

# “Addicted to Love”; Or, Toward an Inessential Solidarity

D. DIANE DAVIS

## Cutting Figures

We know from his secretary that Immanuel Kant was determined to master his body, to control and command it, going so far as to engage a “permanent vigilance” against all bodily spasms—coughing, sweating, sneezing—all those in-house uproars that can, in an instant, expose the philosophical subject as the *object* of a spasm’s will (Agacinski 17). But these rounds of friendly fire, Kant recognized, were only half the battle; our *autonomophilic* would also have to defend himself against outside encroachments. In fact, patrolling the bodily border zones at the level of the *skin* is a perpetual challenge, especially since, as Sylviane Agacinski observes, human beings often find themselves explicitly “plugged into” other human beings—certainly, breastfeeding is one example. Sex is another. These connections are particularly troubling ones because they blur the distinction between self and other, subject and object, inside and outside. So, in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, when Kant discusses the management of sexual relations, he attempts to re-enforce perimeters by appropriating the body of the other as a means to an end, and therefore to re-infuse the scene with the appropriate dichotomies. Sexual “enjoyment,” a Right of marriage, he says, is “the natural use that one sex makes of the other’s sexual organs.” Because this “enjoyment” depends on “a human being [making] himself into a thing” to be “acquired,” a marriage contract must provide for “one person [to be] acquired by the other *as if it were a thing*.” But since this obligatory self-thinging conflicts with one’s Right to own and master oneself, Kant insists that this must be a *reciprocal* acquiring: for it’s in the act of acquiring the other that each partner reasserts “its” Self and “restores its personality” (96-97).<sup>1</sup>

In short, then, by relating to the body of another as an object to be used, our *autonomophilic* protects its boundaries and its autonomy, preventing “the other’s flesh,” as Agacinski puts it, “from infringing on its own” (17). Kant’s contract establishes the possibility for “unity” by guaranteeing *separation*, by representing the subject to itself as an

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again" (91). And Barbara Biesecker, in her important new book, *Addressing Postmodernity*, reiterates this possibility, arguing for "the power of persuasive discourse to constitute audiences out of individuals, to transform singularities into collectives, to fashion a 'we' out of a plurality of 'I's,' and to move them to collective action" (1).

This is not without its problems, of course, and Burke himself explicated the nasty consequences associated with his own thoroughly modernist notion of rhetoric, but he was simply calling it as he saw it: human beings are divided, and for rhetoric to pull them together into a community, it'll need to hail them as such. And it'll need to do it, he says, even though the so-called communities it will have pulled together will be congregations based on segregation.<sup>3</sup> For, congregation's very condition of possibility is exclusion, a constitutive outside that doesn't make the cut. And Burke is quick to point out that the ultimate disease of the cooperation engendered through this identification is WAR (*Rhetoric* 22). Identification demands exclusion, and not just exclusion but excretion, too, and often repudiation, abjection.

What ought not be missed here is that rhetoric as identification-persuasion appropriates the goals of Kant's marriage contract for the "community," attempting to keep the "other" from closing in by representing the community to itself as a unified body (a "we")—unified across its own figural representation—and representing the other as *another unified body*, one that is very much not the same and is, therefore, excludable. The communal body continually reasserts its Self (its "personality") by excluding/excreting that which is figured as other. Consider, for instance, the simultaneously unifying *and* excluding force of the figure of the Aryan, or the Christian, or the American—but also of the figure of Man, of Woman, of the Liberal or the Conservative ("compassionate" or not), etc. Of course, neither the so-called community nor the other is unifiable, reducible to an identified figure, but the process allows both the rhetor who would pull this community together and the singularities identified across its figural representation to *mime* all the unity and certainty that Kant's subject assumed. This figuration for the sake of representation, this will-to-figure that excludes in order to include, Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy have suggested, is the very problem of the political (*Retreating*).

What will interest us here is rhetoric's complicity in this problem, its drive to establish "an essence-in-common (a community)" on the basis of a figure that the community "identifies as and with itself" (Sparks xxiv). There is no question that the process "works," that identifying rhetorics, be they visual, verbal, written, and/or electric, can still mobilize a nation, a state, a town. . . a *gang*. This is an ethical rather than a utilitarian issue: if in the very act of cutting the figure that would unify, one also, simultaneously, cuts off and out the other,

perhaps rhetoric's *will-to-figure* ought to be rigorously rethought. And perhaps the value of rhetoric's *disidentifying* force ought to be reconsidered, its capacity to expose a "community" *not* reducible to a representable figure, a community that shares not a common identity but rather the "infinite lack of an infinite identity" (Nancy, *Inoperative*). It may be time, that is, to engage a dis/figuring rhetoric. Some will say that this would be an apolitical move, but it seems to me that it would be *powerfully* political in an/Other sense: it would have everything to do with reconceiving the possibilities for being-together-in-the-world.

So let's think this through. And let's begin by admitting that "identifying" scans as a certain type of "drugging," of being-*on-something*. Identifications are structurally imperative, to be sure, but, like anything else that intoxicates Being, they respond to an originarily addictive dis/position, and their effects are utterly dependent on dosage and mixture.

### Having Always Already Said 'Yes' . . .

In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger offers an important insight on the nature of addiction: that addiction is always addicted to *itself*, first. Here's Heidegger: "What one is addicted 'towards' is to *let oneself be drawn* by the sort of thing for which the addiction hankers" (#195). The originary force of addiction, then, is not in the hankering but in the "let[ting] oneself be drawn." An *addicted* addiction is structurally anterior to that for which it ends up hankering, which is why addiction eventually will accept an offer of exchange—God for alcohol, endorphins for amphetamines, even methadone for heroine—but it's also why, as Avital Ronell has shown,<sup>4</sup> the addiction *to* addiction itself—the craving to *let oneself be drawn*--is a strictly unkickable habit. Indeed, Heidegger's insight turned out to be more than he bargained for, prompting the recognition, despite his objections, that there is no unaddicted Being, no being that is not already divided among itself, that is not *dispossessed* perpetually by a craving that is at the same time *part* of itself and yet *anterior* to its Self. There is no self-unity for (what we will loosely call) "drugs" to rupture, since the "Self" is always already not-one and not-at-one<sup>5</sup> with its Self. Originally addicted—always already im-proper, im-pertinent—exists forever exceed themSelves. In fact, as Eduardo Cadava, in his reading of Celan's "Engführung," observed, in order to be who you are, you have to be "on your way," being drawn, "toward something else" ("Toward an Ethics" 11).

Inasmuch as addiction operates as a fundamental structure of desire, a "structure that precedes and exceeds the knowing subject," it also, as David L. Clark has suggested, "displaces and disorganizes firm oppositional limits between propriety and impropriety," "responsibility and irresponsibility," "voluntarity and compulsion," "delinquency

and productivity,” and “sickness and health” (8-9). It would be as ridiculous to be *against* addiction as such as it would be to be *for* it since we are, as Clark puts it, “incapable of just saying no to a form of radical intoxication.” This is not to say that some “drugs” are not more life-affirming and/or life-destroying than others—on the contrary, that will have been an important point—but it is to say that Being-*under-the-influence* is the condition of possibility for Being itself.

Heidegger doesn't name the sort of “thing” towards which addiction would hanker—he leaves it open, granting the signifier “drugs” quite a lot of semiotic space. Given the current US context, of course, “drugs” scans almost immediately as “illicit drugs”; and, in fact, as Ronell notes, rumor has it in Frieburg that Heidegger dropped acid with Ernst Jünger (*Crack Wars* 33), who also turned Heidegger on to technology, a “drug” on which he later slapped a warning label. But it's important to remember that pretty much *anything* can function as a “drug,” as that toward which one allows oneself to hanker, and that, though one might detox from any given intoxicant, there is no moment at which one actually *comes down* off hankering as such. What we call “drugs” are “everywhere dispensed,” as Ronell reminds us, resisting “conceptual arrest” (51) and perpetually expanding to include every ready-to-hand “exigency of ecstasy” (42)—Ecstasy: 1. a trancelike dissociation from all but a single overpowering feeling/drive/emotion (identification); 2. the experience of *ek-stasis*, of standing outside. . .of one's ‘Self,’ of one's so-called proper identity (disidentification).

### Private Addictions, Public Relations:

There are those disidentifying drugs that actually spotlight the experience of *ek-stasis* itself, the experience of Being-not-one. Perhaps the best example of this kind of drug is “love,” in Jean-Luc Nancy's post-metaphysical sense of the term. Love: experiencing oneself as “traversed” by the ungraspable “alterity of the Other” (“Shattered Love” 98). Christopher Fynsk notes that for Nancy, love sparks a kind of “finite transcendence: the subject *finds itself* in love, *beyond itself*” (“The Self” xviii). To be “in love” is to become intoxicated with another's Otherness, to long to be brushed by the “incessant coming and going” of its singularity (Nancy 98), its not-at-oneness—to *let oneself be drawn* toward the Other in the other. And, in the process, to experience oneself as fundamentally exposed. To be “addicted to love,” then, is to crave the exposition of the other's im-pertinence, im-propriety, *ek-stasis*. . .and so to experience and affirm one's own. To “fall in love,” in this sense, is to abandon oneself to this abandonment, to embrace one's own *ek-stasis*: will it, to mainline it.

But don't get me wrong. The experience of being-not-one can also spark a very strong allergic reaction, and some of the most intoxicating

drugs are those that counter that reaction, those drugs that are associated with the need to “assert an identity, the need for Being-one that integrates individuals. . . [and that] cannot be secured without being embedded in the unity of a more comprehensive connectedness” (Düttmann 52). At this end of the drug-spectrum, then, we have the possibility of becoming intoxicated with what we might call “squeezeure,” a *mutant* form of love that, in holding on too tight, gives the Other the squeeze. This addiction hankers after a “mystified communion of community, a mythology of ‘Volk’ “ (Ronell, *Crack Wars* 42). Seeking its fix in the most unloving ways, this craving manifests itself in exclusionary practices and “final solutions” designed to clear the way for communion—Heidegger and his alleged drug buddy turned out to have been tanked up on precisely this. Hankering after the possibility of touching the *Selvsame* in the other, the squeezeure addict longs to Be-One and to Be-at-one with those others who are *the same*. To be hooked on squeezeure is to crave stasis, pertinence, the proper mode of belonging. Importantly, the so-called “Heidegger Affair,” though obviously heartless, was also an *affair of the heart*—an affair, however, that leaves the Other unlovable.

In this sense, what one is addicted towards can set the course, perhaps at the level of a drive, for one’s relations with others, calling into question Richard Rorty’s insistence on a rigid public/private split, on a clean distinction between striving for human solidarity and *fiddling* with self-creation.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it seems that these “private” intoxications directly affect/infect the possibilities for communal relations, public politics, and social justice. It is, after all, we-addicts who make up the public sphere, and we-addicts are typically more prone to allergic reaction than affirmation, to an intoxication with squeezeure than with love. The “Heidegger Affair” is a case in point, illustrating the blow that private addictions can deal public relations. Heidegger’s work revolutionized the occident’s thinking about both singularity and solidarity by naming “being-with” (*Mitsein*) as the very condition of possibility for Being itself (*Dasein*), positing a “togetherness” that *precedes* the *cogito* and turns “the subject” into a *product* of a more originary sharing. But Heidegger also, paradoxically, allowed himself to be drawn by a particularly potent longing for belonging, never quite shaking the effects of the signifier “*Geschlecht*” (“family,” “race,” “lineage,” etc.).<sup>7</sup> Never quite shaking, more specifically, the figure of the *Aryan*. No doubt about it, Heidegger’s public enthusiasm for national reunification sprung from a private craving for “a more comprehensive connectedness,” for *Gemeinschaft*: an organic community based on *Geschlecht*. In the end, Heidegger couldn’t kick his craving for a communion of sameness, which always demands the excretion of otherness, and even the counter-drug of *Mit-da-sein* wasn’t enough to temper the disastrous effects of this craving. Addiction, after all, is tyrannical, bossy, demand-

ing its fix no matter what the cost.

What's most arresting and most important for us here is that Heidegger's craving is a familiar one—in this respect, as Victor Vitanza has put it, "*Heidegger is one of us!*" (*Negation* 191). Squeeze is one potent addiction, and the scramble is still on, in all responsible thinking fields, to come up with a way to think about being-together that would promote a sense of solidarity without, at the same time, feeding this imperious craving—without simultaneously prompting the staging and setting to work of a 'Volk' (Nancy, *Inoperative* 46). Because the myth of common-being *cannot not* serve to "suppress differences among members and exclude those who are labeled different" (Faigley 231), the notion of a "*just community*" seems almost an oxymoron. The question, after Auschwitz, is whether there is any way think about the communal relation that doesn't simultaneously give the other the squeeze, that leaves the other "lovable" in Nancy's sense of the term. More directly: Is there a way to activate a sense of solidarity among singularities—a way to say "we"—that doesn't automatically exclude, that doesn't just *ask for trouble* by simultaneously feeding this craving for communion, for *Gemeinschaft* (in the name of which any number of "we"s have committed the most horrific atrocities in recorded history)?

### *Agonistic Pluralism*

Many have proposed that the last, best hope for a half-way affirmative response to this question lies in what is being called a radically pluralist democracy. Chantal Mouffe, for instance, has argued quite eloquently that what is necessary today, after the crisis in the legitimation of knowledge, after the "death" of the subject, after the utter failure of Enlightenment liberalism, is the revival of a strong "democratic ethos" via "the creation of democratic forms of individuality" ("Deconstruction" 5) and "citizens" who identify with the principles of democracy: "freedom and equality for all" ("Democratic Citizenship" 65). In "Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community," Mouffe elaborates on the plan she and Ernesto Laclau set out in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* a decade earlier. Establishing a distance between her democratic project and the communitarian's, she suggests that "what we share and what makes us fellow citizens in a liberal democratic regime is not a substantive idea of the good but a set of political principles specific to such a tradition: the principles of freedom and equality for all." Citizenship, she says, in a "radical and plural democracy," is not "a legal status" but rather "a form of identification. . . something to be constructed, not empirically given," making the construction of "citizens' identities. . . an important task of democratic politics." That task will require that we "conceive of a mode of political association that. . . implies the idea of community, of an ethico-political bond that creates a linkage among

the participants in the association, allowing us to speak of a political 'community'" but without collapsing distinctions "between public and private, morality and politics" (60-66).

To that end, Mouffe radicalizes Michael Oakeshott's conservative discussions of *societas* and *respublica* in his *On Human Conduct*. Whereas *Universitas* offers a "model of association of agents engaged in a common enterprise defined by a purpose. . . *societas* or 'civil association' designates a formal relationship in terms of [agreed upon] rules." The social bond activated in a *societas*, then, is a function not of a collective action but of "loyalty to one another"; the relation among participants is a function of their "acknowledgment of the authority of certain conditions in acting," a function of what Oakeshott calls "a practice of civility": *respublica*. Membership in the political community requires only the acceptance of this *respublica*, an "identification with those rules of civil intercourse," which "creates a common political identity among persons otherwise engaged in many different enterprises" (Mouffe, "Democratic Citizenship" 66-67).

Mouffe, then, through her reading of Oakeshott, puts forth a notion of solidarity based on a collective agreement about social behavior, a "common recognition of a set of ethico-political values." This collective agreement entails simply that citizens treat "others as free and equal persons." But because Mouffe understands that "there can be as many forms of citizenship as there are interpretations of those principles" and that any *respublica* is "the product of a given hegemony, the expression of power relations," she argues that "it can be challenged." In fact, the possibility of this "challenge" is, for Mouffe, the very stuff of politics: "Political life concerns collective, public action; it aims at the construction of a 'we' in a context of diversity and conflict." Given that the construction of any "we" also, simultaneously, institutes a "'constitutive outside,' an exterior to the community that makes its existence possible," there will be no end to diversity and conflict, which turn out not to be roadblocks to a future harmony but rather constitutive aspects of democracy itself. Though "forms of agreement can be reached," she says, "they are always partial and provisional since consensus is by necessity based upon acts of exclusion" (69-70).

Hers then, is an "agonistic pluralism" in which the borders of the "constitutive outside" would be up for perpetual challenge. The basis of the democracy itself, in fact, would be the constant challenging and restructuring of this "outside." And furthermore, she says, because these radical democratic citizens would agree to treat others as "free and equal persons," they would not challenge each other as "enemies" but rather as "adversaries." An "adversary" signifies an opponent "whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated"; we might "fight against his ideas," she says, "but we will not question his right to defend them." An "enemy," on the other hand, would signify an opponent who must "be destroyed" (*Return* 4).



It's significant, however, that the "displaced" category of the enemy does not really "disappear" in Mouffe's vision. Indeed, she reserves that label for those others who "do not accept the democratic 'rules of the game' and who thereby *exclude themselves* from the political community" (*Return* 4, my emphasis). The enemy, that is, turns out to be anyone who cannot or will not identify with the figure of "the citizen," the unifying—and excluding—principle across which this "radically democratic" community is hailed. Let's not forget—and it's clear that Mouffe doesn't forget—that any identity is "constituted by the force of exclusion and abjection" (Butler, *Bodies* 3). To posit an identification with a new figure as the answer to the exclusionary practices wrought by other identifications is risky business. The identification process *itself* is primarily excremental; as Judith Butler has aptly illustrated, whatever can't be embraced as a constitutive part of identity not only gets excreted but also runs the risk of being "repeatedly repudiated" (*Psychic* 149). In fact, Butler goes on to note that the process of identification is "the [very] mode by which others become shit." (*Gender* 133-4). So, two related objections to Mouffe's plan:

First, though Mouffe embraces conflict and antagonism as the very heart of democracy, arguing that the capacity to challenge any hegemonic expression of power relations is the stuff of politics ("Democratic" 68), she does not discuss the ways in which this potential "challenge" is always already *checked* by the normative discourses of the "hegemony" itself, by the discursive constraints necessarily imposed on any "challenge."<sup>8</sup> That is, she does not discuss and does not seem *bothered* nearly enough by the fact that any "hegemony," including the democratic one she promotes, would necessarily constitute not only "adversaries" capable of "legitimately" challenging its authority (and possibly rebels who consciously refuse to play by the rules) but also a zone of the *irredeemably* excluded—the unheardable.<sup>9</sup> Michel Serres is helpful here: "To hold a dialogue," he says, "is to suppose a third man [*sic*] and to seek to exclude him; a successful communication is the exclusion of the third man. The most profound dialectical problem is not the problem of the Other [adversary], who is only . . . a variation. . . of the Same [another citizen], it is the problem of the third man [enemy]" (66). The real Other here, in other words, is not the adversary but the enemy: the citizen-adversaries are *teammates* who struggle together against the third man in order to keep their game going (67).

In Mouffe's vision, the other gets figured as the noise, the interference that must be silenced (she says "destroyed") for the sake of the *legitimate* challenges issued among teammates—for the sake, that is, of what Mouffe calls the "reasonable agreement" that such *legitimate* challenges can provoke ("Rethinking" 172). The other/Other doesn't get a hearing here at all. What gets avoided completely is what Jean-

François Lyotard calls “the differend,” an injustice that is not litigable because the parties in conflict don’t share the same rules of cognition: what’s at stake for at least one of the parties will remain inexpressible, unspeakable within the genre(s) of discourse through which the “reasonable agreement” is reached. The very possibility of a differend suggests that any hegemony, even a benevolent one up for a *valid* challenge, will be covertly (or ignorantly) smothering “unknown senses” when it refuses (or forgets) to listen for “what is not presentable under the rules of [its *own*] knowledge.” Straining toward “unknown senses,” Lyotard observes, is imperative; in fact, he says, “[e]very reality entails this exigency” (*Differend* 57-58).

But, and this is important: straining toward “unknown senses” does not entail struggling to *under/stand*; rather, it entails embracing under/standing’s withdrawal; that is: embracing the exposition of this withdrawal *as* (an/Other kind of) communication, a communication communicating *that* there is the unhearable/unspeakable. The problem with Mouffe’s faith in perpetual challenge is that no “challenge” will show up as legitimate unless it’s issued from within the current hegemony’s privileged phrase regimens. We’re in Burke’s territory here: “You persuade a man [*sic*] only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his” (*Rhetoric* 55). But if “your ways” are not *his* ways, if what wants to be said cannot be articulated within the judging genre of discourse, argument and persuasion will not help; and if you attempt to point to what has remained unhearable or to the differend itself, those teammates who come to what Mouffe calls a “reasonable agreement” are likely to dismiss you as crazy or evil or *the enemy*. The radical pluralism Mouffe describes doesn’t seem quite radical *enough* for our purposes. It’s still a product of squeeze, it still proffers a will-to-figure, and it still leaves us with a congregation that is based on segregation.

And, second objection: Mouffe never explicitly questions the assumption that “community” is a product of subjectivity, never addresses the problem inherent in that assumption: that if it’s correct, any notion of a “just community” would indeed be an oxymoron. What defines any subject, as Jean-Luc Nancy observes, is “that its outside and all its ‘alienations’ or ‘extraneousness’ should in the end be suppressed by or sublated in [its subjecthood]” (*Inoperative* 24). Alterity is, by definition, the enemy of subjectivity. Any “community” *built* by subjects and/or based on the interaction among subjects already will have been drained of its otherness, already will have been a function of squeeze. Mouffe’s rhetorics of re-identification and reunification attempt to promote a widespread “democratic ethos,” but they don’t leave the Other “lovable” . . . lovable *enough*. . . nor do they offer a counter-drug potent enough to temper an intoxication with squeeze.

Therefore, whereas Mouffe promotes an identifying (modernist-Burkean) rhetoric that would push a “common political identity,” I would propose—alongside it, not to replace it but to accompany and counter it—a disidentifying (*postmodernist-Vitanzan*) rhetoric that would point up the impropriety of any [proper] identity, that would strive to dis/figure unifying figurations and to expose its interlocutors to their radical non-figurability, their not-at-oneness—a rhetoric that would strive to expose them to the unsharable non-figurability *that they share*. So, alongside Mouffe, but with a “loving” twist, I will suggest here that a truly *radical* pluralist democracy “to come”—and Mouffe agrees with Derrida: “true” democracy will be forever *on its way*—would require rhetorics of an/Other kind of “citizenship,” rhetorics that, in the face of rampant squeeze-addiction, churn out a *perpetual flow of counter-(tr)opiates* designed to *interrupt* insidious and invidious “I-formations” and “we-formations.” Specifically, I’m calling for what Vitanza has termed a “third sophistic rhetoric,” which he defines as: “the ‘art’ of ‘resisting and disrupting’ the available means (that is, the cultural codes) that allow for persuasion and identification: the ‘art’ not only of refusing the available (capitalistic/socialist) codes but also of refusing altogether to recode, or to reterritorialize power relations” (“Some More’ Notes” 133; see also *Negation* 328).<sup>10</sup> I’m calling for a rhetoric, if you will, of love, a *disfiguring* rhetoric that would leave its addressees *lovable* and operate, therefore, as a counter-(tr)opiate to squeeze.<sup>11</sup>

### Sharing Other/Wise

The activation of this “para-rhetoric” would require taking an/Other look at the addict, the ek-static, would-be *citizen*. It would require a re/vision that takes into account its excesses, its not-at-one-ness, its . . . “finitude.” And/But here we’ll go with Heidegger’s use of this term in *Being and Time*—Finitude: not simply the inevitable finality of being, being’s orientation towards death, but also being’s radical singularity. Freed from theological and teleological tethers, finitude has everything to do with unprecedented instances of being, instances that can’t be theorized or categorized. It signifies not the [ac]countable but rather the un[ac]countable: the intractable, loose-endedness of being. It’s not the opposite of infinity (that’s the big lie); rather, it is what *absorbs* infinity: Nancy suggests that “finitude is the truth of which the infinite is the sense” (*Sense of the World* 29). And/but, as Ronell observes, it’s “only where, historically, finitude has been *infinitized* that endless damage has been done: the frightful hubris of metaphysical man” (*Finitude’s Score* 4). This drive to infinitize, to idealize even *materiality*,<sup>12</sup> names precisely the problem we are addressing here. Finitude is as material as “the material” gets. Finite beings are infinitely divisible, making immanence (self-presence) as impossible as transcendence. Finitude, then,

which is perpetually churning out an inappropriable overflow, would be what *haunts* any figural representation, including the “subject” . . . and all its mimes.

Incidentally, it was while Heidegger was tripping on finitude that he described community, being-with-others, as preceding the hail into subjecthood. Because, while finitude makes communion impossible by blocking the potential for immanence, it also makes an originary sharing *inevitable*—what “we” share is precisely that which divides “us”: finite beings share. . . . finitude: their infinite divisibility, their unsharable loose ends. Dasein didn’t build community—rather, an originary sharing, being-with-others, made Dasein possible. But Dasein comes down off finitude at the crucial moment of “concernful solicitude,” which is as close as Heideggerian ontology came to a thinking on *love*. Right there, at the moment of its resolute concern-for-others, Dasein pulls itself together by excreting what it shares and installs itself as a unified identity, an “I” uncut by otherness.<sup>13</sup> The moment it dumps finitude for immanence, Dasein—that is, Heidegger—is doomed, left to trip out on an unchecked hit of squeeze.

More carefully now, under the influence of finitude, community doesn’t appear to be a function of the subject—sharing doesn’t appear to be a function of agency. In fact, as finitude-junky Sylviane Agacinski astutely observes, it is only “because the subject believes it can begin with itself, with its own unity and freedom, that it must also lay the foundations for any possible instances of sharing” (15). But to begin with that assumption is to forget Heidegger’s most important insight: that beings are, before anything else, *in-the-world* and *with-others* (15), always already engaged in a sharing-out of finitude. It’s because the Other has always already closed in that *identification demands excretion*. It’s *precisely* because there is this “encroachment,” as Agacinski puts it, this originary exposure, or, à la Nancy, “co-appearance” (“*com-parait*”), that sharing is irrepressible.

Don’t get me wrong, though—when it comes down to it, you finitudes are all alone; finite, mortal, abandoned. And yet, even in your solitude you’re heavily populated, extended beyond yourselves; you share no common being, but you share a Being that is “*in-common*,” which means you share finitude, “the infinite lack of infinite identity. . . . [This] is what makes community” (Nancy, *Inoperative* xxxviii). As Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben observes, finite being signifies “being-within an outside”—being, then, yes: “ek-static” (67). Having the existential geometry of a klein jar or a möbius strip, ek-static beings straddle the limit between inside and outside, existing as threshold, as exposure. This indicates that sharing is inevitable and that a certain community always already is—and/but it also indicates that what we call the subject clearly is not its architect. In fact, we’d need to recognize this “subject” as the “residue of the experience of the dissolution of community,” the

“abstract result of [community’s] decomposition” (Nancy, *Inoperative* 3). The subject and Dasein, in this sense, are mirror images: on the run from their own alterity, they ditch the Other to authenticate their Selves. So it would seem that the subject that masquerades as community’s architect and cornerstone is actually this community’s bloody nightmare. If what “we” share is precisely our finite being, our not-at-oneness, then identification, the unifying of identity is what *alienates us* from that sharing.

Some in rhetorical studies propose that enhancing communal relations involves enhancing “communicative competence,” that the *act* of “reasonable exchange” promotes understanding and so, Habermas says, community by way of consensus. Though Mouffe is highly suspicious of the [total] “rational consensus” that Habermas promotes, she does have tremendous faith in the transformative potential of what she calls the “reasonable agreement,” a temporary consensus (hegemony) that is based on “reasonable exchange” and open always to challenge and rebuttal (“Rethinking” 172).<sup>14</sup> Mouffe trusts that this kind of reasonable exchange leads both to the understanding that prompts the social bond[age] and to the possibility for social change. But this approach takes both communication and community [only] to be products of the subject, who, as we’ve just seen, has already ditched the Other and can only build “community” in its own image. This approach also seems to presume, despite all Mouffe’s arguments to the contrary, that once the citizen-subject has stepped into its position, it is capable of temporarily settling in, of being at *home* with itself.

Our fix of finitude, however, reminds us that this so-called home is haunted. In fact, etymologically speaking, “what haunts is also *a* haunt—something that doubles. . . for a familiar place. Haunting belongs to the family of *Heim*” (Ronell, *Dictations* xviii). *Heim*, then, is never not *unheimlich*; a home is never not haunted. What goes for the subject’s home-base, *êthos*, is spooked, relentlessly, by its own fractal interiorities, its own unditchable and unsharable alterity—its finitude, which is precisely what it shares with others.<sup>15</sup> There never was any “internal peace” in “self-identification,” as Lyotard has warned, that was not purchased at the price of what it must exorcise: “The *Volk* shuts itself up in the *Heim*, and it identifies itself through the narratives attached to names” (*Differend* 151)—that is, through the identification associated with *Geschlecht*—exorcising its spooks so as to preserve its illusion of stasis, of sobriety. When “communication” signifies only “reasonable exchange” among subjects, you can bet that alterity already will have been barred from the conversation. This is why Nancy charges that “the conventional chatter that attempts to promote reasonable exchange” as synonymous with *communication* “serves only to obscure violence, betrayal, and lies” (“Exscription” 319)—serves, that is, only to cover over the finitude it ought to be exposing.

It may be that any theory of communication that places a speaking subject in charge of *building* community effaces the sharing it attempts to promote. The “subject representing,” after all, is not the same as the “being-communicating” (Nancy, *Inoperative* 24). Communication. . . happens—it is beyond *our* control; it is, in fact, *who we are*: communication is “the predicament of being” for any ek-static existent (24). Inasmuch as this existent functions as “threshold,” it is continuously exposed to an in-common outside and so is always already communicating—finite being to finite being—by virtue of that exposure, by virtue of an involuntary. . . *touch*. There is no escaping community or this irrepressible communication, which neither expresses a bond[age] nor approximates a Vulcan mind-meld but simply operates as an exposition of the finitude. . . that. . . we. . . share—an exposition, as George Bataille has put it, that “tears [us] together” (22). A subject’s representations can aim to crank up this rustle of finitude or to tune it out, but communication will have been happening, either way.

Maybe this needs to be made explicit: this originary “communication,” this sharing, does not signify “under/standing.” That is, what “communication” gives us to understand, Nancy explains, is only “that there is no *common* understanding of [or in] community, that sharing does not constitute an understanding (or a concept, or an intuition, or a schema), that it does not constitute a knowledge, and that it gives no one, including community itself, mastery over being-in-common” (“Myth Interrupted” 69). Communication is no more or less than the exposition of the overflowing, inappropriable, unsharable finitude that we share. And neither speaking nor writing is a *means* of this communication; rather, each is “communication itself, an exposure” (Nancy, *Inoperative* 31). Communication as *understanding*, Nancy observes, “is always disappointing,” it’s always “the communication of a disappointment, a nonpossibility, a withdrawal of communication” (“Speaking” 314-15). One can never be sure that a communiqué will arrive at its destination, and one can be fairly certain that if it does, it won’t arrive *as* what it was when it was sent. And yet, in all the missed connections, in all the misidentifications, another communication is exposed: a communication [that] communicates the *withdrawal* of under/standing and /but also the opening of another kind of sharing (315).<sup>16</sup>

This is not to say that *what* gets said is insignificant. But it is to say that a certain *irrepressible* communication is not about exchanging information, arguing a point, or expressing a bond: it’s only about exposing understanding’s withdrawal and so exposing finitude. . . *as* what we share. The ethical question par excellence for the third sophistic rhetorician is not how to move an audience toward a predetermined action or attitude but rather how to crank up the “noise,” the excess, the interference that must be silenced for the sake of “reasonable agree-

ments,” for the sake of cutting unifying figures. The question, in other words, that finitude prompts is not how to *use* language to *build* community; it is, rather, how to amplify the communications of community that are drowned out by the processes of identification.<sup>17</sup>

### Whatever

Butler responds to finitude’s question with an ethico-politics of *disidentification*, an affirmative **un**raveling of identity markers. In *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, she calls for a parody of the superimposed “integrity” of the subject, a parody that flies into *pastiche* to expose that so-called “integrity” as “an imitation without an origin.” This theatricalization of identity works as a “perpetual displacement” of the “origin,” a perpetual re-turning to “a fluidity of identities” (*Gender* 138). Butler picks up this thread again in *The Psychic Life of Power*, where she suggests that if there is “an elsewhere” where the law of identity does not “monopolize the terms of existence,” but where, also, we do not deny “our complicity in the law that we oppose,” it would be the result of “a different kind of turn [read: ‘trope’], one that, enabled by the law, turns away from the law, resisting its lure of identity, an agency that outruns and counters the conditions of its emergence” (130). This “turn,” she says, echoing Agamben, would demand “a willingness *not to be*—a critical desubjectification—in order to oppose the law as less powerful than it seems.” It would demand a determination to perpetually re/cognize that “being” will remain “unexhausted by any particular interpellation” (131). Interpellation’s failure to solidify the fluidity that we are undermines the “capacity of the subject to ‘be’ in a self-identical sense.” But—and don’t miss this reversal of Kant—it’s also this failure to be-one that *makes* community, Being-in-common (possible). Butler’s call is to perpetually expose this failure by over-performing the excess that “we” are, over-performing our own improper scatteredness, refusing to be faithful to our historical/cultural/linguistic positionings, refusing to hold still while they take root. Rather, Butler would have us *use* those positionings as a launch pad into what Agamben calls “whatever being.”

In English, Agamben says, “whatever being” connotes something like “being, it does not matter which,” but in its original Latin form, “whatever being” is “*quodlibet ens*,” which connotes instead something like “being such that it *always* matters” (1, my emphasis). This “whatever” reclaims any existent from its having “this or that property,” or “belonging to this or that. . . class (the reds, the French, the Muslims),” and reclaims it not for another class but for “belonging itself,” for belonging such as it is, “with all its predicates.” This “whatever,” then, reclaims any existent as *lovable*. The lover’s “particular fetishism,” Agamben observes, is to want the loved one *as* its loose ends and not on

the basis of any of its specific characteristics (being dark, being blond, being well-hung, etc.) (2). What the lover wants is precisely the being-not-at-one of the Other, precisely the overflowing Other in the other that can't be isolated or named: This distinguishes the lover from the squeezer.

Whatever beings are lovable, that is, disidentified, dis/figured. Disidentification is the condition of possibility for whatever being, for being that is lovable. "Expropriated of all identity, so as to appropriate belonging itself" (Agamben 11), whatever beings share not an essential identity but an "inessential commonality, a solidarity that in no way concerns essence" (18-19). They have no "common bond" and possess no "common property," but they share. Here, community—including the community of the self—is not a communion of sameness but a "togetherness of otherness" (Nancy, "Finite History" 157). It is a congregation that is not based on segregation; or, in Derrida's terms, it is the operation of equality without the "calculation of equivalence" (*Politics* 64): it's community without the possibility for communion.

### Rhetorics/Pedagogies of Love

Idioms must be possible that resist the bloody idiocies of identities indicated by blood, soil, and self. Identities must write themselves, that is, they must know and practice themselves as non-identifiable (k)nots of sense.

Jean-Luc Nancy

Would it be possible for "democratic institutions" (schoolhouses, jailhouses, courthouses, etc.) to hail *whatever* "citizens"? In the name of a more radically plural democratic State, might "democratic institutions" interpellate "citizens" who would embrace not only the principles of democracy but also their own whateverness? their own ekstasis? Probably not. In his preface to *Tricks*, Roland Barthes notes that there is one thing "society will not tolerate," and that's that "I should be. . . *nothing*, or to be more exact, that the *something* that I am should be openly expressed as provisional, revocable, insignificant, inessential, in a word: impertinent." Agamben has argued something similar: that the only thing the State can't tolerate "is that the singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging. . . . The State," Agamben notes with Alain Badiou, "is not founded on a social bond, of which it would be the expression, but rather on the dissolution, the unbinding it prohibits" (86), on the Being-not-at-One, the impertinence it conceals. "Whatever singularity, which. . . resists all identity and every condition of belonging," Agamben observes, "is the principle enemy of the State" (87).



This may be why Lyotard once wondered if the only just politics would be a politics *without the polis* (“A l’insu [Unbeknownst]”); a politics, then, of the pagus? A “cizenry” of *pagani*? Maybe so. Whatever beings, after all, can’t form a “societas” precisely because they have no “identity to vindicate” and no “bond of belonging for which to seek recognition” (Agamben 86). But neither the State nor any program for social change is going to hail Whatever Beings. Rather, it is necessary that the *subjects* who are hailed continuously be exposed to their own whateverness; it’s necessary, that is, if they hope to catch a moment’s “traction on the trace of the other” (Ronell, *Finitude’s* 3).

Rhetorics of disidentification would expose whateverness by interrupting identification’s unifying hail, by disfiguring figures, shattering unifying principles. These rhetorics would offer no hope of communion and would not pretend to be “that which fuses you to me”; rather, they would seek only a de-Selfing interaction that would expose us both to the “the vertigo of expropriation” (Ronell, *Dictations* xii), a *democratic* interaction, above all, that would leave us *lovable*. Rhetorics of disidentification would not depend on the stability of the reader, the writer, or the message; would not pretend that signs “transport messages that are communicable in principle” (Lyotard, *Libidinal* 51). They would instead name an interaction or a writing that “haunt[s] itself,” that refuses to take its place within the “common” fund of circulating stories that bind a “community” (mythos), an interaction or a writing that “consistently reflect[s] a situation of depropriation, a loss of the proper” (Ronell, *Crack Wars* 107). And they would name an interaction or a *reading* that tunes its ears “into noise frequencies, to anticoding, to interference, to the inflated reserves of random indeterminateness,” an interaction or a reading that stays “open to the static and interference that will occupy [all] lines” (Ronell, *Telephone Book* xv). We could not be further from community as consensus and communication as reasonable exchange.

And/But we could not be closer to what would be at stake in a third sophistic pedagogy, which would embrace these rhetorics of disidentification and would promote, therefore, a kind of *finite* revolution in the classroom. Finite revolution, Nancy explains, names “the incessantly present moment at which existence-in-common resists every transcendence that tries to absorb it, be it in an All or in an Individual (in a Subject in general)” (*Inoperative* xl). For, today, “if there is to be something called a revolution,” Vitanza observes, “it must be achieved without establishing integration/congregation/consubstantiality by way of segregation/purging/purity” (“Hermeneutics” 131). It must be achieved, that is, without infinitizing finitude. Therefore, though there is a trend toward identification and disclosure in rhetoric and writing pedagogy, toward discovering and embracing a personal history,<sup>18</sup> a third sophistic pedagogy would not ask (or need) students to become the figural representations of their hi-stories. Rather, a third sophistic

pedagogy would invite student-subjects to interrupt their histories by searching out, exposing, and embracing what Vitanza calls their “hysterics”<sup>19</sup>: whatever their historical narratives must exclude in order to reproduce themselves. Third sophistic pedagogies would encourage students to de-negate the negations that have made their “stories” reproducible, to embrace their own ineffability, and so to affirm precisely what divides them *as* what they share: their radical non-figurability. *This* would be the task of a third sophistic pedagogy.

Recognizing that *exceeding* the hail of identity is not the same as *escaping* it (Butler, *Psychic* 17), that there is no kicking the habit of figuration-identification, third sophistic rhetors would perform a counter-drug, setting their sights on interruption, on making some room for the harassing other that must be “squeegeed out”<sup>20</sup> for the sake of “reasonable exchange.” Operating as counter-(tr)opiate to squeezeure, third sophistic rhetorics would meet the desire for collective action with rigorous hesitation, the craving for reasonable exchange with a celebration of what remains unspeakable, and the hope for communion with an affinity for radical dispersion. Interrupting and countering, reopening and deterritorializing, these rhetorics [of love] would crank up precisely what any figuration must tune out—*the communication of community*.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Agacinski notes that Kant’s marriage contract solicits “a sort of mutual disrespect and a possible unleashing of a reciprocal and legal hold over one another” (16).

<sup>2</sup> See Victor Vitanza’s “Taking A-Count of a (Future-Anterior) History of Rhetoric as ‘Libidinalized Marxism’ (A PM Pastiche),” where he calls multiplicitous subjects “*polyethoi* (scattered subject positions)” (184).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Burke’s “The Rhetorical Situation,” where he notes that “one’s notion of his [*sic*] personal *identity* may involve identification not just with mankind or the world in general, but by some kind of congregation that also implies some related norms of differentiation or segregation” (268). This is also where Burke points out that “identification by antithesis”; that is, “union by some opposition held in common,” is “the most urgent form of congregation by segregation.” He offers racism and the temporary wartime alliances as examples. I owe a big one to Lewis Baker for helping me locate this essay.

<sup>4</sup> See *Crack Wars: Addiction, Literature, Mania*.

<sup>5</sup> I’m lifting this play between “not-one” and “not-at-one” straight from Alexander Garcia Düttmann’s wonderfully rigorous and insightful book called *At Odds With AIDS: Thinking and Talking About a Virus*.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Rorty’s *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*, where he lays out his distinction between public concern for solidarity and private concern for self-actualization. Also see his “Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism,” where he reiterates this distinction and suggests, for example, that he wants to “save

radicalism and pathos for private moments, and stay reformist and pragmatic when it comes to. . .dealings with other people" (17).

<sup>7</sup> In other words, Heidegger's Dasein, for all its immersion in co-existence, doesn't finally break with a certain kind of [dangerous] humanist hope. Dasein's "ownmost-potentiality-for-being-itself" is a function of its *breaking* with "the they" until ultimately "the they" collapses" and Dasein is, poof, individualized, identified (BE&T 317). I discuss this problem in more detail in my forthcoming book, *Breaking Up [at] Totality*. Here, we'll not be out to bash Heidegger but will instead attempt to take his important insights elsewhere, to refuse the re/turn to identification. Above all, we'll try to avoid the mistake against which Derrida warns, the mistake of "denunciat[ing] without equivocation and without delay. . .every known complicity with Nazism" (*Comment Donner* 6) so as to validate a cowardly refusal to read and to think. For, what is necessary, still today, are rigorous interrogations into "the horror of what, in Heidegger precisely, and so many others, in Germany or elsewhere, has ever been able to give in to it [Nazism]" (6, 8). This means we'll have to have the guts to admit, as Ronell has, that "the gas has not been entirely turned off but continues to leak and spread its effects" ("Differends of Man" 63).

<sup>8</sup> Think here of the discursive constraints, for instance, that Plato and Aristotle imposed on Heraclitus and of how effectively they managed to silence him. In "Nietzsche and the Obscurity of Heraclitus," Sarah Kofman notes that both Plato and Aristotle accused Heraclitus of being obscure, of (intentionally or not) concealing his ideas behind his un/clear, im/mature, "mythic discourse," a discourse that proved impossible to reconcile with their own. They labeled Heraclitus's discourse "irresponsible" because it proved impossible for them to stuff into any structural schemata without a vast remainder, a vast excess of unconforming singularities with which neither Plato nor Aristotle knew what to do (41-43). Heraclitus, then, could not be heard, deciphered according to the interpretive grids of the philosophical hegemony, and so he was not a valid adversary—his thinking was declared obscure, was muted, so that the "real" philosophers might, without further interference, get back to a dialogue among *themselves*.

<sup>9</sup> Mouffe does indeed touch on this problem in her introduction to *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, when she cites Stanley Cavell: "what if there is a cry of justice that expresses a sense not of having lost out in an unequal yet fair struggle, but of having from the start being left out?" ("Deconstruction, Pragmatism" 10). Here, Mouffe acknowledges that "deprivation of a voice in the conversation of justice can be the work of the moral consensus itself." But she's interested primarily in bringing *total* consensus under suspicion as a goal for democracy and doesn't quite get to the heart of what's at stake here. Mouffe frames the problem, again, in terms of preserving the possibility for a [legitimate] challenge, in terms of refusing to "silence the voice of those who disagree with the dominant consensus," stating that "citizens" must "never refuse" to listen to a "cry of justice" only on the basis of "general rules or principles" (10). What does not get a hearing in this discussion, however, is the problem of the "differend" (no surprise, either, that Lyotard is not mentioned—Mouffe often explicitly dissociates her work from his). And/but the differend names precisely the problem that gets effaced here. And it's particularly evident in her suggestion that anyone who will not play by the "democratic rules of the game" would exclude *themselves* from the community, as if it would be their choice, based on the same rules of knowing. The enemy, this suggests, has asked for it, and so will get what is coming to her/him: s/he will be excluded, silenced ("destroyed?").

<sup>10</sup> Michelle Ballif also issued a call for this Vitanzan "third sophistic rhetoric" in her recent essay "Writing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sophistic Cyborg." Thanks to Michelle and to Victor for many wonderfully rigorous conversations about "community" and "rhetoric" as I worked through this present essay.

<sup>11</sup> Though I do believe, then, that rhetoric is an important key to social change, I would not define “rhetoric” as [only] “practical argument.” I’m suggesting here that a (postmodern) rhetoric that *disrupts* and *interrupts* the very means of “practical argument” may well be more fundamental to any real social transformation than the arguments themselves. While Biesecker concludes that social transformation depends on “our willingness to rhetorically transform ourselves in the mirror of politics by *actively choosing* to become its subjects” (102), I’m suggesting that the potential for a “just community” may have more to do with our capacity not to ignore but to *resist* even this transformation, to resist it enough to affirm our ownmost impropriety, to embrace our reflection in a *multiply-binged mirror*, and so to experience the finitude that we share.

<sup>12</sup> I’m thinking specifically here of Marxism’s tendency to turn materiality into an ideal. See, for instance, numbers 237-240 of Lyotard’s *The Differend* for a working through of two “illusory” phases of Marxism: “the first. . . passes from the sign that is solidary enthusiasm to the ideal of a revolutionary subject, the proletariat; the second passes from this ideal to the real political organization of the real working class” (#238). When the party recognizes that it can’t prove that “the proletariat is real” it simply gives “itself as proof and undertake[s] a realist politics. . . one that remains attached to proper names and to the narratives of real communities.” But “[t]he referent of its discourse remains unrepresentable. . . . The party is constrained to mistake the proletariat—a referent of the dialectical genre (in the Kantian sense), namely the ideal object (and perhaps subject) of the Idea of emancipated working humanity—for the real working classes, the multiple referents of ‘positive’ cognitive phrases” (#239). It matters little whether any infinitizing of finitude is accomplished in the name of totalitarianism or revolution—for, in the end, they are mirror-images: any revolution that demands such an identification is, in its own way, dangerously totalizing.

<sup>13</sup> In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes Dasein as a being who is first of all in-the-world and with-others. “World,” for Heidegger, is always a “shared world” (“*Mitwelt*”); in fact, singularities are constituted *by* their sharing of this world, a world that is perpetually coming into being and putting Being into play. Furthermore, “concern-for” (“*Fürsorge*”) the other, Heidegger suggests, is an existential function of this originary sharing. It is in this context that Heidegger works out his ethic of care and describes two modes of “concernful solicitude” (#122). But importantly, Heidegger devotes only this small section to a thinking through of concern-for-others. Despite his insistence that being is always and only being-with and that world is always and only shared-world, there’s not much sense of *Mitsein* or *Mitwelt* in Heidegger’s descriptions of Dasein throughout most of *Being and Time*; Christopher Fynsk, in fact, traces out in *Being and Time* what he calls Heidegger’s “evasion of the question of the Other” (185). More to the point here, even when Heidegger does propose an ethic of concern-for-the-Other, this ethic is based on a seemingly *atomistic* Dasein. When it comes down to it, even his notion of “authentic solicitude” seems to take off from a position of self-sufficient isolation. As Jean-Luc Nancy has noted, Heidegger’s *Fürsorge* starts “from an ‘I’ or from an ‘identity’ that goes toward the other” (“Shattered” 104).

<sup>14</sup> I discuss this problem in more detail in “Agonizing [With] Chantal Mouffe,” in which I respond to the interview JAC conducted with her. But see, in particular, this section from that interview, where Mouffe writes:

[R]hetoric is important here. It must be understood that this is the way in which we are going to try to reach some kind of reasonable agreement—“reasonable” meaning that in certain circumstances this is how a political community, on the basis of a certain principle or something it values, is going to decide what is acceptable. (“Rethinking” 172)

<sup>15</sup> Thanks to Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds for first tipping me off to the connection between “*êthos*” and “haunt” in their essay “The Splitting Image: Contemporary Feminisms and the Ethics of *êthos*.” There, they note that both *ethos* (habit) and *êthos* (character formation) are “related to *êthea*, a plural noun meaning ‘haunts’ or, more colloquially, ‘hang outs’” (48).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. my “Laughter; Or, Chortling into the Storm”; Vitanza’s *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric*; Ballif’s “What is it that the Audience Wants?”; and, of course, Derrida’s *The Post Card*.

<sup>17</sup> This may be the place to mention that Derrida, in an essay entitled “Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism,” suggests that identification *is* the moment of decision. The deciding subject “does not exist prior to the decision but when I decide I invent the subject. Every time I decide, if a decision is possible, I invent the who, and I decide who decides what” (84). In fact, Derrida agrees that “identification is indispensable,” but he notes that any process of identification is “also a process of disidentification, because if the decision is identification then the decision also destroys itself” (84). I am suggesting neither that decisions are not necessary nor that identification is avoidable. I am suggesting only that what we share takes a hit with each decision that is allowed to efface the conditions of its possibility. No decision is necessary or possible, strictly speaking, until one is faced with the Undecidable, until one is exposed to finitude.

<sup>18</sup> See Michelle Ballif’s “Seducing Composition” for a rigorous examination of this trend, this tendency in rhet/comp to assume that if students/subjects can identify [with] their own discursive/historical positionings and then disclose those positionings to others as the basis for their own perspectives and arguments, they will “foster . . . mutual understanding and tolerance” (76), they will foster *community*, in and out of the classroom.

<sup>19</sup> See Vitanza’s *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric*. Specifically, here, I’m thinking of the final Excursus: “Preludes to Future (anterior) Histories of Rhetorics (From The Obsessive to the Hysterical and Third Schizo turns),” where Vitanza notes that “[t]here are hysterics *in* rhetorik rather than The history of rhetorik,” and that “[h]ysterics of rhetorics speak through the savage *silences* of Dora, through the savage *miraculating body* of Schreber and savage *dreams* of the Wolfman, through the savage acts of Lacan’s Christine and Léa Papin—all of which are excluded, through “negation” (repression/suppression) from The History of Rhetorik (oppression)” (319). Vitanza suggests that a third sophistic history of rhetoric would interrupt The History by inviting back in all the hysterics that got silenced to make The History possible; he’s after a finite history, a history of the expositions of finitude. I’m suggesting, along with Vitanza, that there is no personal history that has not silenced personal hysterics, and that a third sophistic pedagogy would invite students to embrace their hysterics, to affirm them, and so to break up their History as they expose their finite existence.

<sup>20</sup> Credit for this marvelous expression goes to Juanita Comfort, who used it after hearing an early version of this paper (which I presented as the keynote address at Old Dominion University’s EGSO conference in February of 1999)—and after much good wine at a bar in Norfolk, VA. Thanks to Juanita and to Ed Jacobs, Manuela Mourão, Andrea Slane, Collin Brooke, and David Metzger for their insights that night, for helping me think this through.

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