harlow*. Looking back on that day in the theater, Pauline recalls,

> I taken a bit bite of that candy, and it pulled a tooth right out of my mouth. I could of cried. I had good teeth, not a rotten one in my head. I don't believe I ever did get over that. There I was, five months pregnant, trying to look like Jean Harlow, and a front tooth gone. Everything went then. Look like I just didn't care no more after that. I let my hair go back, plaited it up, and settled done to just being ugly. I still went to the pictures, though, but the meanness got worse. I wanted my tooth back.[530]

As Scarlett O'Hara, as an Arkansas beauty queen looking placidly out from her "world of clean comfort," as a chocolate-covered playboy bunny, Moorman serves up the *Candy* that rots Pauline's front tooth, that "destroys her sense of pride, her beauty," and "ends her hopes for a better life," made from sugar that, to voice Mavor once again, "is violent, is black with history, and blue with sorrow. " It is "stained with slavery."[531]

To mobilize Mavor's imagery, Moorman's *Candy* is irrevocably bruising and stained. There is no counterpointing phrase, no "and yet" that can follow without casting a chilling shadow. But I want to suggest that from this unsettling performance, a dissonant and unstable sound emerges, a sound made up of the interpretive framework

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[529] Mavor, *Black Blue*, 8.
[530] Morrison., 123.
[531] Mavor, *Black Blue,* 41.

(the note) that I have established (sounded), in combination with another notes, which, when played together, create a noise, jarring and difficult to sustain. I argued earlier that Moorman's physical opacity is doubled by her ethical opacity, an opacity created by the opposing directionality, the jumble of intersecting horizontal and vertical lines that represent hegemonic and resistant social and cultural ideologies, that when situated one on top of the other, block our field of vision, make it go black. In *Candy*, Moorman puts tropes of femininity on display, but she does so to ends that disrupt the relationship between femininity and refinement, in which she undoubtedly, but undecidedly traffics. The serious posture she adopts as she cradles her cello between her legs, gestures towards the conventions that *The Book of Good Manners*[532] Moorman inherited from her mother mandates, while her chocolate-covered nudity—provocative, but in its provocation unsettling rather than satiating—denaturalizes those conventions.

As I have argued, Moorman, as a figure of temporal transitivity and confusion, drags not only "anachronisms" of femininity and "anachronistic" feminist debates into the present, but also traces of antebellum blackface and the Jim Crow South. While Moorman's chocolate-covered body seems to be inscribed with the "familiar and malignant semiotics" of white patriarchy, the notion of temporality that Moorman's performance evidences, also poses a threat to those very trappings.[533] As I said, I am not suggesting that Moorman's Easter performance was intentionally about race per se, but

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[532] Upon her mother's admittance to a nursing home in 1978, Moorman collected many of her mother's things from her home in Little Rock and brought them back with her to New York. Among these things was this book: Victor H. Diescher, *The Book of Good Manners* (New York: Social Culture Publications, 1923), inscribed with a series of names including her mother's, Vivian Kelly. Charlotte Moorman Archive, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University.
[533] Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 199.

that it can be productively interpreted through that lens. There is something uncomfortable about how readily we recognize the racial practices and narratives that Moorman's multivalent chocolate-covered body conjures, not only as historical and particular, but also as familiar and ubiquitous. Moorman thus disturbs the tranquility of one of the most naturalized narrative plots operative within post-slavery and post-segregation societies: that the long history of brutal violence that her blackened body evokes relates to the present only as history, anachronism, and regression. As Mimi Sheller has argued, post-slavery societies "systematically forget […] slavery and fail […] to recognize its legacies in our midst," because "[m]any have said that slavery was a long time ago, dusty history that no longer matters today."[534] Sheller goes on to insist that this way of thinking is a product of not only popular culture and the media, but also of social theory and academic discourse, and hinges upon a pervasive Western temporality of history that postcolonial theorists, such as Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Anne McClintock have taken to task. In her book on the inextricable workings of gender, race, and class within the colonial contest, McClintock explains that in the service of these progressive conceptions of time, "entire continents like Africa were envisioned as 'anachronistic' space […] a land perpetually out of time in modernity, marooned and historically abandoned."[535] Western modernity maintains an oppositional image of non-Western places as anachronistic, in part to obfuscate the fact that "Western European and North American publics have unceasingly consumed the natural environment, commodities, human bodies, and cultures of the Caribbean [and Africa] over the past five hundred years," in order to fuel the "progress" that moves its time "forward." One of

[534] Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean*, 4, 13.
[535] Quoted in ibid., 2.

Sheller's key arguments follows, in effect, that "contemporary consumer cultures are directly connected to the wealth generated by slavery, [and] also to the contemporary inequalities between the 'underdeveloped' Caribbean [and Africa] and the 'modern West.'"[536]

One of the figures to which Sheller looks to trace this history of Western colonial exploitation is the eighteenth century British scientist, Sir Hans Sloan, who spent fifteen months in Jamaica as the personal physician to the British-appointed Governor. As Sheller recounts, in Jamaica, Sloane not only indexed and pirated plant and human "specimens," he also mined local knowledge held by aboriginal peoples and African slaves to determine how the substances he collected could be used to treat European bodies. His capitalization of the material and intellectual resources of Jamaica secured not only his scientific reputation, and his ensuing personal wealth, but also enabled the formation of the British Museum, as he bequeathed his whole collection to the crown upon his death. As Sheller emphasizes, Sloan's procurement of the island's resources thus has not only profound scientific and epistemological reverberations, but also economical and commercial ones. A derivative of an elixir of cocoa, sugar, and milk, which Sloan observed sickly children consuming in Jamaica, enables me to resurrect this history, now largely erased from cultural memory, via Moorman's Easter-day performance. Sloan obtained the recipe from locals and subsequently produced and marketed the substance in Europe as "Sir Hans Milk Chocolate," the sale of which earned him "a considerable amount of money." In 1849, the Cadbury brother's purchased the recipe, and manufactured their chocolate, that eventually "became the chocolate we all

[536] Ibid., 3.

know and love today," based on the recipe's instructions.[537] That everyday practices of consumption are legacies of slavery is an implication Moorman unexpectedly lays bare in putting her chocolate-covered body on display. It is not only that her deployment of a racialized body casts a shadow upon the saccharine spectacle of pastels. More specifically, Moorman's evocation of blackface and the violent racial narratives with which these minstrel shows are bound, within a life-size basket filled with cellophane grass and, the candy most closely associated with the Easter holiday, Cadbury chocolate eggs, sounds a dissonant note, and in that dissonance the past forcefully breaks its silence within the present. It thereby announces not only its persistence, but also its irreconcilability, in effect troubling the "'innocent' indulgence in the pleasures of thoughtless consumption."[538]

Moorman's mandate, not to throw anything away, allows me to find use in a seemingly absurd and superficial performance, marginal within Moorman's (already marginalized) oeuvre. It also makes perceptible residues that proliferate across Moorman's body—as a site of corporeal surplus, contradiction, and confusion— residues that do not console, but rather obscure. The last of these residues that I trace in the work's chocolate surface emerges when we take into account that, in *Candy*, Moorman emulates a performance practice that was almost exclusively taken-up by white men. In *Bodies in Dissent*, Brooks notes that while "white women worked as dancers in the mid-to-late extravaganza version of minstrel production, […] very rarely did they perform in blackface."[539] In conjoining her nude female body with allusions to blackface, the few

[537] Ibid., 15.
[538] Ibid., 14.
[539] Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 394 n. 147.

antebellum women who donned blackface, "who traveled through the transatlantic imaginary," travel back across Moorman's body.[540]

In 1959, Moorman left her husband, double bassist Tommy Coleman, whom she met at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana, to pursue a more illustrious and exciting musical career in New York City. A century earlier, in 1859, another young Southern ingénue, Adah Isaacs Menken, left her husband and headed north to pursue a theatrical career in that same city. Menken, who according to Daphne Brooks, was "always lauded for her ability *to strike a pose*," was also one of the few antebellum women to blacken herself with burnt cork in a number of her most successful theatrical productions.[541] Both Moorman and Menken would become controversial and spectacle-driven icons of their respective stage arts and within their respective eras, eras at once historically specific and multivalent. Both would also become infamous for their nudity. While Moorman stripped, Menken created the illusion of nudity by wearing nude bodysuits, but neither Moorman's naked body nor Menken's seemingly naked body made either woman legible to their beholders. Rather their bodies created confusion and disorder at the site of exposure, confusion and disorder, which often resulted in negative reviews that I argue are attempts to contain the threats their bodies posed. Upon attending Menken's theatrical performance of *Mazeppa*, Mark Twain described Menken as working her naked-looking body "like a dancing-jack [and carrying] on like a lunatic from beginning to the end of it." In his estimation, she was nothing more than "a 'shape actress' who apparently didn't have any histrionic ability or deserve anymore

[540] Ibid., 137.
[541] Ibid., 164. Emphasis mine.

consideration than a good circus rider."[542] In a review of Moorman's 1968 New York City Town Hall performance in *New York* magazine, "Miss Moorman's Thing, or: Nudity is No Cover," music critic Alan Rich dismissed Moorman not only on account of her seeming inability to play the cello but also on account of her inability to arouse him. He wrote:

> The sad thing is that Miss Moorman is not a very good cellist […]. Also, if I may be terribly ungallant for a moment, she doesn't turn me on very much as a stripper. In the nude or fully clothed, she is about as sexy as Pablo Casals, 91, and he at least has earned the right to perform in whatever costume he chooses. Actually, how much novelty is there in Miss Moorman's act? Flamboyant stage behavior of one sort or another is hardly her invention.[543]

I have established that such responses to Moorman's performances are an attempt to silence the dissonance (between the expected comportment of a female cellist and female stripper), which Moorman sounds, and are based on masculinist notions of artistic merit and, relatedly, temporally linear notions of time. Similarly, Twain's dismissal is an attempt to neutralize the crisis of recognition that Menken poses, a crisis that needs elaboration.

What makes Menken a figure of ongoing scholarly interest and debate is that during her life she was decidedly evasive about her personal history, thereby generating uncertainty that led to controversy and speculation about her identity, specifically her racial identity. This controversy and speculation has persisted for more than a century since her death. Brooks, who devotes a chapter of *Bodies in Dissent*, to "examining how the labyrinths of Menken's identity performances complicate the terms of her corporeal

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[542] Ibid., 164.
[543] Alan Rich, "Miss Moorman's Thing, or: Nudity is No Cover," *New York* magazine, no 14, July 8, 1968, 50.

'exposure' as a female entertainer," cautions against the scholarly impulse to decipher the racial codes in which Menken traffics by pursuing validating or repudiating "evidence" of her "African ancestry."[544] Brooks suggests that even if such "evidence" were to exist, that these lines of investigation work not only to overdetermine Menken, but also to stabilize the racial narratives that Menken unsettles.

For those scholars who have searched for proof of Menken's racial identifications in her political identifications, Brooks points out that the available evidence contradicts: "[f]or every uncorroborated anecdote that would have [Menken] claiming to be 'an ultra Southerner' who 'cannot fraternize with the negro' there is an alternative image of Menken pledging allegiance to the Union, or, in one case, even privately confessing to [Alexandre] Dumas that she was a quadroon."[545] Brooks also goes on to remind us that in nineteenth century America, racial identifications were not always uncomplicatedly represented in political identifications. Without resolving the crisis of recognition that Menken inaugurates, Brooks suggests that Menken's racial ambiguity and elusiveness created space for Americans to wonder about Menken's racial identity, and that while such speculation does not reveal anything about Menken, it does reveal something about the strategies of deflection she mobilized, as well as the way in which race, gender, sexuality, and class functioned "as intersecting metaphors in nineteenth-century culture." Menken's adventurous and shape-shifting roles on stage— in which she delivered a confusing and contradictory set of characters who were transgender, transethnic, and transracial, and who appeared in varying states of exposure—"colored" rumors about her personal life. Her vocation as an actress, her racial ambiguity, and her divergences from

[544] Ibid., 137.
[545] Ibid., 156.

the norms of white womanhood on and off stage, gave rise to assertions of her sexual promiscuity and availability. What Brooks claims is that the way in which blackness gets projected onto Menken's controversial and contested body suggests the complicated ways in which blackness and "morally questionable" womanhood were intertwined in the transatlantic imagination. While "the actress, 'the fallen woman' and women of color [were] by no means exclusively interchangeable" in nineteenth-century America, each category is nonetheless a site of projected sexual deviance across which "conflated perceptions of race, gender, and class" would slip.[546] Menken was thus often blackened in the press, as well as within wider social discourses. Brooks recounts that on the occasion Menken had to cancel a series of performances because of a stage injury, a rival Parisian theater circulated threats in the newspaper that Menken might be replaced by "Sarah l'Africaine" whom the press described in terms that meant to

> conjure up images of Sarah Bartmann, the 'Venus of Hottentot' of Southern Africa who had, some thirty years previously, been put on display in Paris as a result of her 'deviant' genitalia […]. Menken's imaginary 'rival' was meant to *shadow* her in the most grotesquely racialized terms.[547]

What Brooks notes is that this comparison actually reveals a process of erasure, or what we have also been calling refinement, for "when the display of the black woman became indecorous [unrefined], the decorative, less overtly sexual, white-appearing woman stepped in to fill the former's place."[548] In effect, the replacement of mythically vulgar black-appearing female bodies with mythically less-vulgar white-appearing female bodies at the scene of corporeal consumption, served not only to obfuscate the physical

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[546] Ibid., 151.
[547] Ibid., 154. Emphasis mine.
[548] Ibid.

and sexual exploitation of those black bodies and psyches, but even more urgently, the voracious white male desire that powered that exploitation, as well as the "obscenity" of miscegenation that could, and did result.[549] As it relates to Menken, her "mystic whiteness […] is fueled by 'the most primitive negress' and fills the void created by the erasure of 'Sarah' from cultural memory."[550] And yet her racialization poses a threat to the filling of that void, while her white-appearing, racially ambiguous body calls into question "the very concept of racial evidence" and Western ocular certainty and centrism, and tacitly signals interracial sex and reproduction. To trace Menken's racially ambiguous body on the surface of Moorman's blackened body—which as I have already suggested, disrupts the seeming refinement of two emblems of Western sophistication, avant-garde art and classical music—disrupts the mythic refinement, as well as the mythic purity, of white-appearing bodies, and Moorman's body specifically. It also disturbs what Rosalind Krauss claimed to be the invisibility of black-appearing bodies in avant-garde art, when, as Fred Moten reports, she "said something to the effect that there must not be any important black artists because, if there were, they would have brought themselves to her attention."[551]

What Krauss calls absence is actually avoidance, an avoidance black feminist artist Adrian Piper has relentlessly confronted in her work.[552] As the temporal suturing

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[549] As Enwezor argues in *Lorna Simpson*, whites "hunted and consumed in prodigious quantities the body of the other, in order to assure [themselves] that the pseudo-scientific interest in racial otherness was not a sublimation of [their] own carnal abnormality," 128.
[550] Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 154.
[551] Fred Moten, *In the Break,* 233.
[552] In her work *Cornered* (1988), Piper, who notes that she could pass for white, insists both upon her blackness and that the pervasive aversion to recognizing blackness in racial ambiguous bodies is a problem in which the viewer is irrevocably implicated. Elsewhere she states that, as a black, white-appearing, woman, "I am a reminder that segregation is

together of Menken and Moorman suggests, this avoidance is, in part, an attempt to repress and forget the contingency of white masculinity upon black female bodies, along with the violence to and exploitation of the black female body and psyche with which this contingency is inextricably entangled. Yet, just as this visual pathology renders the black female body a site of avoidance and invisibility, it also renders it a site of spectacularization and hypervisibility, overdetermined and plagued by stereotypes of rotuinized racial, gendered, and sexual violence, and thus cut off from the universal and the aesthetic, and confined within the particular and the political. In his essay on the work of Lorna Simpson, Okwui Enwezor calls this double-binding, saturating, racist visual regime the "racial sublime," and goes on to insist that: "[i]t is never said enough that nothing escapes the racial sublime and the epistemic violence that surrounds it in American civilization."[553]

In 1989, subsequent to Krauss's troubling presumptuousness, Lorna Simpson, who was among black artists who gained visibility in the early nineties, appeared on the front page of the arts section of a daily newspaper, adjacent to an insidious bit of text that announced: "The Outsider is In."[554] As these words suggest, and Huey Copeland points out, this visibility was not uncompromised, for, "as the mascot for a brand of specious multiculturalism, Simpson was expected to speak tirelessly of and for her oppressed sisters."[555] As Enwezor notes, the difficulty of rendering the black female body within the

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impotent, a living embodiment of sexual desire that penetrates racial barriers and reproduces itself…I represent the loathsome possibility that everyone is 'tainted' by black ancestry," in Jones*, Body Art*, 162.
[553] Enwezor, "Repetition and Differentiation," 113.
[554] Huey Copeland, "'Bye, Bye, Black Girl': Lorna Simpson's Figurative Retreat," *Art Journal*, Vol. 64 (2) (Summer 2005): 65.
[555] Ibid., 64.

"racial sublime" is something that Lorna Simpson has unremittingly negotiated in her artistic career, a career that has spanned over twenty years. "Suspended between difference and repetition […] negation and plenitude," Simpson's photographic and cinematic works unravel visual regimes that make thinking the opposition between singularity and universality possible.[556] By way of Simpson then, I return to the tensions that animate the shadows of shadow feminism, and to the question that animates this chapter: what might it look like, and, of course, sound like, to practice shadow feminism? Simpson's works have a "sonic materiality" through which I consider a related question that Fred Moten raises in his book*, In the Break:* "How do sound and its reproduction allow and disturb the frame or boundary of the visual?"[557] This question is at stake in our reading not only of the black female figures who appear and don't appear in Simpson's images, but also in our reading of Moorman who appears and doesn't appear in the history of the avant-garde and feminist art, in which, circularly, black bodies appear and don't appear.

Simpson is best know for her photographic works that critics have described as "negative portraits" or "antiportraits," captured within "shadowless," and "socially [un]recognizable" spaces.[558] In subtly differentiated, repeating images (plentitude), she refuses the faces of her black female figures (negation), and thus "the façade of the stereotypical victim" and implicates her viewer in the inscription of racial, gendered, and sexual violence upon these figures. Perhaps counterintuitively then, I approach Simpson

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[556] Ibid., 64.
[557] Moten, *In the Break,* 235.
[558] Enwezor, "Repetition and Differentiation," 109, 117; Copeland, "'Bye, Bye, Black Girl'", 62–77. These negative portraits have been critically usefully because of the way in which they disrupt the documentary tradition, and more specifically the presumed relationship between signifier and signified, the photograph and the real.

by way of more recent works in which the black female figure, to the surprise of some critics, emerges in full view. For such critics, this emergence was especially unexpected given that it was preceded by works in which the figure had disappeared altogether from the photographic stage, a trend in Simpson's representational practice that generated debate amongst scholars.[559]

Corridor (2003), a double projection video installation, juxtaposes two scenes occupied by two generic stand-ins for black female figures, of two respective historical moments, 100 years separated. [Figure 4.19] As part of a collaboration with Mass MoCA and the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), Simpson staged these scenes in two historic homes, under the stewardship of SPNEA. The Coffin House, in Newbury Massachusetts, was once known as "the Grand Central Station for the Underground Railroad."[560] As Simpson pointed out during a lecture at the Walker Art Center, the house has been restored to reflect the American vernacular architecture of the 1860s.[561] The Gropius House at Walden Pond in Lincoln Massachusetts was designed by Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus, as a home for his family in which to live

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[559] As Copeland explains in "'Bye, Bye, Black Girl'," a number of critics took the removal of the figure from Simpson's work as an indication of her movement away from the negotiation of "sociological issues" (particular) and towards a rumination on "wide-ranging aesthetic issues" (universal), and found her new work to be "too bland and generic" as a result, while others welcomed the way in which these new works "played down [race]." Not only are these expectations an indication of the doubling-binding burden Simpson bears as a black artist negotiating "the racial sublime." As Copeland notes, these responses, both critical and praising, also troublingly bifurcate her work, whereas he claims that what is consistent and ongoing in her practice is the way in which it "consistently worrie[s] over the status of the body and the consequences of its divergent modes of self-perception for the constitution of the black female subject," 71–74.
[560] Sarah Valdez, "Lorna Simpson: Echoes of the Unspoken," in *Art in America*, Vol. 94(11) (December 2006): 110.
[561] Lorna Simpson, "Artist Talk," The Walker Art Center, May 13, 2010, audio recording accessed on the museum's website, February 13, 2012, http://www.walkerart.org/channel/2010/artist-talk-lorna-simpson.

while he was away teaching at Harvard. The house emblematizes, as Simpson also notes, the modernist architecture of the 1960s. The women who occupy Simpson's parallel worlds, both played by artist Wangechi Mutu, share time with Menken and Moorman, women at their artistic heights in the 1860s and 1960s respectively.[562] The juxtaposed video captures these women (different and the same) as they move through their respective domestic spaces over the course of a mundane day, from morning until evening.

Little in their meanderings, apart from their clothes and architectural settings, is suggestive of either narrative or the electrically charged nature of their respective divisive political moments: pre-emancipation and the height of the civil rights movement. Of course, the apron and purposeful movement of the woman from the Coffin House, as she passes in and out of the camera's view, are suggestive of her servitude, and more broadly the "free" labor performed by Northern blacks in the face of impending Civil War. The vanity, pink bathrobe and negligee, stylish dress, and apron of the woman in the Gropius house are suggestive of not just postwar femininity and domesticity, but also the rise of the black middle class that resulted from civil rights campaigns for desegregation, equal access to education and professional opportunities, and modest gains for a some blacks, even in the face of violent opposition, and the persistence of societal and institutional racism and discrimination. Yet these scenes are by and large devoid of explicit political and social signifiers. It is Simpson's juxtaposition of musical scores from each era, with the unfolding images, that most palpably conveys the affective immediacy and tension of these dialectical scenes. These scores are, in fact, teeming with the sonic and textural

[562] Simpson, "Artists Talk." Wangechi Mutu was Lorna Simpson's studio assistant at the time.

materialities of their respective eras, but break apart as the notes move through each other, in dissonance. The blistering saxophone of concrete Jazz musician Albert Ayler's *Love Cry* cuts through the brooding nocturnes of "Blind Tom," a blinded and enslaved pianist whose owners toured him around the US and Europe as an "idiot savant" of music. This dissonant call and response, constantly on the brink of dissolution into each other, at once disallows and augments any sense of trajectory we might try to trace within and between the simultaneous images, to which these cacophonous sounds adhere with undifferentiating force.

In Alyer's "free jazz," Fred Moten hears the haunting echo of the scream Fredrick Douglass's Aunt Hester emits, as she is beaten by her master. Moten identifies this scream as the scream of the commodity, which, as sounding object, breaks a counterfactual Karl Marx made when he argued for the impossibility of the speech of the commodity, and thereby the impossibility of its intrinsic value, via a speculative claim that "[i]f the commodity could speak, it would say…" Moten's argument thus begins with

> the historical reality of commodities who spoke—of laborers who were commodities before, as it were, the abstraction of labor power from their bodies and who continue to pass on this material heritage across the divide that separates slavery and 'freedom.'[563]

Moten describes this "subjectivity structure born in objection,"—that Marx "neither realizes nor anticipates,"— as "radical" and "inspirited" materiality/objecthood, that, in shrieking, breaks speech and "moves towards a location that is remote from—if not in excess of or inaccessible to—words," and "the confines of meaning." As Moten traces it, this "shriek turn[ed] speech," turns song in Ayler's wailing notes, and thus Ayler "perform[s] historical placement as a long transfer, a transcendental fade, an interminable

[563] Moten, *In the Break,* 6.

songlike drag, disrupting song." The crash of notes Blind Tom creates when he bangs on the piano keys in between each musical phrase of the American National Anthem, the Star Spangled Banner, drag across the divide that separates Simpson's scenes of slavery and "freedom," and into Ayler's screaming notes, notes that secretly scream "to the very idea of mastery."[564] These notes feel and transmit the weight of history, while refusing their reducibility to conventional musicality, linear narrativity, and verbal meaning. The black female subjects within the scenes that these sounds accompany, are thus weighted with history, and yet, as they pass in and out of sight to the sound of haunted dissonance, they refuse to cohere or to make accessible their interiority. Marked by simultaneity and disjunction, moments of emptiness and persistent mundanity, and a feeling of being at once generic and hermetic, these scenes announce their stagedness and performativity, and thus insist upon their lack of direct correspondence with social equivalents. *Corridor* thus refuses to render its black female subjects a site upon which to project and refuses to "illustrate" historical narratives, rather it insists its viewers feel the cut between two historical moments sutured together by "an interminable songlike drag."

Enwesor notes in the concluding pages of his essay on Simpson's work, the black figure is "never wholly free of the reflexive assumption that it is outside the norms of the canons of beauty," and yet "[i]gnoring the political conditions of the black subject in art is a self-defeating act of critical bad faith."[565] Devoid of the strife that often characterizes the scenes and images in which the black female figure appears in the American "racial sublime," Simpson endows the temporally dispersed black female figure in *Corridor* with "aesthetic and historical value," an endowment that Enwesor emphasizes is a

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[564] Ibid., 13, 22.
[565] Enwezor, "Repetition and Differentiation," 130.

"consciously political act." It is not only the way that sound disrupts sight that makes the hermeticism of *Corridor* charged. Importantly, Simpson "asks viewers to engage her [refusing] subjects not as coincidence but in conjunction with the aesthetic politics of American and Western devalorization of black identity."[566] To approach the norms of beauty through blackness is something Simpson does most explicitly in a project based on another temporal and spatial dialectic, *LA-57 NY-09*. If Moorman has slipped into the shadows, she reemerges here.

In her earlier photographic work, Simpson carefully composed her images, staging her sitter in deliberately nonreferential environments to ends that emphasized the limits of photography and representation. *LA-57 NY-09* began differently, not with an empty, even-lit, monochromatic space, but rather with Simpson finding a black and white photograph of an anonymous black woman on e-Bay. In the image, the woman—wearing a sleeveless, high waisted, white dress, with matching white pumps—smilingly poses for the camera, her hands extended behind her to rest on the hood of a convertible, which sits in front of a neatly trimmed shrub. [Figure 4.20] Posing in Los Angeles in 1957, this woman's gestic vocabulary, surroundings, and even hairstyle, recall those of Moorman when she posed as Miss City Beautiful in Little Rock in 1952. What is similar about these two photographs is announced, though, by differences that are grounded in historical injustices, and signaled by Moorman's tiara and the banner that identifies her as "Miss City Beautiful." In the face of the movement against segregation that began in the nineteen-fifties, the Miss America Pageant became more urgently an attempt to police race than gender. Until 1946, only one southern contestant had won the competition since

[566] Ibid., 130.

the contest began in 1921. But as historian Blain Roberts explains, when a woman from Memphis won in 1947, "the fortunes of Southern contestants rose precipitously." She points out that "although southerners made up only one-fifth of the possible winners," they were crowned Miss America seven out of the thirteen years between 1950 and 1963, "including back-to-back wins by Mississippians in 1958 and 1959."[567] The promotion and visibility of Southern Belles served to insist upon Southern gentility during a time marked by widespread and brutal racial violence, perhaps most famously, the murder of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old black boy from Chicago who was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi.

Elizabeth Alexander's writes that in 1955, Till "was shot in the head and thrown in the river with a mammoth cotton gin fan tied around his neck, for allegedly whistling at a white woman. In some versions of the story, he was found with his cut-off penis stuffed in his mouth." Upon receiving her mutilated son's body, Mamie Till Bradely demanded he have an open casket funeral and that his face be left untouched by the mortician so that " "all the world' [would] witness the atrocity."[568] She argued also that Till's murderers mistook his broken speech, which was a function of a speech defect, for "an attempted transgressive, transracial seduction." Moten (via Alexander) notes that James Baldwin got it right when he claimed that:

> Till's death bears the trace of a particular moment of panic when there was a massive reaction to the movement against segregation. (That particular moment of panic is a point on an extended trajectory, where that panic seems almost always to have been—among other things though this is not just one thing among others—sexual. So that the movement against

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[567] Blain Roberts, "The Ugly Side of the Southern Belle," *New York Times*, January 15, 2013, accessed March 10, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/16/opinion/racial-politics-and-miss-america.html?_r=0.
[568] Moten, *In the Break*, 192–193.

> segregation is seen as a movement for miscegenation and, at that point, whistling or the "crippled speech" of Till's "Bye baby" cannot go unheard.[569]

This panic and fear of miscegenation (which thinking back to Menken, was always about a need to belie the impurity of whiteness) as Roberts notes, also motivated the national recognition of Southern Miss Americas, who were offered up as evidence of mythic white sexual purity that needed protecting. What then can we trace in the anonymous black woman's inhabitation of the trappings of beauty pageant poses in 1957 (also the year that Little Rock High School was famously and violently desegregated)? Was it her attempt to exceed racial limits that were violently policed? What kind of dialectic does her photograph form with the photograph of Moorman as Miss City Beautiful in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1952? I want to think about this question via Moten's claim that photographs have a "phonic materiality," and that "the meaning of a photograph is cut and augmented by a sound or noise that surrounds it and pierces its frame."[570] If we emulate Simpson's deployment of spatial and temporal juxtaposition, and juxtapose these formally similar, but socially and politically dissonant images, what sound do they make? We move through these questions by way of Simspon's engagement with the found photograph.

Upon seeing the image of the anonymous woman in Los Angeles on e-Bay, where unwanted objects go in the hope of being redeployed, Simpson purchased it. Shortly after receiving the photograph, the seller contacted her to see if she was interested in the 200 or so additional photographs this woman had staged of herself, all between June and August of that same year. The albums Simpson received were suggestive of the

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[569] Ibid., 196.
[570] Ibid., 205.

scale and intentionality of this woman's project, for in them Simpson did not find a single-family snapshot, nor a single image that documented the woman's daily life. In all of the black and white photographs, this unknown woman presented herself, very deliberately, to the camera. Always dressed in waist cinching outfits, she appeared in front of various signifiers of postwar middle-class suburban domesticity (the single family home, the double bed, the television set). For the first time in Simpson's career she deployed her own body to reenact another woman's arsenal of poses, at various locations in New York that Simpson staged to resemble the scenes occupied by the anonymous woman in Los Angeles.

The images that resulted are, of course, marked by sameness and difference, for despite Simpson's efforts, what is universal about "the nature of a photograph and a performance [are] their absolute singularity."[571] Simpson's insertion of herself into the poses of the unknown woman confuses time, space, and identity, but in the details, through which difference and anachronism announce themselves, tension moves. Simpson thus creates, as she had in *Corridor*, what Benjamin calls "a dialectical image," through which she drags something of this woman and her poses into the present. Recall though that in so doing, "it is not that the past *throws its light* on the present or the present its light on the past, but [the dialectical] image is that wherein the past comes together with the present in a constellation."[572] As Simpson herself notes, the physically demanding process of inhabiting this woman's hundreds of poses, over the course of several months, actually revealed nothing about her, except that she was double jointed,

[571] Ibid., 202.
[572] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing,* 291. Emphasis mine.

and longer limbed than Simpson.[573] What Simpson does come to know, through her body, corroborates what Moorman suggested through hers: that labor and physicality sustain the pose, and that the pose is an apotrope, a means of deflection, negation, and refusing to be known. It is also, crucially, protection against, and a means of averting evil. Finally, it is a means of posing a threat to the regime of visibility, to the mythic purity of whiteness, and to the notion of time as linear and progressive. As Amelia Jones has noted, "there is an assumption […] of whiteness implicit in the 'rhetoric of the pose,'" but might this woman, via Simpson, reveal the pose's rhetoric to be blackness that has only passed for whiteness? Thinking back again to Benjamin, he suggested that the juxtaposition of dialectical images— *LA 57 NY 09*—produces a "shock of recognition." Might this shock actually be conveyed through a dissonant polyphonic sound, haunted by the echo of a scream? So that "[i]n the small discarded objects […] the 'trash' of history," we *hear* the ghosts of "radical" and "inspirited" materiality, "manifest in the material form betrayed."[574] If we are attuned to Moorman as a figure of opacity who deploys dissonance to ends that disrupt myths of refinement, might we hear in her demand not to throw anything away a call to hear that piercing sound? A call that elicits a response, at the edge of verbal meaning—like that between Blind Tom and Albert Ayler, oscillating, constantly on the brink of dissolution and negation.

Between the moments when a camera's shutter opens and closes, light passes through, and, as it captures the light reflected back from the objects in the camera's view, it creates an image, it freezes the gaze in space and in time. But the posing objects that

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[573] Simpson, "Artist Talk."
[573] Valdez, "Lorna Simpson," 110.
[574] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 93; Hetherington, *Capitalism's Eye: Cultural Spaces of Commodity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 96. Emphasis mine.

meet the light are constituted by a temporal warp, an already frozenness that turns the gaze back on itself. Standing before a mirror, the anonymous woman took a photograph. In it, we see the flash of the camera that obliterates, as it blurs into two oversaturated white roses that obstructed part of the reflective surface. Above the ricocheting light we can make out a barely perceptible face set against the blackness. In Simpson's restaging of the photograph, the obliterating light is less dispersed, but she appears only as a shadow. [Figure 4.21]

The Widow: Ashes and Dario Robleto's Sculptures of Mourning

> *Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them [...].*
> —Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

> *My family has always abided by a common form of Southern etiquette which dictates that its impolite to bring up the subject of death in the family, with the result that at times it seems as if these deaths never happened. In fact sometimes it seems as if the lives never happened.*
> —Ross McElwee, *Time Indefinite*

"One of the realities of war," says contemporary artist, Dario Robleto, "is that people turn to dust on the battlefield."[575] Although warfare has always inflicted irreparable damage to the human body, the weapons used by industrialized nations during the First World War had the capacity to pulverize the bodies of soldiers for the first time in history. As the mayor of the French town of Blois suggested in a speech he delivered in 1919, the absence of tangible remains to bury or mourn was a source of trauma for those loved ones who survived. "But how many sons of our region [*pays*] lie far away in cemeteries in the midst of ruins […]?" he asked. "Though we cannot visit them, let their names remain engraved in our memories."[576] French studies scholar Daniel Sherman tells us that because cemeteries were comprised of mass graves filled primarily with "scattered, jumbled remains," battlefields, where soldiers' bodies had been scattered, "offered more fitting sites of mourning" for many.[577] In the wake of the damage, those left behind would survey battlefields looking for some material trace that would make tangible their loss. Among the few things that remained intact, entangled among debris of

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[575] "Dario Robleto: Sculptor of Memory," by Krista Tippet, *On Being*, March 27, 2017, http://www.onbeing.org/program/dario-robleto-sculptor-of-memory/6640/audio?embed=1.
[576] Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 76.
[577] Ibid., 79.

war, were wedding rings. This history shadows the passage from *Mrs. Dalloway* that served to evoke a London of the future—when "all those hurrying along the pavement […] are but bones with a few wedding rings mixed up in their dust,"—with a haunting image of the Western front.

The problem of the absent body, however, did not begin or end with World War I. In the wake of the American Civil War, during which one in five of the more than 31 million people who lived in the United States in 1860 died, the widows and mothers of the dead would form teams to scour battlefields in search of the bodies of their missing husbands and sons. The bodies they found were often dismembered beyond recognition, however, and so women would seek to collect, in their place, "some *memento mori* in the form of a bullet, a button, or even a bone to take home."[578] Robleto suggests that such objects signal the transference of responsibility from the dead to the living:

> Something crucial happens once our bodies and the memories they carry cross this line, leaving the objects we invested with love and loss stationed in the land of the living. Responsibility shifts. In a way, the objects ask something even more demanding of those remaining than what they were asked to do at the time of their creation. They ask us to *change our relationship with time* […]. The individual bonds that birth these types of objects into our world inevitably erode, but a generational collaboration against erasure grows in their place, rooting us in a dimension of time longer than our own lives.[579]

Whereas widows after World War I were encouraged to find "closure," in other words not to prolong bereavement or to fixate unduly on loss, the American Civil War gave rise

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[578] Clifton D. Bryant, Dennis L. Peck eds., *The Encyclopedia of Death and Human Experience* (Thousands Islands, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 185.
[579] Dario Robleto, "If You Remember, I'll Remember," in *Disembodied Portraits: Portrait Miniatures and Their Contemporary Relatives,* ed. Cory Korcow (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2013), 19–20. Emphasis mine.

to a culture of mourning.[580] As Drew Gilpin Faust writes in *The Republic of Suffering*, for those who survived "[t]he war's work of killing was complete, but the claims of the dead endured."[581] Women turned to craft traditions and "braid[ed] a locket of hair, carv[ed] motifs in shell casings, or stitch[ed] a loved one's clothes into a memory quilt," in order to create objects that would give physical proof that they had not forgotten the loss of the dead.[582]

In these creative responses to loss, drawn from the sentimental mourning customs of the Civil War era, Robleto finds models of transferring meaning and materials through time. In his work, *No One has a Monopoly Over Sorrow* (2005), the artist filled a small wicker basket with historical materials that he found, altered, and resurrected. [Figure 5.1] On top of wax-dripped bridal bouquets of roses and calla lilies and dried chrysanthemums, sit five finger bones coated in melted bullet lead from various American wars. Four of the five bones are encircled by rusted wedding rings excavated from American battlefields. Interspersed among the dried and wax-covered flowers and metal-coated finger bones are flowers that a Civil War widow created with cuttings of male hair and fragments of a mourning dress. During a discussion between the artist and

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[580] After World War I there was less emphasis on expressing personal bereavement, as the fear was that having many widows in mourning would impact national morale and patriotism, and more of an emphasis on monumentalizing loss. The death of Queen Victoria in 1901, whose mourning of the death of Prince Albert in 1861 had been prolonged, signaled the decline in mourning rituals before the outbreak of war. See Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 371.

[581] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 212.

[582] Dario Robleto, "Lunge for Love as if it Were Air," in *More Love: ART, POLITICS, AND SHARING Since the 1990s*, ed. Claire Schneider (Chapel Hill, NC: Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013), 170.

contemporary art curator Darcie Alexander at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2011, Robleto explained that the interventions he makes in the materials at the molecular level—in this case dipping bouquets in wax and melting down metal refuse from war—work not in the service of destruction, but rather in the service of recasting memories.[583] Robleto begins his process by earning the respect of his materials. He asks himself, "Have I remembered it deeply [and in] as committed [a] way as possible?"[584] Once he has earned the necessary respect, he proceeds by undertaking his own creative response to loss through which he *combines* historical remnants, from across time periods, to endow them a material force that works against the relentless gravitational pull of forgetting.

If we think back to Sam Hunter's description of Jackson Pollock's work as a battlefield "strewn […] with the copses of Picasso, the Surrealists, Miró, Kandinsky perhaps […]" and, more generally, to the enduring image of the avant-garde artist, on the front lines, Robleto's work, and the female material culture of mourning that he emulates, provide an alternative framework for thinking about the work of the artist and the art historian. What do we find when we hold back and sift through what has been left behind, rather than forge ahead?

When we survey the history of art, one of the stories from which we might make something is the one in which Pliny the Elder addresses the question of the origin of painting. In his encyclopedic work *Natural History*, the Roman philosopher notes that while the geographical origin of painting is a point of debate, "all agree that it began with

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[583] "Memories, Memorials, and Making Art Today: a Conversation Between Dario Robleto and Darsie Alexander," April 5, 2011, Minneapolis College of Art and Design.
[584] "Dario Robleto: Sculptor of Memory."

tracing an outline around a man's shadow."[585] More specifically, the first semblance was created when a young woman traced the outline of her lover onto a wall before his departure. [Figure 5.2] The myth makes clear, as Victor I. Stoichita points out, that "the primary purpose of basing a representation on the shadow was the possibility that of turning it into a mnemonic aid; of making the absent become present."[586]

Although we do not know where the lover is going, we are told "that he had to travel a long distance." Stoichita draws our attention to the fact that "[t]he constantly changing real shadow of the beloved man will escort him on his travels, while the image of his shadow, captured on the wall, will remain a memento opposed to the movement of the journey […]."[587] Stoichita suggest that, ultimately, we understand the shadow that stays behind and that keeps the lover forever "upright," in the context of the association between the shadow and the soul, and between "the recumbent shadow on the earth" and death. Although Pliny's myth does not say so directly, Stoichita infers that the departed is leaving for war and dies "probably heroically, probably on the battlefield." Stoichita suggests that the image of the shadow, in standing in for the departed loved one, serves to avert and deny the presence of death, or as he claims in the text above, to make "the absent become present." But as he himself points out, the shadow is *not the body*, "rather it is by double virtue the other of the body."[588] As a negative image, one that does not so much stand in for presence as mark its absence, doubly, we might understand the image of the shadow in similar terms to those objects onto which war widows have held in the

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[585] As quoted in Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd), 11.
[586] Ibid., 15.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid., 16, 18.

absence of bodies. In this sense, shadows signal the transference of responsibility from the dead to the living. They represent our responsibility not to forget what has been lost.

In turning to shadows in *The Queer Art of Failure*, it is Judith Halberstam's hope that they might facilitate, rather than work against, forgetting. She asserts that there is subversive potential in loosing touch with the past. She is particularly eager to disrupt the transference of knowledge between mothers and daughters, because it is through this relationship that women come into being. (We might think back to the complicated example of Scout learning how to be a "girl" by spending time watching Calpurnia cook in the kitchen.) Recall that Halberstam advocates instead for the "dismantling of the self" that comes about as a result of a "refusal to be or to become woman as she has been defined and imagined within Western philosophy."[589] While she makes an important case for the ways in which forgetfulness offers to interrupt "generational modes of transmission that ensure the continuity of ideas, family lines, and normativity itself," in this move she *forgets* a tried but true insight of seventies-era feminism.[590] This is an insight, I argue, we should not be so quick to throw away. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar were among seventies-era feminist critics who point out that one of patriarchy's most successful tactics is the breading of hostility between generations of women.[591]

We find a suggestion of what else we risk in forgetting in the 1993 documentary *Time Indefinite* by Ross McElwee. In her book *Seeing Witness*, Jane Blocker describes

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[589] Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 124.
[590] Ibid., 123.
[591] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity," in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 3–44.

the film, in which the filmmaker attempts "to collect and hold on to filmic evidence for as much of his life as possible," as one that is preoccupied with "the trauma of death" and "the impossibility of our witness."[592] In between those scenes in which he captures footage of his family in South Carolina, he visits his longtime friend Charleen who is mourning the loss of a loved one. Her estranged husband, Jim, recently committed suicide by setting fire to the house in which they had lived together, with himself inside. Charleen takes McElwee to the site, where they find the house that Jim had "used all of his energy and strength" to destroy, rebuilt. "It's back," Charleen says to McElwee, "in fact, it is better than it was before."[593] She explains how the new house had risen up in disavowal of Jim's death: "It's like it never happened." She thus feels a heightened sense of responsibility for his ashes, which she carries around in a plastic bag that she keeps in a shoebox. Shards of bones have poked through the bag, though, creating holes through which incinerated flesh escapes. In the face of these losses, she holds the box all the more tightly to her chest as she tells McElwee that she has worried over what to do with her late husband's remains. She just "[hasn't] been able to throw him away yet." She might be able to toss his ashes in the sea, she says; she thinks that is what he would have wanted. But when Charleen and McElwee get to the shore she cannot bring herself to do it. "It keeps seeming like the safest place for this box is with me," she reasons.[594] Charleen's attachment to Jim's ashes is matched by McElwee's attachment to his family's home movies. Towards the end of the documentary he wonders if, in fondling this Super 8 film footage, in watching it over and over again, he is attempting to

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[592] Jane Blocker, *Seeing Witness: Visuality and the Ethics of Testimony* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 40–41.
[593] *Time Indefinite*, Ross McElwee (New York: First Run Features, 1993), DVD.
[594] Ibid.

"massage it back to life," "to keep everyone alive in a sort of time indefinite." As Blocker tells us, these longings " end up affirming memory as loss."[595]

Robleto's work makes clear that remembering is not a means to recovery. In his well-known installation, *A Defeated Soldier Wishes to Walk His Daughter Down the Wedding Aisle* (2004), for example, he creates casts of the prosthetic limbs a Civil War soldier made for himself (from hand-carved wood and iron) out of vinyl records of the Shirelles' 1962 song "Soldier Boy" that he melts down and combines with femur bone dust. [Figure 5.3] We can no more replay the voices of Shirley Owens, Doris Coley, Addie Harris, and Beverly Lee singing, "solider boy, wherever you go, my heart will *follow*," or reconstitute the femur bone, than the Civil War solider could recover his legs. But just as amputees feel pain in their phantom limbs, so too do these objects convey what I described in chapter four, via Fred Moten, as a sonic materiality. The prosthetics are fitted within World War I cavalry boots that Robleto made from melted vinyl records of Skeeter Davis's 1965 song "It's the End of the World." In the proximity of the Civil War prosthetics to the World War I boots, both of which are made of vinyl records about departed love from the Vietnam era, we once again here that "interminable songlike drag" between three different wars, and between the home front and the front lines.[596] The boots are positioned toward the end of an aisle made of up of powder that includes brass, rust, dirt from various battlefields, ballistic gelatin, white rose petals, and white rice. At the beginning of the aisle sits a small metal can that is filled with gun oil, rose oil, and bacteria cultured from the grooves of Negro prison song and prison choir records

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[595] Blocker, *Seeing Witness*, 42.
[596] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 22.

from the midcentury. In the space between the oil can and the boots we feel the cut between those African American men who fought in the Civil War and World War I, in the hopes of securing their freedom and civil rights, and those incarcerated men of subsequent decades who sang "No More, My Lord."[597] The tracks in the powder that separate the oil can left behind from the boots situated up ahead are suggestive of labored movement, of the dragging of heavy wooden and iron legs, of foreclosed futures.

To those critics of sentimental modes of remembering and relating to the past, including Lauren Berlant and Karen Halttunen, Robleto concedes that we should indeed question what is at stake in sentimentality. But he remains committed to the idea that there is more to be gained from engaging these sentimental practices than there is to be lost when we dismiss them completely.[598] "What right do we have to forget?" he insists. I conclude with Robleto in part because his work combines so many of the elements that have animated this text, and points to the ways in which the feminized work of the widow provides a productive model for the historian. In emulating the work of the widow, the historian feels responsibility for what has been lost, and especially for those histories on the edge of memory, but she does not understand this act of remembering to be one through which histories are made whole or are pulled from the cracks and brought into the light. Although her work is animated by absent and haunting bodies, the widow who

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[597] This song is on the album *Negro Prison Songs from The Mississippi State Penitentiary; A Selection*, which was recorded by Harry Oster in 1947.

[598] For a discussion of Berlant's critiques of nineteenth century sentimental culture in *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), see chapter three. See also Karen Halttunen's chapter "Mourning the Dead: A Study in Sentimental Ritual" in her book *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830–1870*, in which she points to the ways in which "mourning was a mark of middle-class gentility" (43).

has searched the battlefield knows that those bodies cannot be reclaimed. I also conclude with Robleto because his work raises a few of the questions that remain, for me, unanswerable. In looking to crumbs, dust, shadows, and ashes for traces of feminized labor, I have made claims that artworks and performances often contain things without the artists and participants knowing. In finding in murky substances traces from the past that have gone unseen and unfelt, can I say that these traces are meaningful? Can histories that get passed over and left behind be productively critical and forgotten at the same time? Even in the face of these uncertainties, to combine materials, art historical subjects, and critical texts that would not otherwise come to together—so that we might register histories that would otherwise be lost—is my offering. In making this offering, however, I must let go of it, but I do so "with the hope that others will grab hold."[599]

[599] Dario Robleto, "If You Remember, I'll Remember," 18.

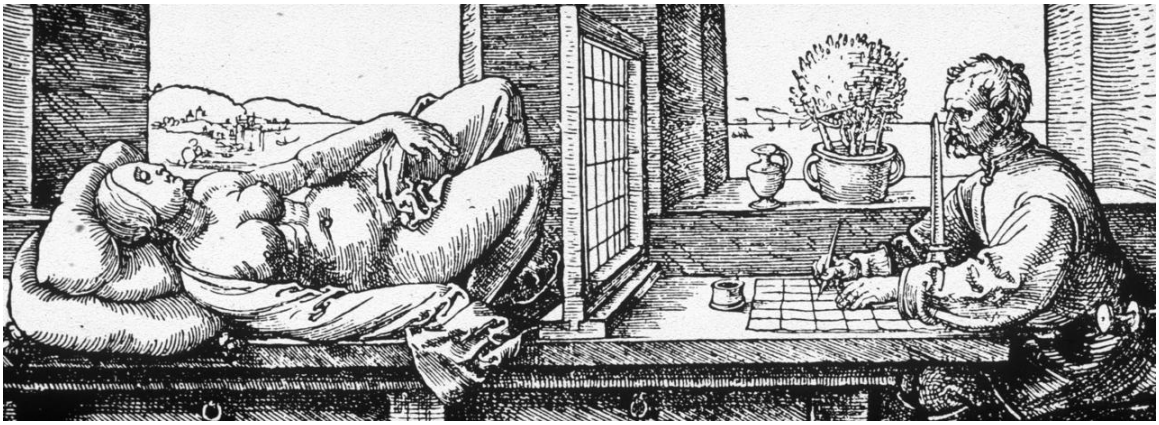

Figure 1.1: Albrecht Dürer, *The Draftsman*, engraving for his *Underweysung der Messung*…, Nuremberg, 1538.

Figure 1.2: Jackson Pollock, *Mural*, 1946. Peggy Guggenheim and Jackson Pollock in front of the mural installed in her home. Photographer unknown.

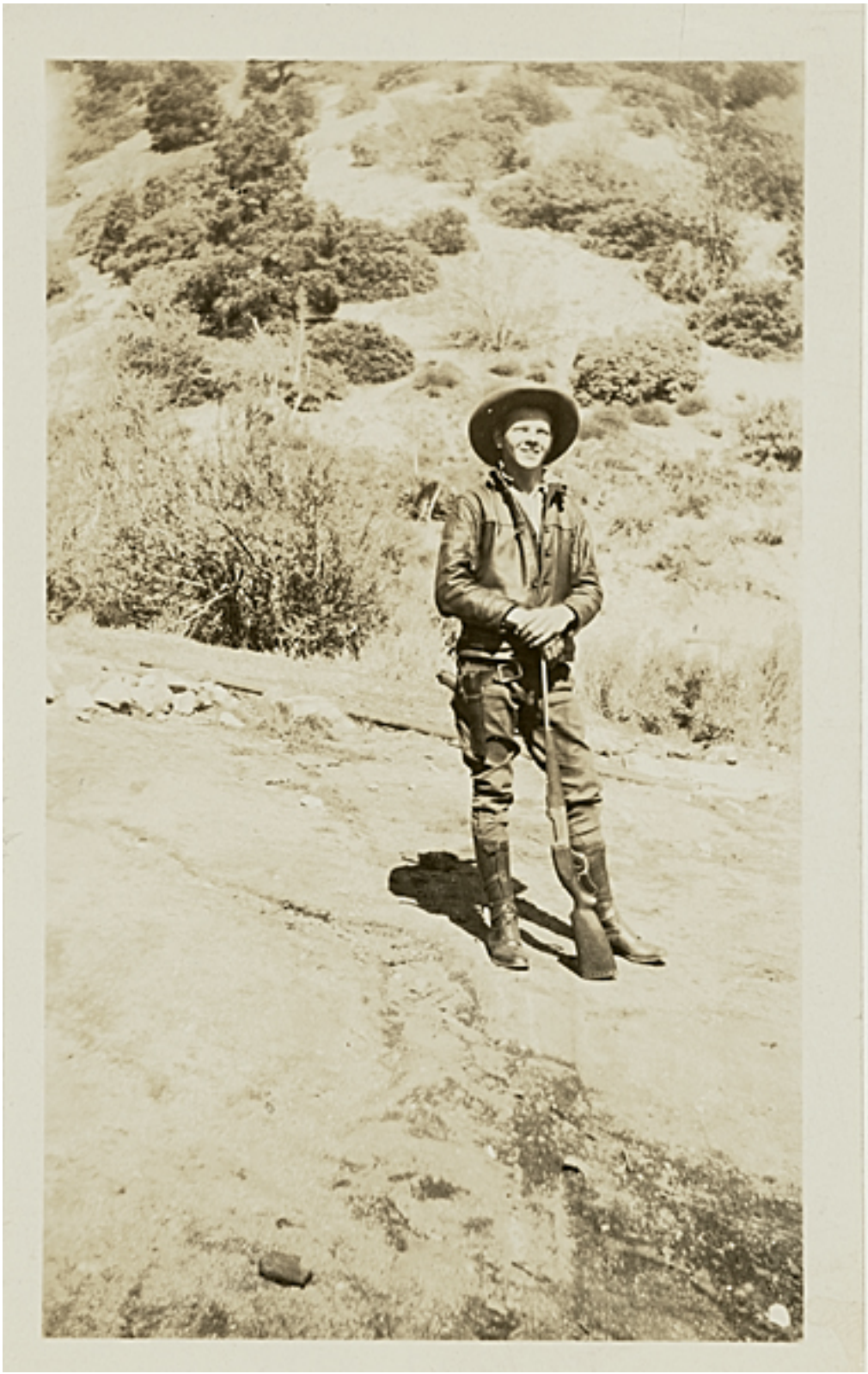

Figure 1.3: Jackson Pollock in Southern California, ca. 1947. Photographer unknown.

Figure 1.4: Jackson Pollock dries dishes with Lee Krasner in the kitchen of their farmhouse, 1949. Photograph by Martha Homles for *Life* magazine.

Figure 1.5: Janet Sobel, *Milky Way*, 1945.

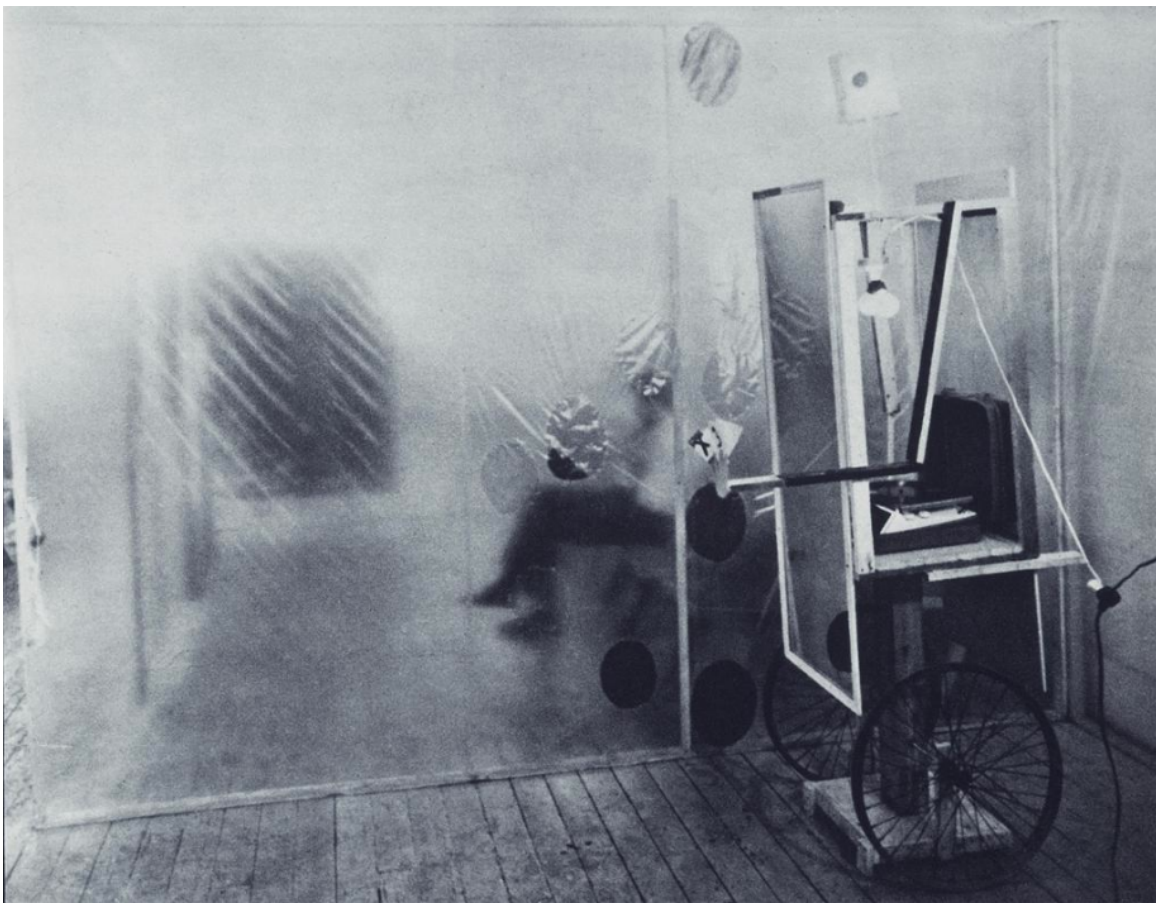

Figure 1.6: Allan Kaprow, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, Reuben Gallery, New York, 1959.

Figure 1.7: Allan Kaprow, *Coca Cola, Shirley Cannonball?*, 1960.

Figure 1.8: Documentation of Futurist dinner at the Tavern of the Holy Palate, Turin, ca. 1931.

Figure 1.9: Emmett Williams and Robert Filliou, *Spaghetti Sandwich—Co-invention*, Eat Art Gallery, New York, 1971.

Figure 1.10: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (History of the Black People),* 1983.

Figure 1.11: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (Picasso Poster)*, 1983.

Figure 2.1: Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled (Free/Still)*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2011–2012.

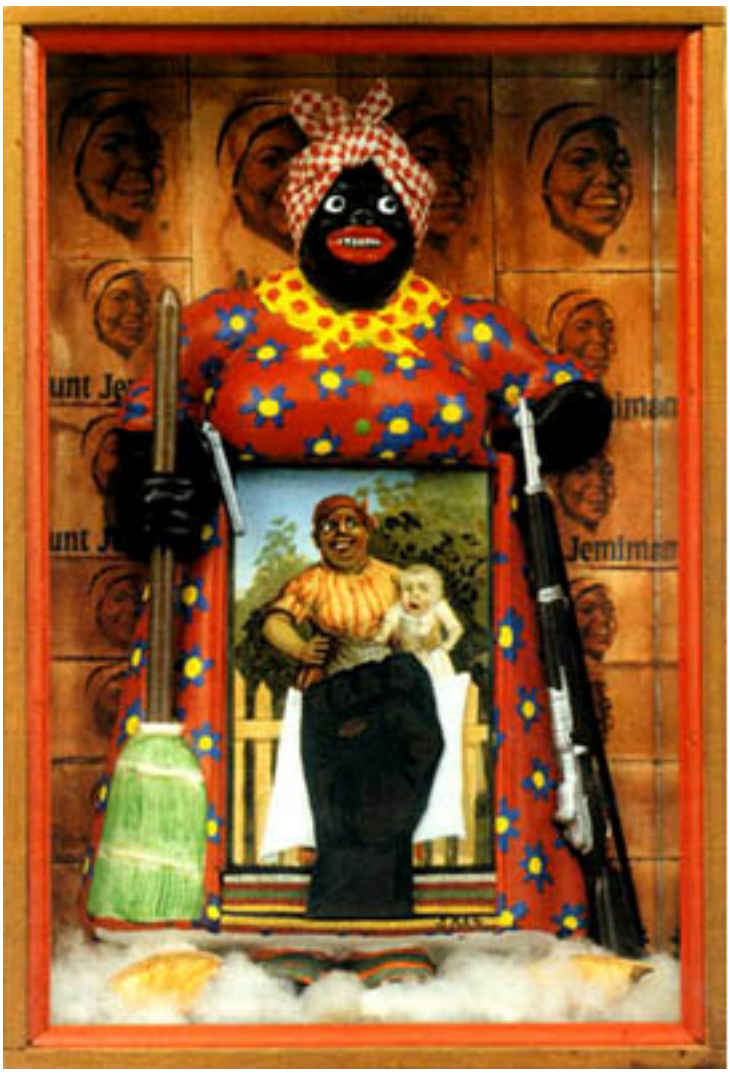

Figure 2.2: Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972.

Figure 2.3: Carrie Mae Weems, *A Class Ponders the Future*, 2008.

Figure 2.4: Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, 1912.

Figure 2.5: Umberto Boccioni, *Unique forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913.

Figure 2.6: Playbill from a performance of Angelina Weld Grimké's *Rachel*, 1916.

Figure 2.7: George Braque, *Violin and Candlestick*, 1910.

Figure 2.8: Theaster Gates, *Dorchester Projects,* Chicago, 2009–present. Archive House Past (2009) and Present (2013).

Figure 2.9: Theaster Gates, *Dorchester Projects,* Archive House Slide Library, Chicago, 2009–present.

Figure 2.10: Slide of J. M. W. Turner's *Self Portrait* (ca. 1798) from Theaster Gates's *Dorchester Projects* (2009–present), Archive House Slide Library.

Figure 2.11: Theaster Gates, *Soul Food Pavilion*, Dorchester Projects, Chicago, 2012. Detail of food served.

Figure 2.12: Theaster Gates, *Dorchester Projects,* Archive House Past, 2009.

Figure 2.13: Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled from the Kitchen Table Series (Woman with Friends)*, 1990.

Figure 2.14: Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled from the Kitchen Table Series (Man Smoking)*, 1990.

Figure 3.1: J. Morgan Puett at Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, Pennsylvania, 2008. Photograph for *New York Times* article "In her Own World," 2008.

Figure 3.2: Residents climbing a dome at the Drop City complex, Goatfield, Colorado, 1966.

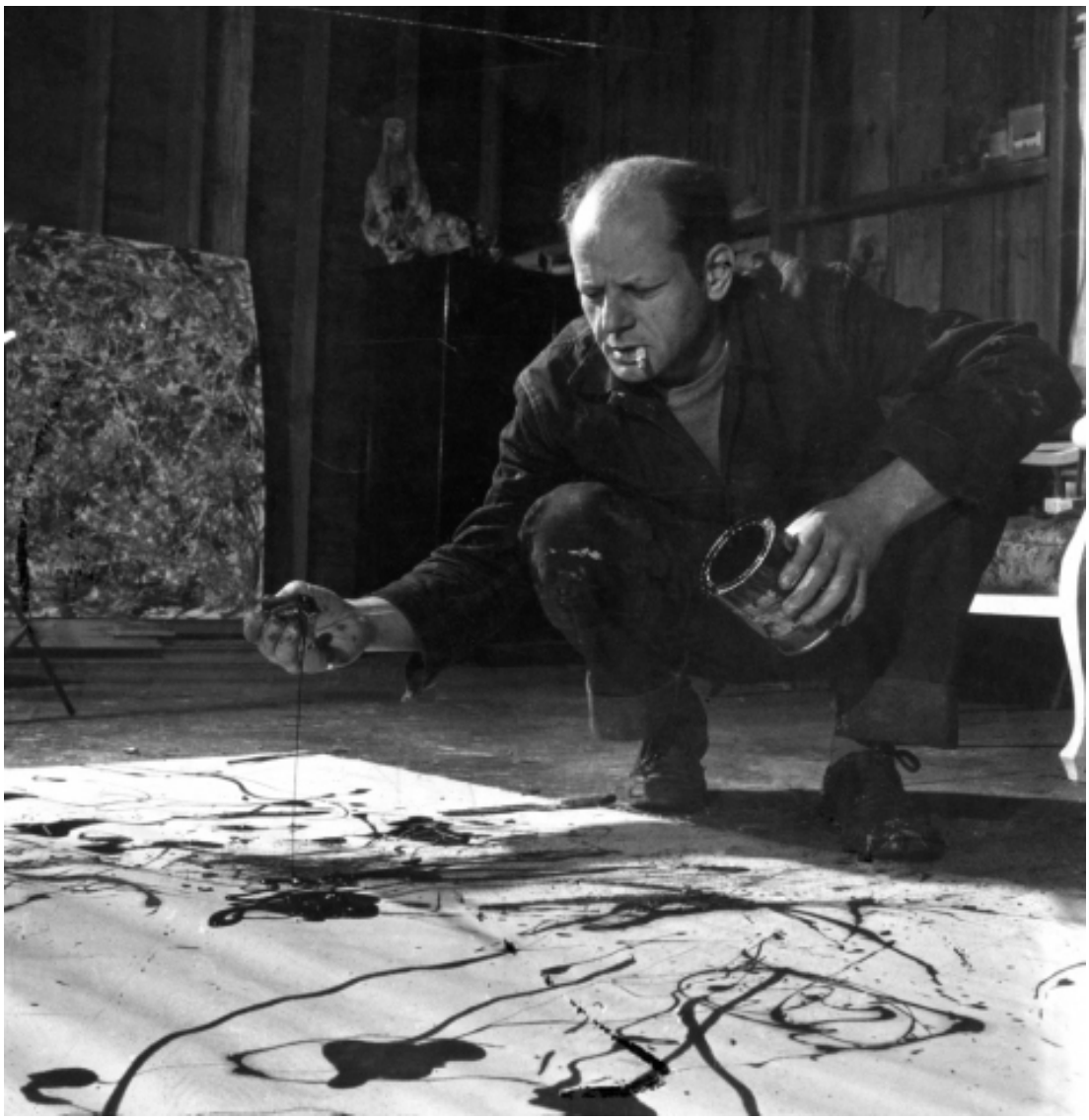

Figure 3.3: Jackson Pollock works in his Long Island studio, 1949. Photograph by Martha Holmes for *Life* magazine.

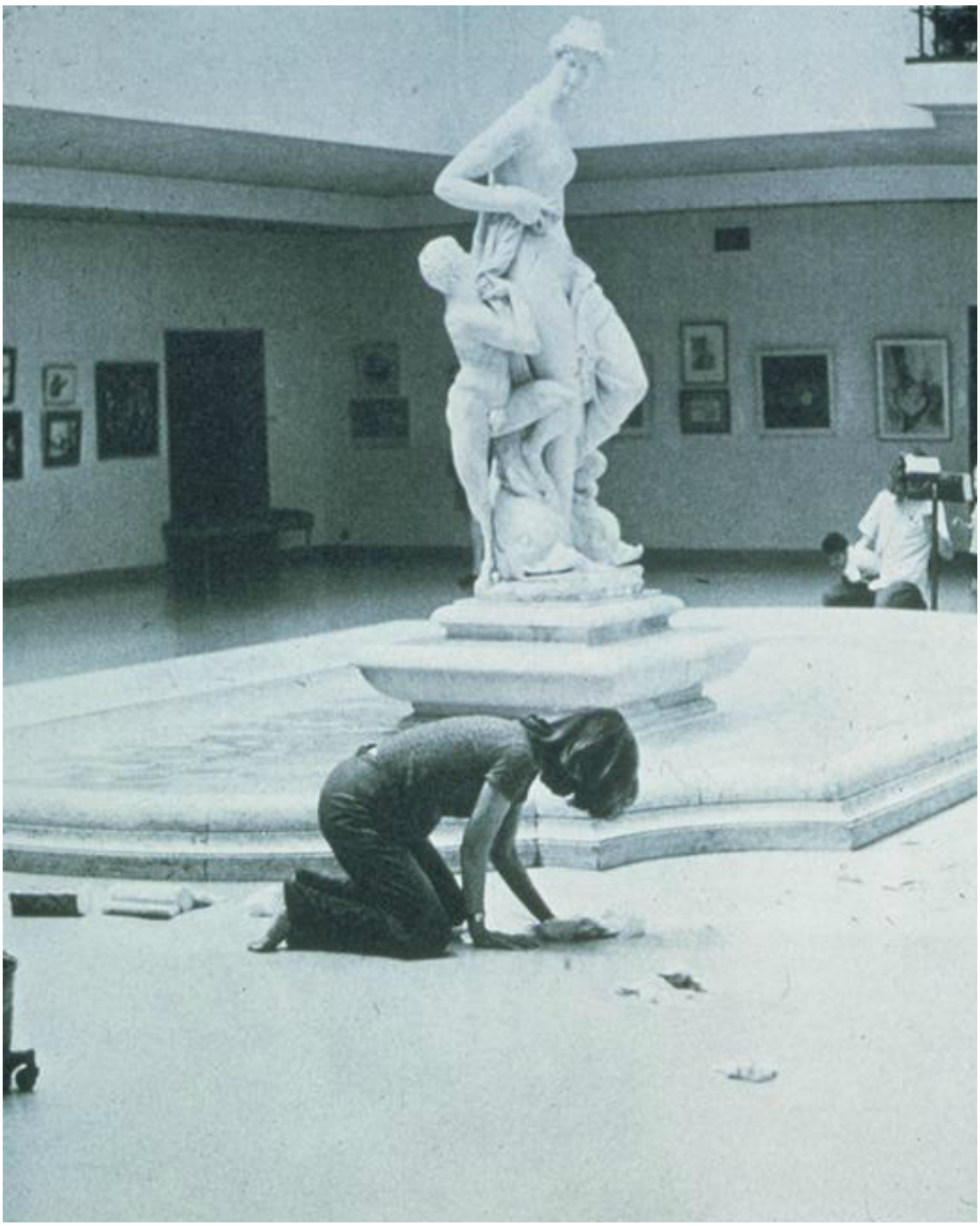

Figure 3.4: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Hartford Wash: Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Inside* (July 22, 1973), part of Maintenance Art Performance Series, Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, 1973.

Figure 3.5: Camille Grey, *Lipstick Bathroom* from *Womanhouse*, 1972.

Figure 3.6: Allison Smith, *The Muster*, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, New York, 2005. Photograph of troops drilling at Fort Jay, May 14, 2005.

Figure 3.7: Portrait of J. Morgan Puett - Gone AWOL at Allison's Smith's *The Muster*, Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, 2004.

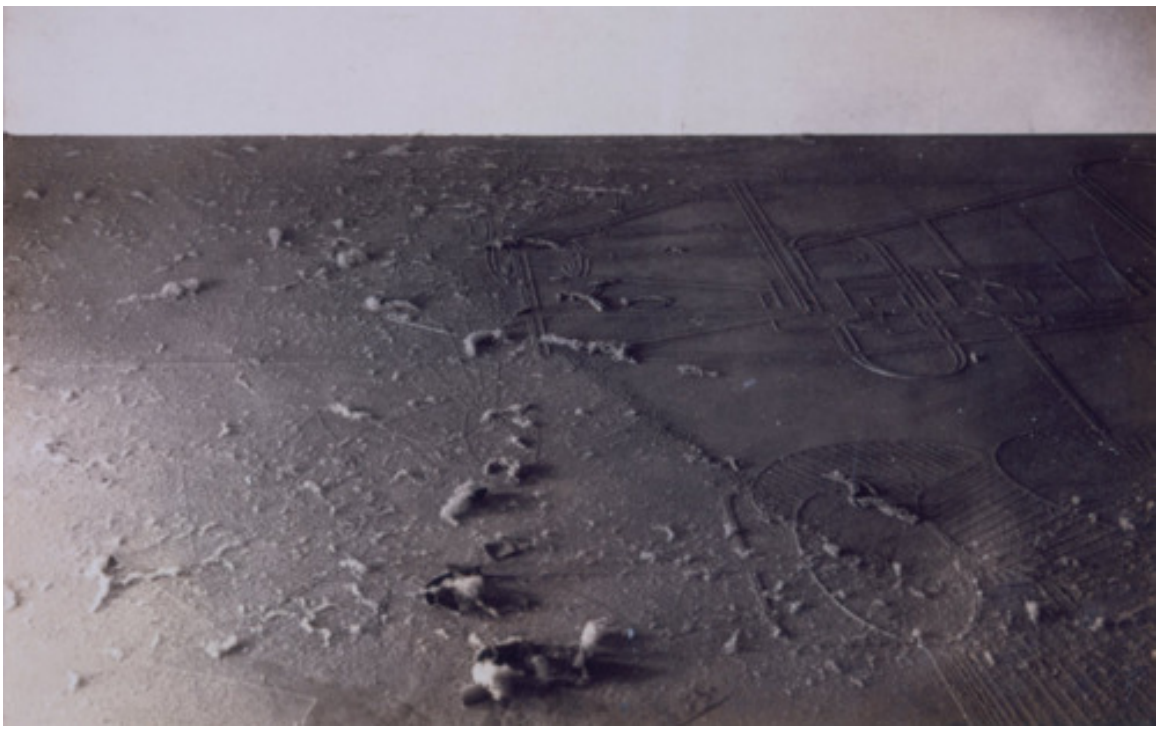

Figure 3.8: Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, *Dust Breeding*, 1920.

Figure 3.9: Braxton/Campbell family home, 35 Calhoun Street, Charleston, South Carolina. Photograph by Simon Upton for the 2002 Spoleto Festival.

Figure 3.10: J Morgan Puett, *Cottege Industry*, Charleston, South Carolina, 2002. Sewing station.

Figure 3.11: Library at Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, Pennsylvania, 2008. Photographed for *London Telegraph*.

Figure 3.12: J. Morgan Puett's bedroom, Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, Pennsylvania, 2008. Photographed for *London Telegraph*.

Figure 3.13: Mildred Steffens's farmhouse, Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, Pennsylvania.

Figure 3.14: Frederick Church, *Twilight in the Wilderness*, 1860.

Figure 3.15: David Avalos, *Wilderness,* 1989.

Figure 3.16: Timothy O'Sullivan, *A Harvest of Death,* Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1863.

Figure 3.17: J. Morgan Puett, *Grafter's Shack*, 2002. Interior.

Figure 3.18: Sally Mann, *Untitled (Georgia)* (from the series *Deep South*), 2005.

Figure 3.19: Still from Jacques Tourneur, *Night of the Demon*, 1957.

Figure 4.1: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body is A Battleground)*, 1989.

Figure 4.2: Negative of Charlotte Moorman performing Nam June Paik's *Sonata for Adults Only*, Caracas, Venezuela, 1975. Photograph by Luciano Maurizio.

Figure 4.3: Charlotte Moorman performing Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* during her solo European tour at the end, 1970. Photograph by D. Krives.

Image not available.

Figure 4.4: Charlotte Moorman wearing Nam June Paik's *TV Bra* in her Pearl Street loft, New York City, October 16, 1991. Photograph by Peter Moore.

Figure 4.5: Charlotte Moorman at work on the 15th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival in her Pearl Street loft, New York City, 1980. Photo by Gisela Scheidler.

Image not available.

Figure 4.6: Charlotte Moorman and Frank Pileggi on the rooftop of their Pearl Street Loft, 1984. Photograph by Peter Moore.

Figure 4.7: Charlotte Moorman's Pearl Street Loft, New York City, 1991. Photograph by Christian Xatrec.

Image not available.

Figure 4.8: Ay-O*, Rainbow Streamers,* 1972. Installed on the Hudson River side-wheeler the Alexander Hamilton. Photograph by Peter Moore.

Figure 4.9: Charlotte Moorman, *Syringe Cello (Shadow of my Cello),* 1989.

Figure 4.10: Man Ray, *Le Violon d'Ingre*, 1924.

Image not available.

Figure 4.11: Charlotte Moorman's first performance of Joseph Beuys's *Infiltration Homogen for Cello* at the 4th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival, Central Park, New York,1966. Photograph by Peter Moore.

Figure 4.12: Charlotte Moorman and Joseph Beuys at John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York, after his action *I Like America and America Likes Me*, May 1974. Photo by Francesco Conz.

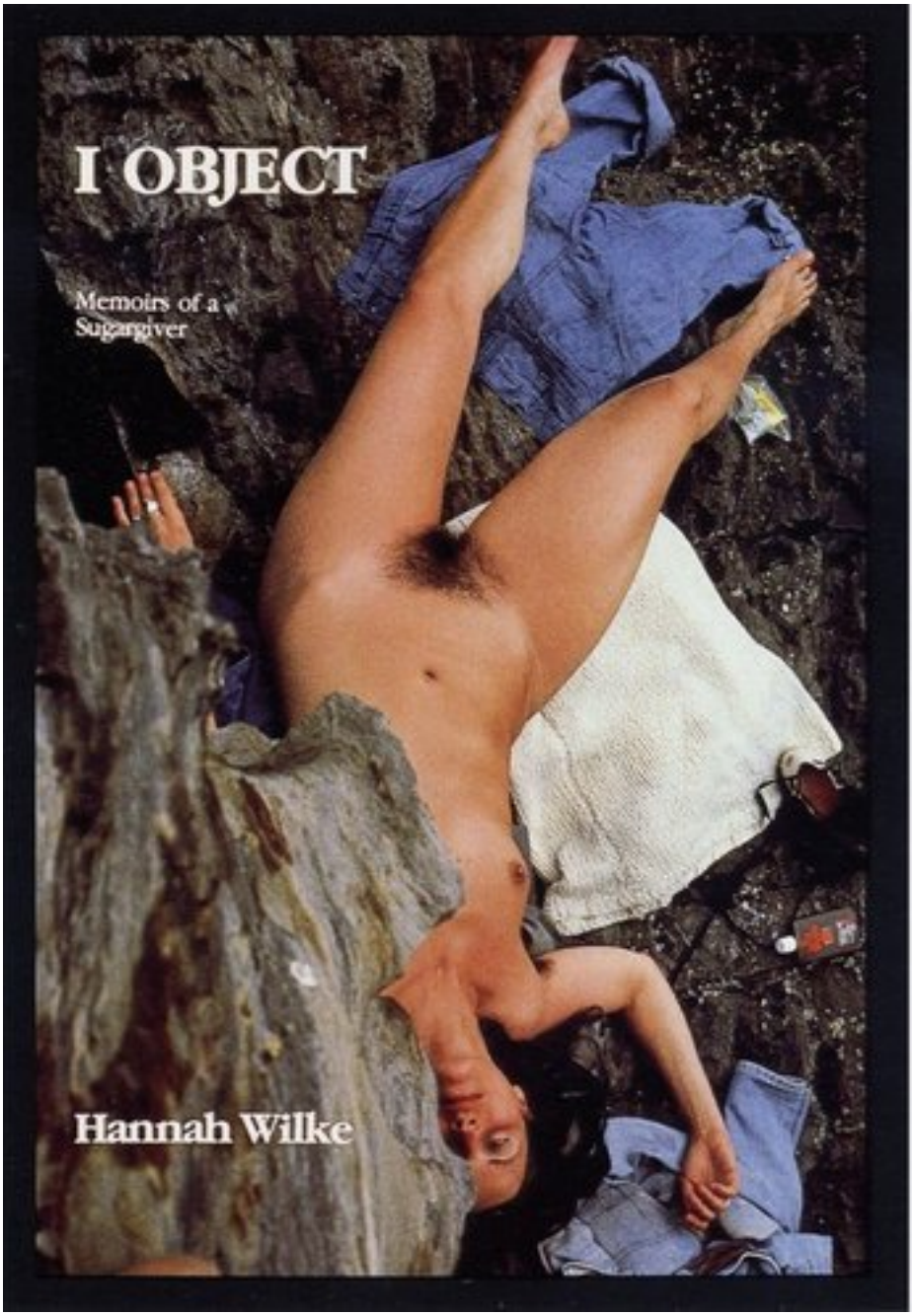

Figure 4.13: Hannah Wilke, *I OBJECT: Memoires of a Sugargiver*, 1977–78.

Figure 4.14: Charlotte Moorman performing Jim McWilliams's *Candy (The Ultimate Easter Bunny)*, 1973. Photograph by Peter Moore.

Figure 4.15: Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992. Detail, chocolate and lard cubes.

Figure 4.16: Nam June Paik assists Charlotte Moorman in Aria 2 of *Opera Sextronique*, New York City, 1967. Photograph by Hy Rothman/NY Daily News.

Figure 4.17: Carrie Mae Weems, *Chocolate Colored Man* (from the series *Colored People*), 1987.

Figure 4.18: Charlotte Moorman as Little Rock's Miss City Beautiful, 1952.
Photographer unknown.

Figure 4.19: Lorna Simpson, *Corridor*, 2003.

Figure 4.20: Lorna Simpson, *LA–57 NY–09*, 2009.

Figure 4.21: Lorna Simpson, *LA–57 NY–09*, 2009.

Figure 5.1: Dario Robleto, *No One Has a Monopoly Over Sorrow*, 2005.

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Figure 5.3: Dario Robleto, *A Defeated Soldier Wishes to Walk His Daughter Down the Wedding Aisle*, 2004.

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