

## Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality

What if the beholder glances, glances away, driven by aversion as much as desire? This is to ask not only, what if beholding were glancing; it is also—or maybe even rather—to ask, what if glancing is the aversion of the gaze, a physical act of repression, the active forgetting of an object whose resistance is now not the avoidance but the extortion of the gaze?

In spite of a presence that could scarcely be called anything other than foundational, black artist/philosopher Adrian Piper barely shows up for certain critics who have taken on the task of defining and explaining modernism, postmodernism, and the avant-garde. (I'm thinking, here, of major critics like Rosalind Krauss, who once 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.<sup>1</sup> For Piper this avoidance would be cataloged alongside a host of other “ways of averting one's gaze.”<sup>2</sup> Piper's insistence on what she calls the “indexical present,” the deictic-confrontational field her art produces and within which it is to be beheld, emerges precisely as a kind of resistance to such aversion, an insistent bringing of herself to the in/attention of somebody like Krauss. That aversion marks the spot of both Michael Fried's famous theoretical dismissal of theatricality in contemporary art (in his seminal essay “Art and Objecthood”)<sup>3</sup> and the objection, by a host of critics, including—most prominently—Krauss, to that dismissal. This is to say that Fried's aversion to this particular moment in the history of

artistic theatricality and his critics' aversion of their critical attention from Piper converge at the point where a quite specific legacy of performance as the resistance of the object becomes clear. That clarity is given by the force of aurality in Piper's work. To avert one's gaze from Piper is to refuse to hear the sound in her work of that quite specific objecthood that joins blackness and black performance. And the critique of Fried's dismissal of objecthood and its complex, ambivalent grounding in Clement Greenberg's in/famous assertion of the necessary optical purity of authentic modernist art is possible only by way of the exploration of that specifically black objecthood that it has been Piper's project to investigate.<sup>4</sup> If, as Zora Neale Hurston suggests, the essence of the Negro is drama, theatricality, then perhaps this is how that theatricality works.<sup>5</sup>

Piper's concern with finding, elaborating, and enacting objections to the various ways of averting one's gaze has led her to deploy a mode of theatricality or objecthood Fried had not anticipated or taken into account. Piper's methods, much to her chagrin, are anything but sure-fire. And this doesn't even mean that this would rehabilitate her under the aesthetic limits laid down by Fried, who thinks that anything sure-fire is necessarily inartistic. Piper would only repudiate Fried's modernist aesthetics in the interest of a theatricality that reconstitutes and redoubles the realm of ethics. The essential theatricality of blackness, of the commodity who materially objects beyond any subjunctively posited speech, is evoked in the service of metaethics. The resistance of the object is the condition of possibility of a metaethics whose fullest enactment is in Piper's art, though it is informed very much by the project of a metaethics that is proper to her philosophy.

Piper traces the boundary between critical philosophy and racial performance and thereby allows us to think the place of the latter in the former, to dwell on what happens when racial performance is deployed in order to critique racial categories and to investigate what happens when the visual singularity of a performed, curated, or conceptualized image is deployed in order to move beyond what she calls the "visual pathology" of racist categorization.<sup>6</sup> Piper opens such questions by way of her intense engagement with Kant, by way of her belief in the

liberatory value of an ongoing redefinition of necessarily incomplete categories and the therapeutic, self-transformational power her performances are intended to exert to that end. This belief raises further questions regarding the place or echo of racialized performance in the construction of Kant's formulations, not only at the level of the object or example, but also at the level of the iconic theorizing subject, Kant himself. Thinking Kant through Piper and vice versa allows us to ask: Is critical philosophy always already infected and structured by this visual pathology? Can we so easily separate visual singularity from visual pathology? Can singularity ever be singularly visual? Might it not be necessary to hear and sound the singularity of the visage? How do sound and its reproduction allow and disturb the frame or boundary of the visual? What's the relation between phonic materiality and original maternity? If we ask these questions we might become attuned to certain liberating operations sound performs at that intersection of racial performance and critical philosophy that had heretofore been the site of the occlusion of phonic substance or the (not just Kantian) pre-critical oscillation between the rejection and embrace of certain tones. *Sound gives us back the visuality that ocularcentrism had repressed.* Meanwhile, there is a cumulative effect of the impure and aggressively de-purifying soundtrack in Piper that marks that holosensual, invaginatively ensemblic internal differentiation of the object that the most influential art criticism of the last fifty years has heretofore seemed unable to reach. A major aspect of Piper's intervention is this phonic recovery of the artwork's visual materiality (or, as she would put it, singularity) that Fried's (somewhat idiosyncratic) Saussureanism requires him to reduce. A phonology is missing in Fried, one that would be attuned to visual art's phonography.

For Piper, to be for the beholder is to be able to mess up or mess with the beholder. It is the potential of being catalytic. Beholding is *always* the entrance into a scene, into the context of the other, of the object. This is a very different experience of beholding, a very different experience of the beholder, than that offered by Fried. The Friedian

beholder, even in his fascination, never moves out of himself, never achieves or is submitted to a kind of ecstasy, the transportative force of the syncope. The beholder is never estranged, never lost or even dark to himself; rather he continually fulfills that self in the ascription of meaning to the beheld and, more fundamentally, in the ascription of greatness or not, authentic and autonomous aestheticity or not, to the artwork. The beholder arrives at that self-possessive sense or knowledge of self that is the essence of what Fried calls conviction. The beholder becomes a subject again in this profoundly antitheatrical moment. One isn't absorbed by the painting as in an entrance into its scene; instead, one is, in the instant of the frame, in the visual experience of flatness as an instantaneous moment of framing, absorbed into or by flatness reconceived as a mirror. The painting is a mirror. Absorption is self-absorption. Such self-absorption comes in moments of calmness, not under the disruptive and catalytic pressure of an object even if that object is there for you, the disruptive and catalytic pressure of an *other* even if that other is there for you. There's something too dangerous about this broke, brokedown, breaking energy of objection. So Fried is not into the fact that

when you encountered minimalist work you characteristically entered an extraordinarily charged *mise-en-scène*. . . . It was as though their work, their *installations*, infallibly offered one a kind of "heightened" experience, and I wanted to understand the nature of this surefire, and therefore to my mind essentially *inartistic*, effect.<sup>7</sup>

Rather, Fried, after Diderot, is concerned with "the conditions that had to be fulfilled in order for the art of painting to successfully persuade its audience of the truthfulness of its representations."<sup>8</sup> But it is, finally, the complex double bind of subjection that is the condition Fried and Diderot are after. The painting moves, depending upon its historical moment, in and as the complexity of that possession and forfeiture of self that constitutes the establishment of the subject-in-subjection. Everything moves from, Fried writes from, the position of a subject

who, in the very fullness of a presence that could never admit its own psycho-political ephemerality, is not there; the (self-)absorbed beholder is an absent beholder, an absented or subjected subject, located no place: the view(er) from nowhere. This viewer from nowhere, this nowhere of viewing, this instantaneous no time of viewing, of the viewer, is what he calls “presentness,” as opposed to presence.<sup>9</sup>

For Fried, presence, as theater, is between (the arts, the beholder, and some passive-aggressive object) like a bridge. It is incumbent upon us, by way of Piper and the tradition she extends, to think the bridge as translation or transportation, where matter and desire are both lost and found. Meanwhile, what Fried opposes to theatricality is signification and what separates the artwork from the mere object is precisely that difference that is the condition of possibility of signification. This difference that is internal to the artwork is what Fried calls the artwork’s syntax. For Fried, the mere object is never differential, never syntactic. It is neither different from the rest of the world nor from itself, and that absence of difference produces an absence of conviction in the beholder—a quite specific inability to see the object as an artwork that takes its place in the history of artworks. This absence of conviction stems from the indifferent’s necessary and ongoing production of non-meaning that will have devolved, always, into an infinitely expandable list of “merelys”: the culinary, the theatrical, the phonetic, the decorative, the tasteful, the gestural, the literal, the cultural. It’s important to remember that Fried denies the internal difference of the object even as he valorizes the internal difference of the artwork. This is to say that he denies the interiority of the object even as he valorizes the interiority of the artwork. But this internal difference of the artwork is nothing other than the mirror through which the beholder is absorbed into the dangerous maelstrom of his own internally different interiority, the place where he is lost in the very act of finding himself, the place where loss constitutes the foundation of self-possession. So that consciousness of art is nothing other than consciousness of self. The conflation of art-consciousness and self-consciousness is something to which we’ll return by way of Piper’s active objection to it.

Meanwhile, Fried says that the success and survival of the arts depend upon their ability to defeat theater; that art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theater; that the concepts of quality and value, central to art, exist only in the individual arts and not in their in-between, which is theater. The material of painting and sculpture—its material constraints, supports, elements—must be confronted *and, most importantly, reduced or dematerialized* so that meaning can be produced in and by the artwork, so that something beyond the object can be given. Here, in a sense, Fried extends a kind of antimaterialism that animates the work of Saussure. If, as Derrida argues, Saussure’s quest for a universal science of language requires “the reduction of the phonic substance,”<sup>10</sup> then the search for a certain convergence of meaning and universality that we might call, after Derrida, “the truth in painting,” requires a reduction of the visual substance. This is why Fried is critical of Greenberg’s reduction of modern painting to visuality. He’s moving under the aegis of a much more fundamental reduction, a reduction *of, not to, visuality.*

What Fried is after is fullness and inexhaustibility, but not the *inexhaustibility of the bare object.* This latter inexhaustibility is a function of the object’s emptiness or hollowness and it produces the experience of the literalist, minimalist, or theatrical work as an experience of duration rather than that instantaneousness wherein one is given the unlimited fullness of the genuine, composed, and compound work *at a glance.* This is to say that the experience of the genuinely modernist work seems to have no duration because “*at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest.*”<sup>11</sup> The totality of the work is given momentarily and in the instant. *This presentness defeats theater.* It’s the aversion of attention from the object that is given in and by a moment’s attention to the compositionally enframed, rather than a lifetime’s everyday attention precisely to the quotidian presence of things. *But Piper is all about fighting what Fried refuses to recognize: the absolute ongoingness and continuity not of attention to objects but of the aversion of one’s gaze from objects.* So that the intensity and grace of presentness, of the experience of a work that at every moment is wholly manifest, is

opposed not to some infinitely durative experience of the object but to the infinite avoidance of certain objects. Just because we are all literalists most of our lives does not mean that we actually ever pay attention to or experience objects in their intensity. What one is after, by way of a certain sustenance of attention, is the presentness of the object in all of its internal difference, in all of its interiority and internal space. The stakes of such disruption of the aversion of the gaze at objects are especially high when object, person, commodity, artist, and artwork converge. The glance, this averted gaze, is realigned by the force of a glancing, oppositional blow; the internal dialogue is interrupted by a voice from outside; subjection as beholding is cut by a sharp objection.

In a eulogy for John Coltrane, Baraka echoes Trane's self-assessment: "He wanted to be the opposite."<sup>12</sup>

To act on the desire to be the opposite, the desire not to collaborate, is to object. How might such resistance suspend the process of subjection?

Here is one of what Piper calls her "metaperformances."

*Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City*

Max's was an Art Environment, replete with Art Consciousness and Self-Consciousness about Art Consciousness. To even walk into Max's was to be absorbed into the collective Art Self-Consciousness, either as object or as collaborator. I didn't want to be absorbed as a collaborator, because that would mean having my own consciousness co-opted and modified by that of others: It would mean allowing my consciousness to be influenced by their perceptions of art, and exposing my perceptions of art to their consciousness, and I didn't want that. I have always had a very strong individualistic streak. My solution was to privatize my own consciousness as much as possible, by depriving it of sensory input from that environment; to isolate it from all tactile, aural, and visual feedback. In doing so I presented myself as a silent, secret, passive object, seemingly ready to

be absorbed into their consciousness as an object. But I learned that complete absorption was impossible, because my voluntary objectlike passivity implied aggressive activity and choice, an independent presence confronting the Art-Conscious environment with its autonomy. My objecthood became my subjecthood.<sup>13</sup>

Till now, Daniel Paul Schreber's has been the prototypical body without organs, an exemplary becoming-objective or becoming-animal in the words of Derrida, on the one hand, Deleuze and Guattari, on the other.<sup>14</sup> Schreber's screams are always coupled with a being-entered, which he characterizes as an unmaning or feminization, a kind of tutelage self-imposed and self-overcome. This is important: the body without organs marks a certain psychotic enlightenment, the re-en-gendering disruption or overcoming of a self-imposed tutelage. One could think, therefore, psychotic enlightenment or becoming-object as a motive of desiring-production. But now, Piper is exemplary of the body-without-organs. The *Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City* marks this becoming-objective of an object, ears shut, eyes pinched, a refusal of collaboration, a positive resistance to the "self-consciousness of art-consciousness," to self-consciousness as art-consciousness, in all of its oedipalization. To be absorbed into their consciousness like a depth charge. A passive aggression of the object, a recalibration of absorption, that Fried does not anticipate. And this by way of a dematerialization; in other words, the subject becomes an object by way of a sensory shutdown. This is, among other things, an enactment at the end of a long, dematerialized transmission of another performance that works by way of violently imposed sensory overload, rather than voluntary sensory deprivation, even though the screaming soundtrack animates the object body-in-performance with a force that exceeds either subjunctive or actual speech. Being materially tied to such immaterially transmitted scenes, there is, inevitably, the desire for the maintenance, in Piper, of a certain privacy. This would be the resistance to deformation, to being messed up or messed with by others, by the omnipresent and oppressive other. This is to say that she is moving in, has already recognized



the riches and satisfactions of interiority, the blessed, invaluable side effect of repeatedly thwarted communication. Not for such as me the luxuries of repression, absent-mindedness, or inchoate thought sublimates into impulsive or irresponsible behavior. . . . So instead we *consider* what we see but are prevented from voicing. We take it into our selves, we muse on it and analyze it, we scrutinize it, extract its meaning and lesson, and record it for future reference. Our unspoken or unacknowledged contributions to discourse infuse our mental lives with conceptual subtlety. We become deep, perceptive, alert, and resourceful.

It seems to me now that the writings in these two volumes are best understood as evolving expressions of a coerced, reflective interiority that develops in response to my increasing grasp of the point: that I am not, after all, entitled simply to externalize my creative impulses in unreflective action or products, because, being merely a foreign guest in the private club in which I entertain, my self-confident attempts at objective communication with my audience would be permanently garbled, censored, ridiculed, or ignored, were it not for a critical and discursive matrix that I—with effort—eventually supply.<sup>15</sup>

And the recognition of this privilege-that-is-not-one of interiority is all bound up not only with what it has meant at times to take on precisely those prerequisites that we associate with what Piper calls “the upper-middle-class heterosexual WASP male, the pampered only son of doting parents.”<sup>16</sup> It is, more fundamentally, the extension of that experimental, performative, objectional, sensually theoretical, *public* privacy that animates the aesthetics of the black radical tradition.

This double-identification, with both Aunt Hester and the Master, the substitutive mother and never fully constituted father, links Piper to Douglass. This is to say that Piper’s performance work moves at the intersection of a feminist, anti-slavery aesthetic and the emergence and convergence of conceptual and minimalist art. This black feminist, anti-slavery minimalism makes possible the reappearance of the art object after the fact of the disappearance of the object that conceptual art had instantiated. This reappearance or reassertion of the object (of the artist

*as* art object in the case of Piper) moves along specific lines. Butler puts forward an extraordinarily rigorous model of subjectivity-as-subjection, a model that knows the subject by way of the severity of its (political and, especially, temporal) limits. Meanwhile, Hartman is thinking the way these limits of subjectivity/subjection are negotiated in the lived experience of and opposition to slavery and in the transition from slavery to “freedom.” Piper’s work seems to be tapping into some things that go on in the field Butler and Hartman explore. These things indicate a lived critique of the assumed equivalence of personhood and subjectivity and, by extension, a force of resistance or objection that is always already in excess of the limits of subjection/subjectivity. In the end, Piper’s conceptualism allows her rich historical animation of the minimalist object. Ironically, this force of objection is best described in Fried’s dismissal of it, his recoil from that force of the object that animates minimalism.

Here is Greenberg from his essay “Modernist Painting”:

I identify Modernism with the intensification, almost the exacerbation, of this self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant. Because he was the first to criticize the means itself of criticism, I conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist.

The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left all the more secure in what there remained to it.

The self-criticism of Modernism grows out of, but is not the same thing as, the criticism of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment criticized from the outside, the way criticism in its accepted sense does; Modernism criticizes from the inside, through the procedures themselves of that which is being criticized.<sup>17</sup>

If, as Greenberg suggests, Kant is the first modernist, Piper might be the last. And the question concerning the source of Piper's modernism is undetached from that concerning the source of Kant's. Piper's immanence, toward which she is ambivalent in the extreme, is out from the outside.

Something like a final approach to that immanence requires a few more questions. What is an object? What are the limits of the object? More specifically (and crucially, for Piper the philosopher and Fried the aesthete, both working within complex Kantian genealogies), what is the relation between the (multiple: *Ding*, *Gegenstand*, *Objekt*) notion of the object offered by Kant and the rather more undifferentiated notions of the object offered by Fried and Piper?<sup>18</sup> Fried claims, after Stanley Cavell, that for Kant the artwork is not an object. What kind of object is specifically *not* the artwork for Kant? And what does the artwork's limit, boundary, frame, its *parergon*, have to do with such an object? Would the *parergon* count as differential in the work of art for Fried? This is to ask, is it syntactical? The answer appears to be yes. Does a Friedian object, precisely as nonartwork, "have" a *parergon*, a constitutive outside-on-the-inside? The answer appears to be no; only the artwork, and not the object, only the meaningful or meaning-producing representation "has" the *parergon*. One could also ask: Does the minimalist or literalist object/work (and the point, here, is the complex encountering of the object and the work) have a support, a frame, a boundary? Note that to have, here, is to confront or engage the support by way of figuration, as if dealing with the fact of the support by way of figuration actually makes the support, as *parergon*, a (possessory) fact. And does the minimalist work/object have a support/frame/boundary that sharply divides it from its milieu (as milieu is given in sharp distinction from the *parergon* by Derrida in *The Truth in Painting*)? Perhaps the real importance of the frame/support/boundary is that it divides the work from the milieu that defines and contains what Fried describes as our quotidian literalism. The *parergon* is, here, the condition of possibility of what Fried valorizes and hopes for: presentness as

grace, presentness as opposed to presence. The literalist work/object is without or in denial of the *parergon*. The two relations to be thought, here, are lack and denial, *parergon* and milieu.

The relationship between object and objectivity in Piper is disjunctive. Think about objectivity as universality, as a set of faculties or attributes given in the set of human beings; objectivity is the quality of being universal, that which is true for everyone. When Piper speaks about wanting to eliminate subjective judgments (i.e., valuative or aesthetic judgments, the question of beauty and, even, pleasure—what might have been called the immanent aesthetic) from her experience of art, she moves within a certain desire for the objective (i.e., epistemological/ethical, the categorical and its imperatives, the transcendental aesthetic as the ideality of space-time) in art. Similarly, when Piper turns herself into an object of art she could be said to be moving in the desire for a detachment from certain subjective/invalid judgments. What she calls, in her description of the *Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City*, the self-consciousness of art-consciousness, especially in that it is shaped by the visual pathology of racist categorization, is the field of such bad judgment.

But Piper seems to deny the implications of what is, for Kant, an enabling paradox: the objective-transcendental ground of humanity seems inseparable from a certain subjective condition of its possibility—the ideality of space-time is always conditioned, *made possible*, by a specific experience of space-time. And this experience or immanence is always susceptible, has always been susceptible, to bad judgment, to the irrationality that is, at once, constitutive of the rational and the rational's necessary extension when it reaches its limits. And in this last lies the rub since one must tap into the possibility of bad judgment—*aesthetic judgment*—in order precisely to work these necessary augmentations of (devolved or delimited) rationality. The repression or denial of the subjective conditions of objectivity in Piper's philosophy is overcome by an aggressive critique of the subject enacted in and by the rematerialization of the object. But this rematerialization of the object is always also the rematerialization of the artwork. So that the repression or denial of the subject/*ive*, which moves into a critique

of the subject/ive, is enacted by way of a return or recovery of the subject/ive where the subject/ive is (the) reanimated, *rematerialized* personhood as *objet d'art*.

If the categorical imperative were an art object, what would it look like? What does art or the immanent aesthetic do to the categorical imperative or to category as such? It deregulates it, cuts and augments it. It also founds it. This is what Piper philosophically represses and artistically enacts in both her philosophy and her art. Kant's philosophy, in its perhaps inadvertent openness to the irrational condition of possibility of rationality, is more radical than Piper's; but Piper's art is a radical improvisation of Kant's philosophical radicalism. This long passage from *The Truth in Painting* allows a fuller exposition of this:

Is the palace I'm speaking about beautiful? All kinds of answers can miss the point of the question. If I say, I don't like things made for idle gawpers, or else, like the Iroquois sachem, I prefer the pubs, or else, in the manner of Rousseau, what we have here is a sign of the vanity of the great who exploit the people in order to produce frivolous things, or else if I were on a desert island and if I had the means to do so, I would still not go to the trouble of having it imported, etc., none of these answers constitutes an intrinsically aesthetic judgment. I have evaluated this palace in fact in terms of *extrinsic* motives, in terms of empirical psychology, of economic relations of production, of political structures, of technical causality, etc.

Now you have to know what you're talking about, what *intrinsically* concerns the value "beauty" and what remains external to your immanent sense of beauty. This permanence—to distinguish between the internal or proper sense and the circumstance of the object being talked about—organizes all philosophical discourses on art, on the meaning of art and meaning as such, from Plato to Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger. This requirement presupposes a discourse on the limit between the inside and outside of the art object, here a *discourse on the frame*. Where is it to be found?

What they want to know, according to Kant, when they ask me if I find this palace beautiful, is if I find that it *is beautiful*, in other words if the mere presentation of the object—in itself, within itself—pleases me,

if it produces in me a pleasure, however indifferent [*gleichgültig*] I may remain to the existence of that object. “It is quite plain that in order to say that the object *is beautiful*, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object. Every one must allow that a judgment on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgment of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing [*Existenz der Sache*], but must preserve complete indifference in this respect, in order to play the part of judge in matters of taste.<sup>19</sup>

Remember that for Fried, working in a Kantian mode by way of Greenberg, the authentic experience of the authentic work of art is an experience of the work as representation, as that which is productive of meaning. It is an experience in which the beholder discerns that meaning, and discerns it momentarily, immediately, in its entirety, in the entirety of its internal differentiation, as if it were a sign. To the extent that this raises the question of the limit or frame of the artwork, one could understand that Fried, after Greenberg, thinks the specificity of modernist painting as the critical engagement with the limit in its limitations, limits here being flatness, the flatness, literally, of the support, of the bounded enframeness of the painting. For it is the frame that marks the limit of significance and the boundary between the real existence of the object and any possible aesthetic consideration. Inauthenticity occurs when the object aggressively foists itself upon the beholder, theatrically so, so that the beholder is forced to encounter its materiality, a materiality that has to be reduced in order to discern its meaning. But it’s important to note that this inauthenticity is a violation not just of a contingent, presently needful formulation of the essence of painting, but of a more general and transhistorical formulation regarding the possibility of discerning beauty as such. More specifically, the proximity of the questions concerning the support or flatness in Fried and Greenberg to the questions concerning artwork and frame—*ergon* and *parergon*—in Kant is an immeasurable nearness.

Meanwhile, the *parergon* is as problematic for Piper as it is for Fried. It is, for her, the extraesthetic that can impinge upon a certain privatized interiority of the art work/er. For him, it's the charged atmosphere that surrounds the literalist object. For both, one might say, the *parergon* marks the interinanimation of (the question of the work's) totality and ideology. For both, the *parergon*, in a way, is inseparable from context, milieu. But both would, in various ways, deny this charge. Here again is Derrida:

In the search for the cause or the knowledge of principles, *one must avoid* letting the *parergon* get the upper hand over the essentials. . . . Philosophical discourse will always have been *against* the *parergon*. But what about this *against*.

A *parergon* comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [*au bord, à bord*]. It is first of all the on (the) bo(a)rd(er) [*il est d'abord l'à-bord*].

. . . The *parergon*, this supplement outside the work, must, if it is to have the status of a philosophical quasi-concept, designate a formal and general predicative structure, which one can transport *intact* or deformed or reformed *according to certain rules*, into other fields, to submit new contents to it.<sup>20</sup>

There is nothing between the elements of the work and its content. There is the atmosphere, the context, that brushes up against the work, like an adornment, one could say, carrying an always possible deformation. The accessory or augmentation that cuts, an invaginative foreign guest one is obliged to welcome on the border, a boarder, the exteriority that interiority can't do without, the co-operator. Piper is disturbed by the *parergon*, even as she is both the *parergon* and that which, in Fried's eyes, continually, duratively reproduces or, at least, charges, the *parergon*. Meanwhile, for Fried, when the object, by way of a strange

reversal, is made to stand in for the representation of the object, when presence stands in for presentness, when literalness stands in for or represents representation by way of a vulgarization of abstraction, then all you have is context, all you have is *parergon* in the absence of the artwork, in the oppressive and aggressive presence of the object. Derrida, here, in summarizing Kant, perfectly encompasses Fried's attitude toward the literalist object:

What is bad, external to the pure object of taste, is thus what *seduces by an attraction*: and the example of what leads astray by its force of attraction is a color, the gilding, in as much as it is nonform, content, or sensory matter. The deterioration of the *parergon*, the perversion, the adornment, is the attraction of sensory matter. As design, organization of lines, forming of angles, the frame is not at all an adornment and one cannot do without it. But in its purity it ought to remain colorless, *deprived of all empirical sensory materiality*.<sup>21</sup>

Modern painting, for instance, is, finally, in a struggle not so much with the support that it cannot do without, or, more generally, with the outside that co-operates in its operation. It is, rather, struggling with the exteriority of what is internal to it—not the primordial convention that it is there to be beheld, but the primordial actuality of its sensory materiality. That brushing against of the *parergon* is itself a complex substitute for the more fundamental problem of the irreducible sensory materiality of the work/object itself, the disruptive exteriority of what is most central, most interior, to the work itself. The lack of meaning, the hollowness of the literalist object is, as Fried himself admits, virtual. The *parergon* corresponds, finally, not to a lack within the work (a hollowness in Fried's formulations) but to a certain material fullness of the work that presents itself as a lack of—or, more precisely, as an irreducible and irreducibly disruptive supplement to—meaning. As Derrida says, “What constitutes them as *parerga* is not simply their exteriority as a surplus, it is the internal structural link which rivets them to the lack in the interior of the *ergon*.”<sup>22</sup> But when Derrida says that *parergon*



intervenes, in Kant, between the material and the formal, we need to be aware that this intervention carries its own shadow. The material is a lack in that it is also a supplement to form (which is its supplement). It's as if the material is understood as a lack of the figural in form. But we know, again by way of and through Derrida, that the material—in/as the *parergon*, in/as the milieu—figures too. Derrida says that the *parergon* stands out not only from the *ergon* but from the milieu. It stands out like a figure from the ground, but it stands out from the figure as a ground. And it stands out, with respect to each of these, in some merger with the other of these. But I would argue that the milieu (the external world into which one would or must withdraw) is a ground, as well. So that the *parergon* could be said to be a figure that stands out from three grounds: milieu, object, first figure. And to the extent that the *parergon* has catalytic effects, it reproduces the milieu as figure. The material figures, re/con/figures, the milieu.

Meanwhile, what about the question of beauty, not only for Piper, but of Piper? What about the beauty of Piper and of Piper's work, the beauty of Piper as Piper's work? Piper is the *parergon*, the foreign guest, withdrawing from the artwork and the art world, into the exterior, into the external world, into that which makes the withdrawal possible, that which demands it, namely the fact that it is this exteriority—this convergence of materiality and milieu, this material reconfiguration of milieu, this understanding of materiality as milieu—that is most internal to the work, that is most proper to the work, that is the essence of the work. The *parergon* is beautiful. In this sense, Piper's work is not a suspension of the aesthetic but a kind of return to it, precisely by way of its materiality. You don't have to privilege the ethical over the aesthetic in art if the aesthetic remains the condition of possibility of the ethical in art.

But Piper would enact such privilege in part as a function of her denial of the pseudorational in Kant. This denial is a repression by way of problematic distinctions between the “minor” or lesser writings and the critical philosophy (though the Third Critique, in both the different senses of Piper and Deleuze/[Guattari] would be a minor writing

too). We ought to look at the Third Critique not only to engage its racist foundations (which Spivak points out so well and which Robert Bernasconi also examines in some recent essays) but, deeper still, to see the whole complex interplay of accord and discord that not only disturbs the racist foundations of the Third Critique but their prior manifestation as a certain foundation for the transcendental aspirations of the First Critique.<sup>23</sup> And such an examination of those foundations would seem to be necessary to precisely that antiracist expansion of category that Piper's artwork seeks to enact. Is the body without organs, the ensemble of the senses, the limit of the faculties? This gets back to the link between Aunt Hester's Passion and the *Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City*.<sup>24</sup> And what's the relation between the limits of the faculties (and the limits of the work of art) and the relations of the faculties each to the other? And the relations of these to the ensemble of the senses and their relations each to the other? Does the body without organs constitute the performance/recording of these relations? The critique of the hegemony of the visual (in art and life) and the recalibration of the faculties/senses and their ensembles: both have to do with the relation between these expansive, invaginative and invaginated ensembles and the expansive universality, the nonexclusionary universality of the categories. Meanwhile, it's not that racism, or xenophobia more generally, is a visual pathology as much as it is about the relation between the hegemony of the visual in art, life, racism, and their intersection. So part of what's at stake in Piper's work is not an eclipse of the visual but its rematerialization, which Fried would recognize and abjure. But not only this. It's a rematerialization or reinitialization of visual pleasure and visual desire, as well. As Derrida says on and after Kant, it was always about pleasure all the time. The question Piper raises for us (it's not a new question, just different, now), perhaps against herself, is this: can the object not only resist visual pleasure but resist by way of visual pleasure? Is the problem visuality or pleasure? Both. Neither.

Piper talks of partitioning herself in order to avoid accommodating people's needs for an oversimplified other. Such overt internal differentiation in the name of complexity—of syntax, if you will—would

make Fried proud. It is, of course, part of the particular work Piper has done to make herself into an art object. Like funk music (in her understanding of it), Piper is modular, syntactical, internally differentiated, polyrhythmic, high fantastical. But compartmentalization is all bound up with privatization even if that privatization, that taking on of all tasks in the figure of one, is later to be resocialized by way of more humane forms of exchange. We could think all this as a conflict of the faculties, but if we did we'd also have to think a certain valorization of counterpoint, here, a kind of embrace of the interplay of accord and discord, along lines Deleuze opens up, lines to and out of the Third Critique—lines of deregulation. Such deregulation is all bound up with the limit, with that being that is neither inside nor outside, that Piper reproduces, as herself, as her artwork.<sup>25</sup>

In the transition from slave labor to free labor, the site or force or occasion of value is transferred from labor to labor power. This is to say that value is extracted from the ground of intrinsic worth (remember Marx's bemusement at the confusion that troubles the writings of English political economists who deploy "a Teutonic word for the actual thing, and a Romance word for its reflection") and becomes *the potential to produce value*.<sup>26</sup> This transference and transformation is also a dematerialization—again, a transition from the body, more fully the person, of the laborer to a potential that operates in excess of the body, in the body's eclipse, in the disappearance of a certain responsibility for the body. This will crystallize, later, in the impossible figure of the commodity that emerges as if from nowhere, the figure that is essential to that possessive and dispossessed modality of subjectivity that Marx calls alienation. Meanwhile, what Aunt Hester enacts, by way of the participant observation of Douglass and the master, by way of Douglass's recitation and its concomitant recitations in music and in the discourse on music, is a rematerialization of value. Now the commodity is rematerialized in the body of the worker just as the worker's body is rematerialized as the speaking, shrieking, sounding commodity, each emerging not from some originary moment but through the catalytic force of an

event before natality. This rematerialization is a music Marx's dematerialization demands. This is to say that the dematerialization that is necessary to a universal revolution and the universal science of revolution is in anticipation of a rematerialization that Marx predicts without working toward, or produces without discovering in Althusser's idiom, in the *1844 Manuscripts*.<sup>27</sup> Aunt Hester's performance-in-objection is a kind of *parergon*, an outwork, a prefigurative working out, or supplemental materialization before the fact, of Marxian science. Whereas the *1844 Manuscripts* spookily prophesies the rematerialization of value in communism, Aunt Hester actually enacts the senses as "theoreticians in their immediate practice."<sup>28</sup> Here, communism is given as discovery procedure and not just as discovery along lines Marx himself would actually endorse: as he says, "Communism is the act of positing as the negation of the negation, and is therefore a *real* phase, necessary for the next period of historical development, in the emancipation and recovery of mankind. *Communism* is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism is not as such the goal of human development—the form of human society."<sup>29</sup>

So Aunt Hester is, at this point, that which Piper reenacts and/or calls for: the artist(-critic-dealer-collector-art historian-social theorist)-as-art-object, the invaginated totality or gathering—the locus and logos—of a division of labor, the (audiovisual) rematerialization of value. And just as C. L. R. James could assert—by way of a kind of magic that seems impossible but whose reality is something to which every worker might surreptitiously attest—that socialism is already in place on the shop floor, so can we assert, by way of Aunt Hester and the theoretical catalysis she enacts, that communism-in-(the resistance to) slavery is the discovery procedure for communism out from slavery's outside. Meanwhile, Aunt Hester's performance-in-objection is recited for us in Douglass, then transmitted or transferred, by way of a repressive dematerialization, into a discourse on music. Aunt Hester enacts a rematerialization that is a necessary preface to, though it emerges only after the fact of, dematerialization. It's a cutting augmentation of Marx's own necessary materialist preface, in "Private Property and

Communism,” to the dematerializing theoretical forces that are gathered and unleashed in *Capital* that Piper re-performs, forging new relations of production and reproduction in this socialization of objection and its surplus. This is what objection is, what performance is—an internal complication of the object that is, at the same time, her withdrawal into the external world. Such withdrawal makes possible communication between seemingly unbridgeable spaces, times, and persons.

In the end, what I’m trying to get to is this: there is a massive and dense discourse on the object, on what it will be in communism, on what it will bring about as communism, that Marx puts forward in 1844. Most simply put, communism is that “positive *supersession of private property as human self-estrangement*, and hence the true *appropriation of the human essence through and for man*” that is actually constituted in and by and as a new approach of and toward the object.<sup>30</sup> Marx adds, “To sum up: it is only when man’s object becomes a *human* object or objective man that man does not lose himself in that object. This is only possible when it becomes a *social* object for him and when he himself becomes a social being for himself, just as society becomes a being for him in this object.”<sup>31</sup> Black radicalism, the invagination and rematerialization of what Cedric Robinson calls “the ontological totality,” might be performed in and as the arrival at becoming-social in the vexed and vexing exchange of roles; in and as the differentialized and ensemblic recalibration of the senses. For Marx, “[t]he domination of the objective essence within me, the sensuous outburst of my essential activity, is passion, which here becomes the *activity of my being*.”<sup>32</sup> Aunt Hester’s objective passion anticipates this Marxian formulation that is later re-configured by Piper’s seemingly passionless objection. In the *Untitled Performance for Max’s Kansas City*, Piper silently transmits Aunt Hester’s shriek, opening herself to its disruptive force even as she closes herself off to the sensory experience of the “artworld.” To think Aunt Hester and Piper, individually and together, is to think not only what it means to recognize and deny, protect and risk, the complex interiority of the object, but also what it means to re-objectify the work of art, to revisualize it

by way of an old recording, to rematerialize its opticality by way of the sound and song of what Marx couldn't even imagine, the commodity who shrieked, by way of what Fried couldn't even visualize, the object whose infusion with the resistant aurality of a tradition of politico-economic aspiration and whose concomitant and necessarily theatrical personhood bound to whatever lies before her own troubled self-making, made her art making art.

### Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality

1. See Robert Storrs, "Foreword," in Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 1: xviii–xix. Piper discusses Krauss's formulation without naming Krauss, placing it within the framework of a larger critique of the convergence of ontological fallacy and socioeconomic presumption in the (construction of the) art world, in "Critical Hegemony and Aesthetic Acculturation," *Noûs* 19, no. 1 (1985): 29–40. Piper revises and expands this critique in "Power Relations within Existing Art Institutions," in *Out of Order*, 2: 63–89. Here are the relevant passages from "Critical Hegemony," 30–31.

"A commitment to a career as an art practitioner requires that one is financially independent, or that one's family is, or that one possesses other economically remunerative skills, or that a permanently Spartan lifestyle can be regarded as a novelty or a virtue, rather than as proof of social failure.

"This precondition to professional commitment functions as a mechanism of selection among creatively inclined individuals for whom economic hardship has been, up to that point, a central reality. Art institutions in their present incarnations will tend to attract individuals for whom economic and social instability are not sources of anxiety, for they have correspondingly less reason to sacrifice the vicissitudes and satisfactions of self-expression to the necessities of social and economic pressure.

"One immediate effect of this social and economic preselection is to create a shared presumption in favor of certain artistic values, i.e., a concern with beauty, form, abstraction, innovations in media, and politically neutral subject matter. Let us roughly characterize these as *formalist* values. Since economically advantaged individuals often import such values from an economically advantaged, European background environment, and since existing art institutions favor the selection of such individuals, it follows that these institutions will be popularized by individuals who share these values.

". . . [T]hose creative products dominated by a concern with political and social injustice, or economic deprivation, or that use traditional, or 'ethnic,' or 'folk' media of expression, are often not only not 'good' art; they are not art at all. They are, rather, 'craft,' 'folk art,' or 'popular culture'; and individuals for whom these concerns are dominant are correspondingly excluded from the art context.

"The consequent invisibility of much non-formalist, ethnically diverse art of high quality may explain the remark, made in good faith by a well-established

critic, that if such work didn't generate sufficient energy to 'bring itself to one's attention,' then it probably did not exist. It would be wrong to attribute this claim to arrogance or disingenuousness. It is not easy to recognize one's complicity in preserving a state of critical hegemony, for that one's aesthetic interests should be guided by conscious and deliberate reflection, rather than by one's socioculturally determined biases, is a great deal to ask. But by refusing to test consciously those biases against work that challenges rather than reinforces them, a critic insures that the only art that is *ontologically* accessible to her is art that narrows her vision even further. And then it is not difficult to understand the impulse to ascribe to such work the magical power to 'generate its own energy,' introduce itself to one, garner its own audience and market value, and so on. For nearly all objects of consideration can be experienced as animatedly and aggressively intrusive if one's intellectual range is sufficiently solipsistic.”

I intend briefly to address this solipsism as it manifests itself in the criticism of Michael Fried. This address is, however, only in the interest of framing an engagement with Piper's art and thought. I hope to show why the frame is necessary and essential even as it is broken. Part of what's at stake is the recognition that Piper's critique of critical hegemony and critical solipsism is structured by an asserted disbelief in, or critical debunking of, the fetish character of the art object. Notions of the artwork's essential energy or aggressivity—whether demonized, as we shall see, in Fried or valorized in Krauss—are unacknowledged ideological effects of an acculturation that emphasizes formalist values, according to Piper. However, part of what I'll begin to argue here is that Piper's work—which is, in a quite specific way, to say Piper—constitutes a massive and rigorous rematerialization of the art object whose most prominent feature is the ongoing and resistant assertion of self-generated energy, impulse, drive. I intended to show that to experience Piper or the Piperian artwork is to enter a zone of ontic aesthetic productivity and a history of performance that undermines Piper's own Kantian formulation that “artworks without words are dumb” (“Critical Hegemony,” 33). This is to say that I intend to argue—by way of Aunt Hester and her line, which includes Piper (who knows much about the complex and open relationship between slavery, art, and the freedom of the object)—against Piper's notion (later extended and elaborated by Phelan) that performance, in its nonreproductivity, constitutes a bulwark against (or a solution to the problem of) the fetishization of the art object. Performance is,



rather, the occasion to think the fetish character of the art object and its secret, its mystery, anew. To assert this is to move with and against Piper's richly internally differentiated—if not contradictory—discourse on the object. See her "Performance and the Fetishism of the Art Object," in *Out of Order*, 1: 51–61; "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object," in *Out of Order*, 1: 29–53; and "Pontus Hulten's Slave to Art," in *Out of Order*, 1: 187–92. See also Peggy Phelan, "Broken Symmetries: Memory, Sight, Love," in *Unmarked*.

2. See Piper, *Out of Order*, 2: 127–48.

3. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 116–47.

4. See Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4: 85–93.

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *The Sanctified Church* (Berkeley: Turtle Island, 1981), 49.

6. Piper, *Out of Order*, 2: 177.

7. Fried, "Theories of Art after Minimalism and Pop," in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (New York: New Press, 1987), 55–56.

8. Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990),

6. An earlier version of this formulation is quoted and analyzed by Stephen Melville in his *Philosophy beside Itself: On Deconstruction and Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 13.

9. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 144–47.

10. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 53.

11. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 145.

12. Amiri Baraka, "John Coltrane (1926–1967): I Love Music," in *Eulogies* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 2.

13. Piper, *Out of Order*, 1: 27.

14. See Derrida, *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault, and Michael Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Law (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

15. Piper, *Out of Order*, 1: xxxix.

16. *Ibid.*, xxxix–xl. For an excellent analysis of the cultural import of racial and sexual minorities' restricted rights of privacy, see Phillip Brian Harper,

*Private Affairs: Critical Ventures in the Culture of Social Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

17. Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” 85.

18. The thing (*Ding*) is passive, according to Kant. It’s that to which nothing can be imputed, and is opposed to “a person [who] is a subject whose actions can be imputed to him.” The thing is without freedom and spontaneity. A human being acting in response to inclinations, acting as means to another’s ends, is a thing. At the same time, the thing or thing as such is metaphysical substance, that undetermined thingness in general that is a condition for the possibility of experience in general and is, likewise, a condition for the possibility of objects of experience. A *Gegenstand* is an object that conforms to the limits of intuition and understanding. When an object of experience is made into an objects of knowledge, it becomes an *Objekt*. Part of what’s at stake here, which I can only begin to explore, is the paradoxical character of intuition (space and time, the transcendental aesthetic) as condition of and conditioned by objects of experience or sense, as both the immediate relation to objects and that which occurs only insofar as the object is given to us. This temporal gap of the object is like the temporal gap of the subject—that it must be called into existence, that the fact that it is called indicates it already exists—that Butler isolates and reads with a rhythmically rigorous insistence in *The Psychic Life of Power*. Just as the subject, according to Althusser, is made possible by the call that its prior existence makes possible, so is the object made possible by the intuition that its prior existence makes possible. This immediacy of intuitive apprehension is presentness, in Fried’s language.

I should here acknowledge the usefulness of Howard Caygill’s *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). The quotation above from Kant is in *A Kant Dictionary*, 304.

19. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45.

20. *Ibid.*, 54–55.

21. *Ibid.*, 64.

22. *Ibid.*, 59.

23. See Spivak, *A Critique*, 1–111; also Robert Bernasconi, “Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant’s Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race,” in *Race* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 11–36.

24. For me, that link is constituted by Artaud and Derrida’s reading of

him. In "La Parole Soufflée" Derrida addresses Artaud's critique of the way speech and writing have worked in the theater. Artaud desires writing, according to Derrida, that is not a transcription of speech but a transcription of the body, a writing on the body, gesture, movement, something, according to Derrida, no longer controlled by the institution of the voice. Artaud is after "the overlapping of images and movements [that] will culminate, through the collusion of objects, silences, shouts, and rhythms, or in a genuine physical language with signs, not words, as its root." As Derrida says, "the only way to be done with freedom of inspiration and with the spiriting away of speech [la parole soufflée] is to create an absolute mastery over breath [le soufflée] within a system of nonphonetic writing." Deleuze and Guattari, again by way of Artaud, speak of this nonphonetic writing as "primitive inscription," and their language marks the spot of a metaphysics that is always primitively anthropological, primitive in its need and desire for the anthropological object, the anthropological order, the one Spivak now calls, but in a different way, the native informant.

Piper enacts this object of desire under the veiled rubric of the primitive that is structured where and when the sciences of in/human/e administration and the new sciences of value meet (anthropology, psychoanalysis, the critique of political economy, the genealogy of morals, general linguistics, evolutionary biology). But in Piper, the primitive is critically unveiled as that which is not what it is. Improvised, this collusive writing of "objects, silences, shouts, rhythms" is her performative language. "A universal grammar of cruelty."

In the end, Derrida, picking up on his critique of Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, also in *Writing and Difference*, wants to challenge the notion that madness is purely the absence of the work. He wants to say that madness is the work as well and, more importantly, that madness is just as much a part of the history of metaphysics as its other. This is to say that the appeal to madness or to the absence of the work is still operating within the metaphysical, logocentric reserve. Artaud and Foucault still operate within or "belong to the epoch of metaphysics that determines Being as the life of a proper subjectivity." This is to say that madness is still operative in its relation to proper subjectivity. This is the metaphysics "which Artaud destroys and which he is still furiously determined to construct or to preserve within the same movement of destruction . . . At this point, different things ceaselessly and rapidly pass into each other and the *critical* experience of *difference resembles* the naïve and *metaphysical*

implications *within difference*, such that to an inexperienced scrutiny, we could appear to be criticizing Artaud’s metaphysics from the standpoint of metaphysics itself, when we are actually delimiting a fatal complicity. Through this complicity is articulated a necessary dependency of all destructive discourses: they must inhabit the structures they demolish, and within them they must shelter an indestructible desire for full presence, for nondifference. . . . The transgression of metaphysics through the ‘thought’ which, Artaud tells us, has not yet begun, always risks returning to metaphysics. Such is the question in which we are *posed*. [Remember—as one poses a net, surrounding the limit of a discursive net.] A question which is still and always enveloped each time that speech, protected by the limits of a field, lets itself be provoked from afar by the enigma of flesh which wanted properly to be named Antonin Artaud” (194–95). You inhabit the discourse you’re trying to destroy as a function of the urge to destroy it and of a formal tie, a tie of necessity to what you would destroy, a tie that is not fixed but is determinate. The thing is, at the end of *La Parole Soufflée*, which I just quoted, something else is going on, first in the body of the text and then in the little appendage or attachment that cuts and augments it like a fold, a messy, unfoldable fold or gap in the envelope, a disruption of the pose. To speak of the envelope, to thereby push it, so to speak, is to invoke the trace of a future discourse in Derrida, a discourse of invagination that will emerge in relation to a certain understanding of the ear—the body and its folds will have literally come to disrupt the artificial or artifactual totality of the pose. In “The Law of Genre” Derrida speaks of invagination as that which cuts and augments the whole, that which ruptures the limit in the interest of a larger reestablishment. Not a dismantling of the house but a stringent and rigorous remodeling and expansion that is predicated on a critique of the idea of ownership and authorship, of a certain exclusionarily determined architectural propriety. Meanwhile, the (delimiting and illimitable folds of the) body becomes the figure for what the flesh will have always done to speech. This is the enigma of the flesh (as distinguished from the body by Spillers) that provokes speech from outside of speech’s protective limits. Such provocation is the very structuring possibility of Derrida’s work that his work is designed to mute as if it moves only in disbelief of the ghost that is its constant companion, as if caught up in the desire for a listening out of earshot, as if folded into an old avoidance of material accent. Derrida’s work is bound up not only with the repression of accent’s irreducible differences, but with the unfortunate way that the French language conflates

voice and speech. To articulate the difference between body, voice, and speech is what remains (to articulate flesh as a kind of *Geschlecht*, a gathering of differences, the ante-logos, the afterparty), what Artaud attempts to do by way of the body's mastery over breath, spirit. Derrida's attachment of the appendix to the essay betrays an awareness of an overheard difference, the differential wedge that articulates it. The hole, the force, the new whole, is a re-en-gendering, as Spillers points out. It is an unmaning, as Schreber describes and Artaud enacts (their link being articulated in the work of Deleuze and Guattari). They carry the knowledge of the mother's touch and tongue, but repressively project it away from themselves in and as the image of the primitive. As we've seen, Spillers describes this operation with regard to blackness, *as* blackness—the cut of cutting, burning flesh, the fleshly remainder in the absence—the cut augmentation and dispossessive spiriting (away)—of the maternal body. The ongoing stealing away of and from maternal body, maternal shore, maternal language. Steal away (from) home. Born not in bondage but in fugitivity, in stolen breath and stolen life.

25. See Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

26. See Marx, *Capital*, 1: 126.

27. See Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1970), 145–57.

28. Marx, "Communism and Private Property," in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Vintage, 1975), 352.

29. *Ibid.*, 358.

30. *Ibid.*, 348.

31. *Ibid.*, 352.

32. *Ibid.*, 356.