

Body of Glass: Cybernetic Bodies and the Mirrored Self

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For my wife,
who made it possible

Abstract

This thesis examines the ontology of the cyborg body and the politics inherent to cultural manifestations of that image, and focuses on the links between glass and human-machine integration, while tracing the dangerous political affinities that emerge when such links are exposed.

In the first chapter, the cyborg's persistent construction as a cultural Black Box is uncovered using the theories of Bruno Latour and W. Ross Ashby. It examines why the temptation to explore the cyborg solely through close readings of contemporary incarnations leads only to confusion and misreading. The second chapter builds on the work of the first by placing the cyborg within its proper historical context, and provides a detailed examination of the period in which the cyborg was not only named, but also transformed into a physical possibility with an existent political agenda. It then investigates the phallogocentricity, hyper-masculinity, and inherent racism of the cyborg body, and demonstrates how representations of human-machine integration reinforce the pre-existing racist, hetero-normative, patriarchal hegemony of the Cold War.

The discussion then explores the issue of the emergent property in the cyborg body; specifically, the figure's persistent construction as a 'body of glass.' It demonstrates how cyborgs are not only associated with objects like the mirror, but also how that figure is tied to visual motifs such as the double or doppelganger. Accordingly, the theories of Jacques Lacan are employed to elucidate the issues that arise when one of the most pervasive images in Western culture also doubles as a reflector. The final chapter seeks to expand upon the framework provided by Lacan, and examines the cyborg not as a mirror, but as a portal. Subsequently, this section challenges not only the cyborg's current status as a posthuman figure, but also current theoretical assumptions which frame the cyborg as the point of transition from humanism to posthumanism.

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Introduction: The Children of Uranium: Warhol, Weaponry and the Evolution of Postmodern American Identity

“After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western world is imploding.”¹

0.1 Light

In a secure section of the New Mexico desert stands an obelisk of black lava. At nearly 15 feet high, the item is paltry in comparison to any existing counterparts, whether ancient or modern, and does not loom over the surrounding countryside so much as scar it like an ugly pile of cobbled rocks (Figure 1). On a purely aesthetic level, the sheer awkwardness of the object is more than just apparent, it is *blinding* given the context in which it was built, because with a shape both cone-like and inelegant, the heap itself not only seems grossly incongruous when stacked against the alkali landscape, but also totally alien and inappropriate when considering the sterility and solemnity of the site itself. This is the Trinity marker, the epicenter of (what was) an irradiated wasteland, and the spot “WHERE THE WORLD’S FIRST NUCLEAR DEVICE WAS EXPLODED ON JULY 16, 1945.”²

Officially, the firing circuits closed at 05:29:45 that morning, causing an implosion so violent, and so visually brilliant, its reflection could be seen on the surface of the moon.³ Isidor Isaac Rabi, a Nobel Prize winning physicist entrenched at Los Alamos since the beginning of the project, watched the event from a position over 10 miles away. When describing the test almost 25 years later, Rabi would recall “an enormous flash of light, the brightest light I have ever seen or that I think anyone has ever seen. It blasted; it pounced; it bored its way right through you. It was a vision...seen with more than just the eye. It was seen to last forever.”⁴ Rabi’s recollection is extraordinary as the image of perpetual whiteness not only marks a new beginning—one which unfortunately, is now associated with the cheap sentimentality of a so-called

¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), p. 1.

² The sign attached to the Trinity marker reads in all capitals: “TRINITY SITE: WHERE THE WORLD’S FIRST NUCLEAR DEVICE WAS EXPLODED ON JULY 16, 1945. ERECTED 1965, WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, J. FREDERICK THORNLIN, MAJOR GENERAL U.S. ARMY, COMMANDING.”

³ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 670, 672.

⁴ Isidor Isaac Rabi, *Science: The Center of Culture* (New York: World Publishers, 1970), p. 138.

‘second dawn’—but also a kind of obsolescence; a complete erasure of everything as Trinity transforms the world into a vision of emptiness without end.⁵ In many ways, this is the “landscape of snows”, the “dumb blankness” described by Melville, and embodied by his whale.⁶ This is the “colorless, all-color of atheism from which” everyone shrinks, because the sight is both terrifying and sublime, empty and yet “full of meaning”.⁷

In reality, the flash lasted for no longer than two seconds, and was replaced by a colossal roar accompanied by “great swirls of flame.”⁸ These swirls rose in a narrow column to a height of nearly 41,000 feet, the top of which mushroomed outward, covering the sky in a churning cloud of colour that was either “mint green,” “brilliant purple,” or “bright...spectral blue”.⁹ However, the image of a “lime green” sky would repeat itself yet again in the early 1960s when a massive Hydrogen bomb was detonated over the Pacific, in a spot near the Hawaiian Islands.¹⁰

Although considerably weaker than its successors, the heat generated by the blast in New Mexico was sufficient to scorch a pine board at 2,000 yards, while the energy produced in the centre was so enormous it not only vaporized the mass of steel girders upon which the device was placed, but also melted the earth at its base; fusing the surrounding sand into a huge plate of murky green glass.¹¹ This glass, also known as Trinitite, is now almost gone. Today only fragments remain, sold as “Atomite” or “Alamogordo glass” to the rock collectors and bomb enthusiasts that scour eBay. The rest was bulldozed

⁵ Ferenc M. Szasz uses the image of a second sunrise to describe the effects of the Trinity Test, see; *The Day the Sun Rose Twice: The Story of the Trinity Site Nuclear Explosion, July 16, 1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press).

⁶ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or The White Whale* (Boston: The Page Company, 1920), p. 186

⁷ Ibid. Indeed, “like [the] willful travelers in Lapland who [refused] to wear colored and colouring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel[s]” un/lucky enough to survive Hiroshima and Nagasaki, also “[gazed themselves] blind at the monumental white shroud that [wrapped] all the prospect around [them].”

⁸ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atom Bomb*, p. 673.

⁹ David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), p. 227. A ballistics expert described the blast as “bright...blue” while Frank Oppenheimer maintains the resulting cloud appeared a “brilliant purple” (Rhodes, 673, 675). David Wade, a 9 year old resident of the nearby town, Socorro, said that his father “was looking out [the window at the time of the blast] and said the sky turned a mint green.” Claire Marshall, “The Bomb that Changed the World,” BBC NEWS, Accessed 10 April 2006: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4689983.stm>

¹⁰ David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, p. 234.

¹¹ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atom Bomb*, p. 677.

by the Army in the years that followed, and buried under tons of dirt and concrete until the crater itself disappeared completely. Equally, this official movement toward secrecy, or erasure, or forgetting also applies to that sense of astonishment that accompanies every atomic event, because unlike the vast power of the bomb, the vibrancy and sheer range of colour produced by such flashes are now all but forgotten. Their brilliance expunged from the collective memory and removed from aesthetic representations. Their variations in shade reduced to a blinding white light followed only by hues of red and orange that foreshadows the coming flames. The “green glass sea” is also lost; referenced solely by a children’s book of the same name.¹² Apparently, the aftermath is not the point; only the event and the sublime image of the blast itself, which ironically, has now been greatly diminished by partial depictions of that very scene.

With the evidence expunged, and the land superficially restored, the Trinity site was then capped with the aforementioned obelisk in 1965, and opened to the public on only two days a year; the first Saturday in April and October.¹³ Pilgrims who manage to make the trip during this 48 hour window are confronted with a thing more burial mound than memorial; an eyesore which has since become a tombstone complete with epitaph. Seen in this way, the object seems to exploit every one of its inherent aesthetic sins to great effect, because each blemish not only contributes to a kind of gravestone, but perhaps more disturbingly, they constitute a marker which stands like a gross premonition of Kubrick’s ebony monoliths in *2001*. Indeed, like the trio (or trinity) of mystical things which Keir Dullea and friends found standing on the earth, buried in the moon, and floating out in space, this pile of black rock marks both a dramatic socio-political change, and one of humanity’s most spectacular evolutionary turns—that of Adam into Atom.¹⁴

On a political level, the implosion at Alamogordo certainly qualifies as a point of no return. Moreover, it represents a kind of vanishing point for the remainder of the 20th century, as if the light thrown out at 05:30 not only illuminated the entire American desert, but also the whole future of the

¹² Ellen Klages, *The Green Glass Sea* (New York: Viking Juvenile, 2006).

¹³ For more on tourism and the Trinity site see The White Sands Missile Range website: <http://www.wsmr.army.mil/pao/TrinitySite/trndir.htm>

¹⁴ *2001: A Space Odyssey*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (MGM, 1968).

Western world. After all, the shadows cast by the bomb are long and dark, while the light released through the hands of Oppenheimer and Groves can still be seen to this very day. George W. Bush and his continuing attempts to resurrect the strategic theories of Edward Teller and the fallacy of Star Wars is only the most recent example, as are the latest efforts by New Labour to renew the UK's now obsolete nuclear deterrent, otherwise known as *Trident*; itself a rather eerie, if inadvertent homage, to the original trio of *Trinity*.¹⁵ This is "Echoland."¹⁶

In biological terms, nuclear weapons are the most "compact, efficient, inexpensive, [and] inexorable mechanisms of total death" ever conceived.¹⁷ Their collective power is so staggering that in 1982 the World Health Organization stated that in the case of a "major" nuclear event an estimated two billion people would die as a result.¹⁸ Alarming, this figure was released before "detailed studies appeared about the potentially widespread disaster of nuclear winter", a climactic phenomenon which would cause the death toll to rise even higher until it eventually peaked with our ultimate extinction.¹⁹

The rise of such a dangerous socio-political system, in which the stakes are nothing less than total annihilation, has clearly had a profound impact on the Western psyche. As one writer declared over twenty-five years ago: "Versions of [this] nightmare have haunted mankind for 37 years". The most obvious examples are the endless parade of books and films that either explicate or explore the dangers inherent in such a terminal form of political brinkmanship.²⁰ One of the most common cultural narratives continues to centre on the image of an accidental evolutionary offshoot; on human bodies

¹⁵ The number three makes another appearance in Britain's newest nuclear deterrent, since the country's latest atomic enforcers comprise a trio of submarines scheduled for completion in 2007: the HMS *Astute*, the HMS *Ambush*, and the HMS *Artful*.

¹⁶ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 13.

¹⁷ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atom Bomb*, p. 779.

¹⁸ The use of "major" is somewhat bizarre given that any nuclear war could never be seen as minor. Yet, perhaps Rhodes and the WHO are inadvertently adopting the terminology of the Reagan administration, and their notion of a "limited nuclear war", in which (presumably) only a few hundred million would die, as opposed to everyone, everywhere. James Kelly, "Thinking About the Unthinkable," *Time* (29 March 1982). Accessed 23 April 2007: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,953406-3,00.html>

¹⁹ Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atom Bomb*, p. 779.

²⁰ "Living with Mega-death," *Time* (29 March 1982). Accessed 23 April 2007: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,953408-2,00.html>

made horribly toxic by the everlasting light of the atomic. In 1954, Godzilla surfaced slowly from the seas of Japan, and with it a crystallized obsession with atomic destruction, and/or radioactive mutation in American Sci-Fi cinema.²¹ To quote pop culture scholar, Christopher Frayling:

Them! (1954), a huge box office success for Warner Brothers, was the film that established the rules of the game: the combination of a quasi-documentary cinematic style with a story about atomic tests in the New Mexico desert leading to the creation of giant mutant ants...was evidently a winning one. The film even included a suitably apocalyptic biblical epigram: “And there shall be destruction and darkness over creation. And the beasts shall rule over the earth.”²²

Despite their impeccable timing and impressive cultural savvy the producers of *Them!* were only half right. It is not darkness, but light, both visible and invisible, that rules over this new world, that dominates this freshly made creation in which the specter of mutation not only haunts the hills overlooking America’s deserts, but also the oceans enclosing Japan.²³ Seemingly, at the centre of the blast, while death is consistently absolute, on the periphery, the margins, in that penumbra between the living and the lifeless, exist the mutants, the undead; the vampires who could not be slain by the killing light of Western science. These are the burned bodies that populated Hiroshima after the explosion had subsided, their skin erupting into open sores as the city burned. And these are the templates for the giant insects and imaginary monsters that not only stalk the rim of every irradiated zone, but which in their monstrosity, also reflect cultural anxieties over modernity’s apparent war against bodily integrity (Figure 2). In fact, perhaps the most powerful and lingering consequence left by the legacy of Los Alamos, the Nevada Proving Ground, and their numerous radioactive centres, is not the precarious political

²¹ It is interesting that both Japan and the United States should develop a near identical cultural reaction to the atom bomb in the years following WWII. Godzilla is easily one of Japan’s most recognizable exports, and is also a victim of atomic testing.

²² Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), pp. 199-200.

²³ Numerous films have followed in the wake of *Them!*. *The Hills Have Eyes* (2006)—a remake of the 1977 Wes Craven film—and its sequel *The Hills Have Eyes II* (2007), are virtual copies of *Them!*. Instead of mutant ants, the beasts in these films are cannibalistic inhumans with a severe rape fetish; people mutated into amoral monsters by the transformative powers of the bomb.

climate of the Cold War, but their subsequent and repeated assaults on the stability of human ontology.

0.2 Atoms

J. Robert Oppenheimer once said that it “did not take atomic weapons to make war terrible” nor did it “take atomic weapons to make Man want peace...But the [atom] bomb was the turn of the screw. It has made the prospect of future war unendurable. It has led us up those last few steps to the mountain pass; and beyond there is a different country.”²⁴ Obviously, the prospect of a future war has been nothing if not tolerable. American conflicts in Korea and Southeast Asia, where nuclear annihilation was always considered a plausible alternative, are a testament to this fact, as are the continued political posturing of newly emerging nuclear states such as Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran.²⁵ In many ways, the ability and the willingness to destroy humanity has always been the preferred political currency for those who wish to enter and/or dominate the stage of international politics.²⁶ The trick is to survive the onslaught.

²⁴ Cited in Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, p. 778.

²⁵ Writing in 1981, Daniel Ellsberg, observed that “every president from Truman to Reagan, with the possible exception of Ford, has felt compelled to consider or direct serious preparations for possible imminent US initiation of tactical or strategic nuclear warfare, in the midst of an ongoing, intense non-nuclear conflict or crisis.” To cite just one example provided by Ellsberg, and elaborated here by scholar, Zia Mian; “the US military seriously considered using tactical nuclear weapons in the Vietnam War. Declassified documents show that in February 1968, the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff considered the question of ‘whether tactical nuclear weapons should be used’ if it looked like the Vietnamese might succeed in their attack on the US troops at Khe Sanh. He asked US commanders in Vietnam to look for targets ‘which lend themselves to nuclear strikes’. The documents show that senior military commanders argued that ‘military prudence alone requires that we do some detailed planning,’ set a planning process in motion, and considered the ‘type and location of tactical nuclear weapons available and best suited to the purpose.’ Nuclear weapons were eventually not used in Vietnam. General Westmoreland, the commander of US forces in Vietnam, later argued that the use of nuclear weapons could have forced the Vietnamese to surrender, and drew an analogy with the atomic bombing of Japan. Other people, and not just in the US, have had similar dreams of what the proper use of nuclear weapons might achieve.” For more see: Daniel Ellsberg, “The Call to Mutiny,” *Protest and Survive*, ed. E.P Thompson and Dan Smith (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), Accessed 13 November 2007, <http://www.ellsberg.net/content/view/52>; Zia Mian, “America, Iran and the Nuclear Option,” *Economic and Political Weekly* (May 16, 2006), Accessed 13 November 2007: <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10282>.

²⁶ Today, there are 9 states with nuclear weapons capabilities; The United States, Russia, United Kingdom, China, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. Of those 9, only 5 are signatories to the 1968 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). India, Pakistan, and North Korea are not part of the NPT. Israel certainly has nuclear weapons, although it has never publicly acknowledged its own capabilities. Iran, on the other hand, is believed to be

On the other hand, no matter how inaccurate Oppenheimer's original speech ultimately proved politically, the validity of his statement continues to persist ontologically, albeit unintentionally, because even though his "mountain pass" never led to an international body politic predicated upon peace and mutual understanding, it certainly ushered in a new appreciation of what was, what is, and what could become human. Subsequently, the Father of the atom bomb is absolutely correct when his speech is applied to forthcoming research in the medical sciences, as well as to future representations of the human body throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, because even if Oppenheimer's "turn of the screw" swiftly proved itself a literal dead end, his work, and the effects thereof, have instead led us to a different set of steps, where beyond there is a different body.

Trinity, on the other hand, marks a definitive turn. More specifically, and at the risk of repetition, it marks the point of no return. Because not only does the implosion at Los Alamos signify a socio-political rupture in which Superpowers emerge with super-powers, but perhaps also the beginning of Post-modernity, and more dubiously, the "end of history" and of all things everywhere.²⁷ Such a dramatic remark is more than just eager hyperbole. Nor is it merely descriptive of what could be construed as an extreme case of cultural fatalism brought on by the devastating threat of atomic weaponry. On the contrary, it is a more accurate account of the world to come than even the endless parade of theoretical 'endings' to which I refer. Since the real-life trinity of Alamogordo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki seemed to prompt the creation of a consumer culture obsessed with grand finales. As Frederic Jameson writes, the remaining decades of the 20th century were

developing atomic weaponry, but is as yet, a non-nuclear power. Iranian officials and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in particular, have repeatedly stressed that Iran "is simply doing what it is allowed to do." After all, under the NPT "a country has the right to enrich its own fuel for civil nuclear power, under inspection from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)." See: "Iran and the Nuclear Issue," BBC NEWS.com, 6 November 2007, Accessed 13 November 2007: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4031603.stm. Note: to date, only one country has voluntarily relinquished nuclear weapons capability. In the early 1990s, South African President F.W. de Klerk ordered the dismantling of the country's atomic arsenal. For more see: David Albright, "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program," MIT website (March 14, 2001), Accessed 13 November 2007: http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives_01spring/albright.htm

²⁷ Frederic Jameson, "'End of Art' or 'End of History'," *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 73-93; Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Hemel Hempstead, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), pp. 109-136.

marked by an inverted millenarianism in which premonitions of the future, catastrophic or redemptive, have been replaced by senses of the end of this or that (the end of ideology, art, or social class; the crisis of ‘Leninism,’ social democracy, or the welfare state, etc., etc.); taken together, all of these...constitute what is increasingly called postmodernism. The case for its existence depends on the hypothesis of some radical break, or *coupure*, generally traced back to the end of the 1950s or the early 1960s.²⁸

The end of art, the end of history, the end of the human; all are under threat, or seen as inexorably doomed. As if the world itself was slowly being erased by the all-encompassing, all-expunging white light thrown out by the beginning of the nuclear age. Indeed, despite their sometimes dubious validity, each ending reinforces the overwhelming sense that we can never go back.

After all, even though a majority of contemporary cultural theorists trace the origins of postmodernity to the end of the 1950s, we must always remember that the America governed by both Eisenhower and Kennedy would not exist without Oppenheimer and Groves, Teller and Ulam, Wernher von Braun and Operation Paperclip.²⁹ Postmodernism is not simply a case of rebellion, in which the younger generations of the mid to late 20th century “confront” high-modernism “as a set of dead classics”.³⁰ Instead, the movement constitutes a concerted effort to articulate and reflect a new world order; one driven by M.A.D.(ness), contained by Sputnik, surveyed by all, and shattered by events that “weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living.”³¹ As Jameson notes, the “postmodern is...the force field in which...‘residual’ and ‘emergent’ forms of cultural production...must make their way.”³² Presumably, the previous models from which these residues derive are no longer valid or existent, because the epoch which allowed them to grow is now gone. After Trinity there are no reparations. The body cannot be repaired.

²⁸ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 1.

²⁹ Operation Paperclip was the code name under which the United States government secretly extradited Nazi scientists after the end of WWII. For further reading see: Tom Bower, *The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Battle for the Spoils and Secrets of Nazi Germany* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1987); John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Scientists: Science, War and the Devil’s Pact* (London: Penguin, 2004).

³⁰ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 4.

³¹ Ibid, p. 4. For more on Sputnik’s role as a container see: Marshall McLuhan, “At the moment of Sputnik the planet became a global theater in which there are no spectators but only actors,” *Journal of Communication* 24.1 (Winter 1974), pp. 48-58.

³² Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 6.

The earth is salted and we are changed. As one U.S. Naval officer put it when visiting Nagasaki in September, 1945 (Figure 3):

A smell of death and corruption pervades the place...The general impression, which transcends those derived from the evidence of our physical senses, is one of deadness, the absolute essence of death in the sense of finality without hope of resurrection. And all this is not localized. It's everywhere and nothing has escaped its touch. In most ruined cities you can bury the dead, clean up the rubble, rebuild the houses and have a living city again. One feels that is not so here. Like...Sodom and Gomorrah, its site has been sown with salt and 'Ichabod' written over its gates.³³

American art production following the end of World War II certainly reflects this sense of irrevocable alteration, because unlike Léger or his peers in the 20s and 30s, painting no longer seems concerned with “vaster [realities]”, “ultimate [truths]”, or the restoration of the self.³⁴ Rather, the singular representation of a meaningful subject—and I mean that in every sense of the word—is replaced by the endless replication of “dead objects”.³⁵ Frederic Jameson's iconic analysis of Vincent Van Gogh's *A Pair of Boots* (1887) and Andy Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* (1980) illustrates this chasm between the modern and its 'post' exceeding well. Characterizing the transition from one moment to the other as an apparent loss of voice, in which disconnection is the primary player:

Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* evidently no longer speaks to us with any of the immediacy of Van Gogh's footgear...I am tempted to say that it does not really speak at all. Nothing in this painting organizes even a minimal place for the viewer, who confronts it at the turning of a museum corridor or gallery with all the contingency of some inexplicable natural object. On the level of content, we have...what are far more clearly fetishes, in both Freudian and Marxian senses...a random collection of dead objects hanging together on the canvas like so many turnips, as shorn of their earlier life world as the pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz...³⁶

In 1959, Alain Resnais dramatized this sense of aesthetic alienation in *Hiroshima mon amour*.³⁷ Entering the Peace Memorial Museum with

³³ Cited in Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, p. 742.

³⁴ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 8.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ *Hiroshima mon amour*, dir. Alain Resnais (Argos Films, 1959).

staggered jump-cuts he captured human figures obscured from the waist up as they strolled past the remains of garden stones, rock walls, melted Coca-Cola bottles, and human skin. Like Jameson's turnips, these are objects as "shorn of their earlier life world as the pile of shoes" Resnais employed so vividly when filming the corridors of Auschwitz in 1955 (Figure 4).³⁸ To quote one of the earliest exchanges between Elle and Lui:

Elle: I saw people walking round. People walk pensively past photographs, reconstructions, since there is nothing else. Photographs, photographs, reconstructions, since there is nothing else. Descriptions, since there is nothing else. Four visits to the museum in Hiroshima...It was hot in the Place de la Paix. Ten Thousand degrees in the Place de la Paix. That I know...

Lui: You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing.³⁹

Despite the utter imprecision inherent in using such a term, the 'soul' has been scooped from the Image and replaced by a sense of emptiness and alienation that is ultimately rooted in Jameson's "public History" of "blood, torture, death, and terror."⁴⁰ Roots, which incidentally, we consistently strive to forget, ignore, dismiss, and/or expunge at the expense of our own past.⁴¹ What remains is a sense of flatness; or, what Jameson refers to as, "a new depthlessness, which finds its prolongation in contemporary 'theory' and in a whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum".⁴²

³⁸ *Nuit et brouillard*, dir. Alain Resnais (1955).

³⁹ *Hiroshima mon amour*, dir. Alain Resnais (Argos Films, 1959). For critical responses to *Hiroshima mon Amour* see: Bernard Pingaud, "Le temps – Dialectique de la mémoire et de l'oubli," *Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima* (Bruxelles: Institut de Sociologie, 1962), pp. 89-112; Edgar Morin, "L'amour et la mort," *Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima* (Bruxelles: Institut de Sociologie, 1962), pp. 77-88; André Delvaux, "Hiroshima, Resnais et la grammaire," *Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima* (Bruxelles: Institut de Sociologie, 1962), pp. 143-150; Raymond Ravar, "Les Spectateurs," *Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima* (Bruxelles: Institut de Sociologie, 1962), pp. 51-74.

⁴⁰ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, pp. 6, 5. Note: I use 'Image' with a capital 'I' to denote the idea of the image, as opposed to one specific instance of imagery.

⁴¹ As Claudia Springer explains: "Even our experience of space and time...has been transformed under postmodernism. Time has collapsed into a perpetual present, in which everything from the past has been severed from its historical context in order to circulate anew in the present, devoid of its original meanings but contributing to the cluttered texture of our commodified surroundings. The result...is historical amnesia, a lack of knowledge about the past that, in its pathological form, resembles the schizophrenic's inability to remember anything and consequent inability to sustain a coherent identity" Claudia Springer, *Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Postindustrial Age* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), p. 40.

⁴² Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 6. Interestingly, Jameson then ties this sense of "depthlessness" and forgetting to a feeling of the sublime, writing: "...a consequent weakening of historicity, both in our relationship to public

Of course, nowhere is this connection more explicit than in the early pop art of Andy Warhol, because even though later pieces like *Diamond Dust Shoes* perfectly embody the qualities of the postmodern era, Warhol's continual reproduction—and perhaps obsession!—with celebrities, commodities, sexuality, and death consistently speak to the origins of this new epoch, and to the body it produced. As such, Jameson might be adamant that there is often “no way to complete the hermeneutic gesture and restore to these oddments [the]...larger lived context” from which they came, but in relation to much of Warhol's early work, he is also wrong.⁴³ The Brillo pads, Campbell's soup cans, green Coca-Cola bottles, Maytag savings signs, hot water heaters, Heinz tomato ketchup boxes, and Kellogg's Corn Flakes packages produced in the early 1960s are more than just reproductions of “the great billboard images...[that] explicitly foreground the commodity fetishism of a transition to late capital.”⁴⁴ Instead, they constitute a reflection on the endless bric-a-brac coveted by—and orbiting around—the American nuclear family. In fact, whether deliberate or inadvertent, Warhol's *Green Coca-Cola Bottles* not only recall the “bouquets of bottle tops” created in Hiroshima in 1945 and filmed by Resnais in 1959, but also reconstruct those objects repeatedly, as if the factory, and perhaps the artist himself, were fruitlessly striving to understand and expunge the trauma of the atomic weaponry through the endless recreation of the same empty products (Figure 5). Apparently, simulacrum seems to soothe and anesthetize, as well as alienate.

Warhol's replicas and silk-screened reproductions do not depict loose, unfastened, or free floating products. Nor do they reproduce natural produce. They are duplicates of bottles and boxes; objects processed by industry, and hermetically sealed under the pretence of protection. They are physical coffers fashioned from wood and paint, or images rendered depthless by a system of production modelled on the American factory. As such, all are containers consciously devoid of content. Moreover, they are the husks that constitute the hollow centre of a culture founded on the doctrine of

History and in the new forms of our private temporality, whose ‘schizophrenic’ structure (following Lacan) will determine new types of syntax or syntagmatic relationships in the more temporal arts; a whole new type of emotional ground tone...which can be best grasped by a return to older theories of the sublime”.

⁴³ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 9.

containment (Figure 6).⁴⁵ Indeed, in a fashion typical of Warhol, and perhaps of the postmodern, these are the containers contained by assortments of ever-larger containers, since the Brillo boxes, Coke bottles, and Corn Flakes packets are continually enclosed by the borders of a slightly more expansive, but no less confining series of shells. As Alan Nadel writes,

shortly after the bomb initially exploded upon American consciousness...a national narrative developed to control the fear and responsibility endemic to possessing atomic power. The central motif of that narrative was ‘containment,’ in which insecurity was absorbed by internal security, internationalism by global strategy, apocalypse and utopia by a Christian theological mandate...⁴⁶

centred on the newly emerging network of independent breeding units otherwise known as the nuclear family.⁴⁷ To put it simply, the Brillo box is enclosed by the conjugal and familial limits of the new American home, which acts as the “universal” vessel for “democratic values,” which is controlled and contained by a “cult of domesticity” meant to “form a political and social container for the sexual energies of post-World War II teenagers and young adults,” which is in turn “congruent to and commensurate with [U.S.] foreign and domestic policy [for] containing communism.”⁴⁸ All of which is enclosed one final time by the launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957; a spheroid satellite that not only circumscribed the earth with repeated orbits, but also managed to contain the globe—metaphorically speaking—within its highly polished aluminium shell.

Thus, in a rather strange, but overwhelming piece of Warholian irony, these bottles, boxes, and cereal packets comprise the empty core nestled at the heart of America’s impossibly huge Russian doll. In fact, the Brillo box and Father appear to be the primary components comprising the nucleus of this

⁴⁵ All of Warhol’s supermarket reproductions, such as the package of Brillo Pads, were hollow containers made from wood and paint. Like all of Warhol’s work, interiority is consistently denied. There is only the surface; content is not the point.

⁴⁶ Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 14.

⁴⁷ The term ‘nuclear family’ was originally coined in 1949 by American anthropologist, G.P. Murdock; marking the self-contained familial model to which it refers as a post-WWII invention. For further reading on the history of the nuclear family see: G.P. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1949); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁴⁸ Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*, pp. xi, 117.

newly formed but confining America. After all, consumer goods now stand beside nuclear weapons as the standard by which to measure the strength and prosperity of a democratic society, while the Laws of the white Father ceaselessly control the policies and procedures of both the home and the homeland (Figure 7).⁴⁹ Here, product becomes political panacea, while Adam is literally relabelled as Atom. Subsequently, it seems both relevant and appropriate that the most recent exhibition of Warhol's work should be branded SUPERNOVA, since the word connotes more than just stars, celebrity, and self-destruction, but also endings, emptiness, and a blinding white light, which although alluring, absolutely obliterates everything it illuminates.⁵⁰

In this sense, perhaps Peter Greenaway and Saskia Boddeke are right. Perhaps, we did abdicate our place in the chain of being over 60 years ago, by breaking away from the Father of all Men, in order to become the "Children of Uranium."⁵¹ Such a theory would certainly explain a prolonged obsession with the fragility and ontology of the human body over the last half century, and add some much needed context to continuing debates regarding the past, present, and possible future of the purely biological form. It could also explain why this debate has recently been resurrected by a seemingly collective Western will after almost ten years of dormancy and/or stagnation, because even though a solid theorem elucidating the recent resurgence of prefixes such

⁴⁹ The political roll of these products is emphasized by Richard Nixon's bizarre debate with Nikita Khrushchev at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow, where, as Elaine Tyler May writes: "Nixon extolled the virtues of the American way of life, while his opponent promoted the Communist system. What was remarkable about the exchange was its focus [*and its location inside a full-scale model of a six-room style ranch house*]. The two leaders did not discuss missiles, bombs, or even modes of government...they argued over the relative merits of American and Soviet washing machines, televisions, and electric ranges—in what came to be known as the 'kitchen debate.'" According to May, "Nixon's focus on household appliances was not accidental. After all, arguments over the strength of rockets would only point out the vulnerability of the United States in the event of a nuclear war between the superpowers; debates over consumer goods would provide a reassuring vision of the good life available in the atomic age." Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, pp. 16-17. For an excellent reading on the kitchen debate see: Beatriz Colomina, "Enclosed by Images: Architecture in the Post-Sputnik Age," *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin, Ursula Frohne, and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 322-337.

⁵⁰ "Andy Warhol/Supernova: Stars, Deaths, and Disasters, 1962-1964," Art Gallery of Ontario, curator David Cronenberg (July 8–October 22, 2006). This exhibition was organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA, and traveled throughout North America.

⁵¹ "The Children of Uranium," Change performing Arts webpage, Accessed 18 April 2007: <http://www.changeperformingarts.it/Greenaway/childrenofuranium.html>

as *posthuman*, *transhuman*, and *inhuman* continues to remain elusive, the elements which gave rise to this transformation on July 16, 1945 still manage to persist. Furthermore, the recent revival of ontological uncertainty—at least in the Western world—could relate to the renewed threat of nuclear proliferation by so-called ‘rogue states.’ Producing a power shift that has initiated a newer, and seemingly, far more precarious version of the Cold War, in which almost every person with a claim on their respective countries seems capable of pressing the proverbial red button. Ultimately, this latest resurgence probably stems from a blend of three elements, in which nuclear radiation, genetic manipulation, and environmental damage recombine to fuel pre-existing cultural anxieties over the stability—and possible death—of the human and humanism.

Yet, whatever the reasons, and whatever the medley of fears and desires that these reservations reflect, all we really know is that texts which represent the present body, and which prophesize the future-human, continue to persist. And that a vast majority of the scholarship designed to explicate this phenomenon consistently fails to produce any real insight, because most is written either with a sense of naiveté that borders on embarrassing, or in turn, assigns qualities to the present and potential body almost arbitrarily, in order to facilitate a personal and/or political agenda.⁵² Whether deliberate or inadvertent, complacent or combative, all articles are derived directly from the ingrained—but invisible!—construction of “technology as...*white mythology*.”⁵³ As Joel Dinerstein writes:

Technological progress has long structured Euro-American identity...[functioning] as a prop for a muted form of social Darwinism—either ‘might makes right,’ or ‘survival of the fittest.’ Here is the technological matrix: progress, religion, whiteness, modernity, masculinity, the future.⁵⁴

⁵² To quote one overly enthusiastic PhD student: “At numerous gigs around Wellington [New Zealand] I played my drums and, under the lights, in the midst of sound, in the middle of rhythm...I theorized my relation to the drums, my becoming rhythm, the abstract-machine of player, stick and skin, my self as purely a conduit for other phyla.” Grayson Cooke, “Human-1/ Cyborg-0: A Personal History of Human-machine Relation,” *Nebula* 3.1 (April, 2006), pp. 19-20, Accessed 2 December 2006: <http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Cooke.pdf>

⁵³ Joel Dinerstein, “Technology and its Discontent: On the Verge of the Posthuman,” *American Quarterly* 58.3 (September 2006), p. 571.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

Certainly, the transformations began by Trinity fall into this mould, as do our continuing attempts to explain the trajectory of those changes, since we consistently omit all references to any plausible point of origin. Whiteness, hegemony, history, theology; all are seemingly irrelevant when describing a future wistfully devoid of such difference and dogma. It is therefore immaterial that the genesis of this new postmodern, posthuman, and supposedly post-gendered epoch can be traced backward to a vanishing point, 100 feet above the desert, on the outskirts of the Promised Land.⁵⁵ Indeed, even Donna Haraway, whose “Cyborg Manifesto” serves as the blueprint for all explorations of human-machine integration, is ultimately guilty of such assumptions, writing:

This [essay]...is an effort to contribute to socialist-feminist culture and theory in a postmodernist, non-naturalist mode and in the utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end.⁵⁶

Under this rubric, it is apparently inconsequential that staggered groups of privileged white men not only stood in awe before the production of such sublime radiance, but also meditated over a light stamped with the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As Haraway continues only a moment later: “The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust.”⁵⁷

Such dramatic and overreaching statements are clearly mistaken, as are the works of artists, writers, roboticists, and inventors who consistently ignore and/or elide the presence and consequences of a very bloody and problematic public History. All are guilty of such historical disconnection, and all are complicit in a kind of revisionism based on omission, since well known figures like StelArc, Diane Greco, Hans Moravec, and Ray Kurzweil continually make either: a) no reference to any sort of techno-human lineage; or b) start “with the abstract idea of [the] Cyborg”, the human, and the posthuman, “and then [try] to work out [their idyllic] implications” without

⁵⁵ According to the Mormon sect of the Christian religion, the ‘true’ promise land is North America and the United States in particular.

⁵⁶ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 150.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 151.

situating their arguments against a stable point of origin.⁵⁸ Thus, as N. Katherine Hayles writes: “Anything that [these terms] might be taken to mean becomes what [they] in fact [mean], as if the free play of the signifier translates instantaneously and effortlessly into physical and social realities.”⁵⁹ By ignoring the genesis of the post, trans, and inhuman, or at least their point of crystallization within Western culture, in order to uphold some arbitrary notion that cyborg bodies and their related identities reject all reference to their roots, we are consistently reinforcing the concept of technology as white myth, as well as sabotaging the primary goal of such work. Namely: positive social change through the formation of sense. To put it simply, one must know the past in order to understand the realities of the present, as well as the possibilities for the future. To do otherwise, is to “[theorize] in a void”, to produce no answers or even inklings, only circle upon circle, dizziness and disorientation as we attempt to advance without light, knowledge, memory, or myth.⁶⁰

0.3 Flashpoints

At best, conjectural tomes exploring the limits of the present and potential human falsely define their arguments in relation to what writer R.W.B. Lewis calls, the “restoration of Adamic perfection, knowledge, and dominion, a return to Eden.”⁶¹ Kurzweil, StelArc, and Joel Garreau happily embrace such a myth, although they seem to accept it either carelessly or unknowingly.⁶²

⁵⁸ N. Katherine Hayles, “Engineering Cyborg Ideology,” *The Electronic Book Review* (1995), Accessed 15 June 2005: <http://www.altx.com/ebr/hayles.htm>. For more information on the ideas of StelArc, Greco, Moravec, and Kurzweil see: Stelarc, “Towards the Posthuman,” *Cyber_Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), p. 267; StelArc, STELARC Website, Accessed 20 May 2007: <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/>; Dianne Greco, *Cyborg: Engineering the Body Electric*, CD-ROM (Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1995); Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking, 2005).

⁵⁹ N. Katherine Hayles, “Engineering Cyborg Ideology,” *The Electronic Book Review* (1995).

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 5.

⁶² Recently, journalist Joel Garreau went so far as to inscribe the Christian themes of Heaven and Hell upon his new book, *Radical Evolution: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing our Minds, our Bodies—and What it Means to be Human*. Garreau’s use of Christian terminology is so prevalent that some of his chapters are actually identified by titles like “The Heaven Scenario,” “The Hell Scenario,” and so forth. Joel Garreau, *Radical Evolution: The Promise*

While Haraway, Hayles, Greco, and Elaine L. Graham constantly reject such a story in order to construct another narrative in direct opposition to representations of Eden and the Enlightenment. As Haraway once remarked during an interview with Constance Penley:

It's the problem of being in the belly of the monster and looking for another story to tell...At a certain point you ask if there isn't another set of stories you need to tell, another account of an unconscious. One that does a better job of accounting for the subjects of history.⁶³

Unfortunately, Haraway's theory establishes a very limiting and monolithic binary. One which ironically, does not account for the "subjects of history", nor the incredible reach with which those subjects are capable, because even though her "Manifesto" remains an extremely valuable call to technological arms for both women and non-whites, Haraway continually misreads the metaphor at the heart of her paper in the name of defiance, insubordination, revolution, and resignification. Adam or not-Adam, these are the choices, and like all black and white articulations of enormously complex concerns, this too is erroneous, restrictive, and damaging. To quote Marshall McLuhan in a slightly different context: "To give both sides...tends to ignore the possibility that there may be more sides than two."⁶⁴

The following dissertation is an attempt to explore the complexities inherent within Western constructions of new human identities. In particular: Euro-American representations of the cyborg body. It will not offer solutions or seek to create new myths designed to liberate or enslave, but will instead chart the social, cultural, and political consequences of the only relevant cyborg story. Namely: metamorphosis in the 20th century. Having said that, however, the arguments do not deal with myths of animal-human collusion, even though such stories speak to the existence of a parallel narrative, which interconnects with the following in the space of the cosmetics, pharmaceutical, and military laboratory.

and Peril of Enhancing our Minds, our Bodies, and What it Means to be Human (New York: Doubleday, 2005).

⁶³ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large: Interview with Donna Haraway," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), p. 15.

⁶⁴ Marshall McLuhan, "At the moment of Sputnik the planet became a global theater in which there are no spectators but only actors," p. 51.

Moreover, this project will not point a way out of the quagmire created by cyborg theory produced over the last thirty years. Too much of that has already been done, and with little success, but will instead map the myth of human-machine integration in order to discern the complex political cargo which both infuses and surrounds the idea. Subsequently, the arguments will draw on a wide variety of sources from a wide range of mediums; including literature, art, film, sculpture, and architecture. In addition, it will reference and employ a selection of relevant theories from a number of theorists in order to elucidate the paper's key points. As a result, the arguments will remain unhindered by adherence to one particular viewpoint or philosophy, in the hopes that such an approach will release the work from the potential disaster of narrow thinking, as well as open the subject up to the possibility of wider cultural connection.

The entry point of this discussion is an examination of the near-sacrosanct nature of the cyborg's body, and Western culture's subsequent construction of that body as an opaque black box. In taking this step, we will follow the critical methodology set out by Bruno Latour, who states that all facts, no matter how tidy, stem from a period of intense uncertainty, in which facts themselves do not necessarily emerge as truth, but instead have truth conferred upon them through general consensus from a relevant community. Subsequently, the basis of this dissertation derives from the following questions: when was the image effectively produced? Why is it now considered subversive? What are cyborg politics, and upon what are they based? What is the ontology of the cyborg, and how does that affect not only its representation, but also its political affinities?

To better investigate these queries, the following work is subdivided into three parts. The first deals with the historical circumstance that not only produced contemporary understandings of the cyborg body, but which, even now, continue to inform representations of that image. The second part investigates the political affinities of both that particular figure and time period, while the third and final section explores the body's consistent links to glass and the mirror. As such, history will precede theory so that any ensuing analysis will be substantiated by, as well as grounded in, historical fact.

Moreover, the numerous photographs, film stills, and reproductions found in the text have been packaged together at the end of the work. Although moving back and forth from paragraph to picture might be seen as inconvenient or disorienting, it is also important that these images remain juxtaposed so that the connections between them can be more easily recognized and understood. It is also significant that certain literary works within this dissertation serve not just as textual examples, but also as theoretical tools for the lucid explication of especially difficult, or even intangible ideas. Subsequently, Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) has been integrated throughout the text so that the author's prose can consistently illuminate some of the cyborg's more pressing features. The same principle also applies to the rather extensive footnotes which characterize this work, because even though some are relatively large, each demonstrate that the images and ideas contained herein have consequences beyond the arguments discussed.

However, of the many relevant films, novels, and art pieces available, this dissertation only discusses a handful, and "for every privileged event" or text "examined in detail, I ignore countless more".⁶⁵ The only suitable excuse springs from the work of historian Alan Nadel, who writes:

These omissions were not simply caused by space constraints, although given my topic I certainly could never escape those...even infinite space would provide enough space. History is a cipher for omission, and the process of representation is never one of proportionality, but of narrativity.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 8-9. Nadel continues: "We all offer narratives in the hope that they will be repeated in ways that make some activity recognizable. One could counter, of course, that a narrative identifying CIA-trained mass murderers in Nicaragua as 'freedom fighters' made their performance 'unrecognizable.' I would reply that [such an] example of misrecognition is the reason for analyzing cultural narratives, however partial and suggestive the resulting analysis might necessarily be."

Part 1: Cyborgs in the Making

1: Explosive Propositions: Cyborgs, Sudden Death, and the Issue of Textual Examination

“What is a historical fact? It is after the fact.”⁶⁷

1.1 Appearance

In the desert beyond the limits of L.A., in a landscape part real and part realistic, bolts of lightning flash and curl, blasting outward from a central nexus until the air itself ruptures and congeals into the glassy spectre of a silver sphere (Figure 8). Abandoned by time, or America—or is it Hollywood?—this mirrored ball sits on a readymade set of burning bushes and scorched earth. Its movie-produced material dropped amid a hail of fire and light as if the object’s cleverly crafted corpus was designed to mimic the particulars of a specific man-made spectacle. Producing a recreation that (totally) recalls a vision of “that weird peeled eyeball exploding over the desert”; that violent burst of atoms and light, which like Wallace Stevens and his Jar, once forced the whole world to rise, surround, and submit.⁶⁸

At the heart of this computer generated simulation sits the naked but flawless form of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Reborn and returned to us for the third time, Schwarzenegger arrives as the Terminator. The infamous cyborg who for twenty years has not only been configured as the Germanic hypocenter of an American will to power, but also as a harbinger who drags behind him the conjoined spectre of atomic Armageddon, and the purity of Aryan physical perfection. Schwarzenegger is not simply the face of a looming but fictional techno-revolution, but the mythical echo of the Manhattan Project, Operation Paperclip, and their factual legacies of American techno-supremacy.

As the smoke clears, and the lightning subsides, a figure slowly rises from a crater surrounded by fire. Beyond the rim, Joshua trees blaze and pop, while inside the sealed limits of the circle itself, the sand has been superheated into a warped plate of murky grey glass. With his cyborg body now safely resurrected on the jagged shards of a broken mirror, Schwarzenegger stands, stares, and strides beyond the camera frame; the newly made silicate now crunching beneath his feet. Reprogrammed and ready to kill, or maybe this

⁶⁷ Laurence Rickels, *The Vampire Lectures* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁶⁸ Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 51.

time just to maim, he appears just as he has countless times before; biceps straining; ready to pose. His relentless T-101 punched out like yet another duplicate in an endless stream of uncontrollable cyborg simulacra. Bodies, which like the endless products of postmodernity, and the promised apocalypse of the Cold War, are not necessarily evidence of inevitable de-centering, but perhaps more crucially, figures and events which warn against the inherent devastation that comes from the manufacture of one centre too many. 1984, 1991, and (finally?) 2003; in the desert between L.A. and Las Vegas, between the Ocean and Alamogordo, stalk the embodied specters of the bomb.⁶⁹ Characters that not only manufacture metaphors and secrets, both open and invisible, but armored *things* that perpetuate a series of intertwined cultural narratives, whose very connections are consistently overlooked by the dominant myths of American history. As author Don DeLillo notes in his 1997 novel, *Underworld*: “What secret history are they writing? There is the secret of the bomb and there are secrets that the bomb inspires, things even [Hoover] cannot guess”.⁷⁰

1.2 Alert

Inevitably, all cyborg theory is based on a single certifiable fact: that a cyborg is a hybrid of machine and organism. As such, everything comes from this seemingly secure point of reference, because while speculations regarding the cyborg’s political leanings, as well as its evolutionary and philosophical implications are varied and uncertain, the basic structure of the cyborg has always been protected, locked, absolute, its ontology generally ignored; its entire existence and the politics therein based upon a belief in one simple equation: Organic + Inorganic = Cyborg. On the surface, reliance on such a theorem seems stable enough. Its validity is almost incontestable. Yet, taking the structure of the cyborg as a certainty is not without serious consequence, because by solely investigating the cultural repercussions that spring from the union of organic and inorganic, and by extension, ignoring the relationship between those components, cyborg scholars have missed a profound point.

⁶⁹ The Internet Movie Database has a listing for Terminator 4, scheduled for 2009. The project is labeled as in production, and is therefore at risk of cancellation: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0438488/>

⁷⁰ Don DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 51.

That ultimately, it is not only simplistic to assume the combination of two binaries will result in the creation of a new and revolutionary whole, but more importantly, that it is also dangerous to presume cyborgs somehow elide our suspicions, because they do not fully occupy either of those binaries. Man and machine mix and merge, but the processes which give rise to such a potent synthesis of the living and the lifeless are somehow lost in its manufacture.

After all, Haraway describes the cyborg as a figure which has made “thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed.”⁷¹ While others like Jonathan Goldberg have expanded upon those ideas to suggest that such ambiguities not only demand current conceptions of the body be refashioned to accommodate this new ontological equality, but actually “displace the question of sexual difference, [by marking] it [as] elsewhere and otherwise.”⁷² Power, gender, self, and Other; all are apparently irrelevant in a world where bodies lose all sense of boundary. The ideal somehow subverting the real as Haraway’s “traditions of ‘Western’ science and politics...of racist, male dominated capitalism” mysteriously dissolve in the continuing merger of white man and war machine.⁷³ The problems of liberal humanism ostensibly nullified in the representation of its ‘post,’ as if a body predicated upon disjunction and fracture could forever shatter the image of cohesion normally generated by the Ego, and thereby dislocate the body itself from previous conceptions of the so-called ‘natural hierarchy’ by purporting a subjective stance that views the social, cultural, political, psychological, and even the physical qualities that make up humanity, as disembodied, transferable, negotiable. Here, the body of the cyborg, poster child for the posthuman, successor to the subjects of the Enlightenment, and apparent death knell to the Age of Reason, seemingly elides all descriptions of *Man and his place*, in favour of a far more inclusive discourse about the *Human and its limits*. As Elaine L. Graham writes: the

⁷¹ Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 152.

⁷² Jonathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities: The Mirrored Stages of Arnold Schwarzenegger,” *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 246.

⁷³ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 150. Haraway writes: “...the traditions of ‘Western’ science and politics—the traditions of racist, male dominated capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other...”

cybernetic evokes a “human subject dismantled and demolished; a human whose integrity is violated, a human identity whose boundaries are breached from all sides’...by a technology that encroaches, invades and dismembers.”⁷⁴ The penetrative and decidedly invasive nature of bio-mechanical integration somehow appealing to the basest part of human desire, as the act of amalgamation extends the Terminator’s promise of immortality, superiority, and the potential for both unlimited power and endless pleasure, to only those smart enough to appreciate the venture. Behold the glib irony of the pop artist, and what is now almost certainly, the sincere battle-cry of the contemporary futurist: “I want to be a machine.”⁷⁵

Like the muscled figure of Schwarzenegger’s Terminator, the public face of such Darwinian ideals is always the same.⁷⁶ People are either improved through the integration of mechanical appendages, or replaced by brand new shells made of untarnished steel. In the latter case, personal consciousness is liberated from the limitations of the body, as the remaining “meat” is discarded in favour of that which is not only beautiful, but also powerful, perfect, and permanent. The individual’s corporeal existence now bordering on the fantasy of ethereal omnipresence, as the embodied subject is continually discarded in lieu of biology’s increasing obsolescence. Roboticist Hans Moravec maintains that a neural network of electric sparks constitutes the only true and/or relevant component comprising both personal consciousness, and its resultant humanity.⁷⁷ Comparatively, scientist Andy Clark insists that the brain itself has outgrown its “biological skinbag”, and that such a dynamic and self-contained system cannot be “bound and

⁷⁴ Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens, and Others in Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 33.

⁷⁵ G.R. Swenson, “What is Pop Art?,” *Art News* 62 (November, 1963), p. 26. Andy Warhol’s original quote reads: “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine and I feel that whatever I do and do machine-like is what I want to do.”

⁷⁶ In 1872, one of Charles Darwin’s great critics, Samuel Butler wrote: “There is no security...against the ultimate development of mechanical consciousness, in the fact of machines possessing little consciousness now...Either, a great deal of action that has been called purely mechanical and unconscious must be admitted to contain more elements of consciousness than has been allowed hitherto...or...the race of man has descended from things which had no consciousness at all. In this case, there is no *a priori* improbability in the descent of conscious...machines from those which now exist.” Cited in George Dyson, *Darwin Among the Machines* (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 26. The original quotation can be found here: Samuel Butler, *Erewhom; or, Over the Range* (London: Trübner & Co., 1872; new and revised edition, London: A.C Fifield, 1913), pp. 236-241.

⁷⁷ Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*, p. 117.

restricted”—at least not anymore.⁷⁸ Indeed like Moravec, Clark “thinks of himself less ‘as a physical presence than [as]...a kind of rational or intellectual [apparition].’”⁷⁹ Similar ideals also spring from figures like Ray Kurzweil, who also believe in the frictionless transfer of personal subjectivity, and authors such as William Gibson, Neal Stephenson, and their throng of Sci-Fi followers, whose cyberpunk protagonists are often nothing more than phantoms; ghosts who willingly trap themselves inside the endless landscape of the virtual.⁸⁰ In the words of Haraway:

Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of the spectrum...People are nowhere near so fluid, being both material and opaque. Cyborgs are ether, quintessence.⁸¹

Given the consistency of such representation, human-machine amalgamations are comprised not just of skin and alloy, circuits and signals, images and Lacanian “imaginaries,” but parallel to the cyborg’s contemporary manifestation as super-powered killing machine, they are also ‘bodies of light’ consistently endowed with no more substance than a spirit, but all the powers of a sorcerer, or a god. In fact, whether a person is transfigured into an ‘angel’ both luminous and ethereal, or replaced by ‘tank’ both commanding and corporeal, what follows is not only identical, but also inescapable as the ensuing transformation consistently signifies a misguided attempt to achieve a stainless existence. A kind of evolutionary peak in which all flaws are expunged and all limitations transcended, as if the future of the human now held the perfection of heaven itself; forever marking the incredible potential of participatory evolution with a distressing mixture of religious excitement and fervent confusion. To quote the Dutch-American abstract painter, Willem de Kooning, on the spectacle unleashed by Los Alamos, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki:

⁷⁸ Joel Dinerstein, “Technology and its Discontent: On the Verge of the Posthuman,” p. 586. For the original quote see: Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 131, 135.

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace Books, 2004); Neal Stephenson, *Snow Crash* (New York: Bantam Spectra, 1992).

⁸¹ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 153.

some people think that the light of the atomic bomb will change the concept of painting once and for all. The eyes that actually saw the light melted out of sheer ecstasy. For one instant, everyone was the same colour. It made angels out of everybody.⁸²

Today, such persistent affirmations are becoming near-clichés; tired phrases expressing worn-out ideas all drawn from the same superficial beginnings. Because despite the current and correct impulse to recognize the relationships between two poles previously thought of as separate, most research investigating the connections between the body and technology, the mind and the machine, still fails to explore the nature of organic-inorganic integration beyond that of a simple surface reading. Privileging manner over method, potential over politics, ideal over real; presenting only the utopian perspective, as the vast majority of contemporary cyborg scholarship continues to focus solely—and wrongly!—on the figure’s supposedly subversive effects on the social systems found in both material reality and modern fiction, rather than the decidedly dangerous consequences derived from the culture’s consistent representation of cyborg origins and their resultant ontology. Sexuality and the socio-political consequences of late capital, these are the issues at hand; falsely rendering the merger immaterial, since all that matters are the visible results.

Hence, while cybernetics is certainly a combination of biological and mechanical, and while its effects on the culture are certainly worth studying, one must acknowledge that a truly viable reading of the man-machine can never be produced if one simply *assumes* the image is nothing more than the sum of its parts. In short, without a serious investigation of those parts, such a reading can only produce a serious misreading.

Ironically, the primary metaphor for such assumptive reasoning flows directly from the science of cybernetics. More specifically: from the theory of ‘black box’ thinking and its ensuing expression of complex systems as a single but simple variable. The term ‘black box’ refers to a device or system when that object or arrangement is viewed primarily in terms of its input and output characteristics. As such, the black box is ultimately a fiction designed to

⁸² Willem de Kooning, “What Abstract Art Means to Me,” *Collected Writings*, ed. George Scrivani (New York: Hanuman, 1988), p. 60. Amusingly, Gilles Deleuze once asked: “Why does the pervert have the tendency to imagine himself as a radiant angel, an angel of helium and fire?” Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 319.

simplify complex systems so that its nature and effects can be explained, manipulated, and understood. Even prior to the theory's eventual articulation in the mid 20th century, black boxes have not only had a profound influence on the way in which we view the world, but also in how we explore and describe it, because just as the engineer or the physicist segments vast amounts of data into tidy units of measurement, so are huge systems of information and history thrust into cultural signs both verbal and visual.

Pioneering British cyberneticist, W. Ross Ashby, has done more than most to develop and implement the idea of blackboxing within the science of cybernetics. For, as well as devoting a lengthy section to the subject in *An Introduction to Cybernetics* (1956), he is also responsible for the Law of Requisite Variety, and the invention of the Homeostat. The former is a lasting theoretical tool which has since become “the most famous (and some would say only successful) principle of cybernetics recognized by the whole...Systems Science community”, while the latter is a black box in physical form that randomly reconfigures itself in response to received inputs, and is a device which Norbert Wiener would later describe “as one of the great philosophical contributions of the present day.”⁸³ However, in the context of this discussion, we can ignore Ashby's technical innovations and instead focus on his theoretical models. Thus, when writing on the concept of black box thinking in 1956 Ashby explained its use as such:

Were the engineer to treat bridge-building by a consideration of every atom he would find the task impossible by its very size. He therefore ignores the fact that his girders and blocks are really composite, made of atoms, and treats them as his units...It will be seen therefore that the method of studying very large systems by studying only carefully selected aspects of them is simply what is always done in practice.⁸⁴

The cyborg is of course no exception to the pervasive and problematic use of such a system, because the field which gave rise to such a pervasive and problematic self is also based on the use of those constructions. Indeed,

⁸³ F. Heylighen and C. Joslyn, “Law of Requisite Variety,” *Principia Cybernetica Web* (31 August 2001), Accessed 15 November 2007: <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/REQVAR.html>. Wiener's quote is cited in Andrew Pickering, “Cybernetics and the Mangle: Ashby, Beer, and Pask,” *Social Studies of Science* 32.3 (June, 2002), pp. 417. Pickering also provides a detailed description of Ashby's Homeostat; including pictures of the actual apparatus (414-420).

⁸⁴ W. Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1956), p. 107.

articulations of that self would become incomprehensible without such profound simplification, because even when like materials are combined to create an overall whole, generalizations are essential for completion and understanding. Thus, to extend and slightly skew the words of French intellectual, Bruno Latour:

no matter how controversial [the cyborg's] history, how complex [its] inner workings, how large the commercial or academic networks that hold [the image] in place, only [its] input and output count. When you [turn] on your computer it runs the programs you load; when you compare nucleic acid sequences you start from the double helix shape

And when you investigate the socio-political effects of the cyborg body you begin with the aforementioned equation.⁸⁵

Such a perspective is extremely misleading, not to mention damaging, because it leaves the cyborg itself safe from examination, and creates a very large question mark at the base of its supposed study: a query which, according to Ashby, is supposedly irrelevant in the field of cybernetics, and apparently by extension, within contemporary cyborg theory:

Many a book has borne the title “Theory of Machines”, but it usually contains information about *mechanical* things, about levers and cogs. Cybernetics, too, is a “theory of machines”, but it treats, not things but *ways of behaving*. It does not ask “what is this thing?” but “*what does it do?*”⁸⁶

Unfortunately, Ashby's query leads only to fallacy when solely applied to the image of the cyborg body, because by inferring ontology from perceived actions, instead of investigating origin and structure from available representations, cyborg scholars produce only guesswork and estimations. After all, the body of the posthuman is more than just a thing or an object. It is also an idea, a concept, and more importantly an inherently unstable, politically loaded cultural metaphor that can produce an equal number of readings and misreadings as there are people deciphering that metaphor. As such, one must not ask “*what does it do,*” but rather, “*what is this thing, and*

⁸⁵ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Science and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 3.

⁸⁶ W. Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, p. 1.

how does that affect what it does,” in order to ground any subsequent analyses in something besides faith, or historical inertia.

Naturally, the latter question is not an easy one to answer. Like all black boxes, a cyborg *cannot* and should *not* be opened, at least not after that particular device has been sealed through its emergent status as accepted fact. To do so is to invite disaster, because just as Latour uses the image of a DNA molecule to illustrate the chaotic complexities inherent in all dark structures, a cyborg will also, if unlocked, suddenly release the countless intricacies contained therein. Allowing them to rush out, overwhelm, and obscure any attempt at a cohesive analyses, since conventional theoretical assumptions regarding the cyborg’s structure, liminality, and political leanings are completely undermined as soon as one chooses to dissect the image in order to understand its ontology. Like the multiple hybrids and would be messiahs that attack the Terminator, visible penetration of the cyborg is not only tantamount to releasing chaos incarnate, but its ensuing detonation is also an echo, producing broken bodies which act as yet another reminder of what can happen when one delves too deeply into the explosive space of the man-machine; progeny of the bomb. For as it was with Pandora’s Box, just as it is with every subsequent back box, the cyborg reads: “DANGER: DO NOT OPEN.”⁸⁷

1.3 Access

Consider representations of cyborg death both filmic and writerly, or the point at which its skin is pierced by some outside force. In Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982) “skinjobs” screech and convulse after gunfights with Deckard, while in *Robocop 2* (1990), the protagonist is not only blown apart on screen, but his insides are scattered across most of the city block where his body is destroyed. In *T2: Judgment Day* (1991), the surface of Schwarzenegger’s newest enemy is breached irreparably by Arnold’s inferior T800. Blasting the evil cyborg in all directions as its body is transformed into an open and distended wound. Moreover, Schwarzenegger’s Terminator then kicks his opponent into an open vat of boiling steel where it not only screams and thrashes wildly, but also cycles through every form it has ever assumed before

⁸⁷ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 7.

melting away completely into nothing. The subject's detonation allowing whatever truth that lay in the centre of that self to disappear completely, as the body is burnt up or mutilated at the instant of exposure.⁸⁸ Take the death of Pris Stratton, the cybernetic double of the android, Rachael Rosen, in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*:

[Deckard] fired...as...she dashed toward him. The android burst and parts of it flew; he covered his face and then looked again, looked and saw the laser tube which it had carried roll away, back onto the stairs; the metal tube bounced downward, step by step, the sound echoing and diminishing and slowing.⁸⁹

Deckard fires, Pris explodes, and everything that burst forth from her body at the moment of death is obscured by the spectacle itself. Her very form blown to bits, leaving only the phallus she had assumed in life to pop out, fall, and clink slowly into the dark.

Here, in that moment where the body is breached, representations of human-machine integration will either: a) spew incessantly; b) convulse violently; or c) simply detonate in reaction to a perceived violation.⁹⁰ In almost every case, the results are catastrophic, or at the very least grotesque, often culminating in an explosive reaction which reveals very little and

⁸⁸ The following is just one example of violent cyborg ending. As Phillip K. Dick writes: "As the android's hands sunk into his throat Rick fired his regulation issue old-style pistol from its shoulder holster; the .38 magnum slug struck the android in the head and its brain box burst. The Nexus-6 unit which operated it blew into pieces, a raging, mad wind which carried throughout the car. Bits of it, like the radioactive dust itself, whirled down on Rick. The retired remains of the android rocked back, collided with the car door, bounced off and struck heavily against him; he found himself struggling to shove the twisted remnants of the android away." Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (New York: Del Rey, 1982), p. 82.

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 195-196.

⁹⁰ In her book, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, Sue Short suggests that, "[c]yborg bodies, for all their relative strength, are not indestructible machines and they frequently die in order to emphasize this fact, underlining a fundamental link that we all have as a species" (195). She also maintains that since cyborgs are sometimes "guilty of...emulating humanity's most negative traits...their destruction therefore appears to be a means of denying and displacing this fact. As such, pronounced ambivalence that is demonstrated towards technology in the cyborg film reflects our own divided response to human nature itself; perceived as either inherently flawed in terms of destructive, territorial, and hostile capacity, or by contrast, blessed with abilities of empathy, compassion, and understanding that will allow us to transcend these limitations. Cyborgs are situated between both polarities..." (5). For further reading see: Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

obscures even more.⁹¹ This risk of sudden disclosure is the danger inherent in all black boxes. It is also part of their power, because in breaching the surface of such a construction, one not only releases every doubt, every debate, and every difficulty which first prompted the production of such a device, but also the many social biases and political issues instilled by the era in which that box was produced. In such a scenario, breaching the surface in order to expose or understand is anything but revealing, because by disclosing the image's internal make-up, one is merely transforming an already established system into something chaotic, unintelligible, and completely uncontrollable. To recall Latour, historical "context" and socio-political "content" do not simply "merge" in the image of an exploding body, but also burst forth and flow endlessly at the first sign of puncture.⁹²

The 1973 novel *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon contains one of the more remarkable cases of a crazed, damaged, and/or explosive cyborg body, as well as one of Western culture's more oblique references to human-machine integration, as the idea itself is masked behind an obscure visual known only as the "Schwarzgerät".⁹³ Literally, the term translates as 'black device,' and is *the* centre of yet another unknown; specifically, Pynchon's reinterpretation of the V2 Rocket. An object both real and fictitious, with proportions both mythic and mysterious, producing a weapon that is not simply a Schwarzgerät in its own right, but also a container containing the contents of yet another container. Its matryoshka-like structure not only recalling, but also prefiguring both the coming culture of the Cold War, and the missiles which facilitated the globe's transformation into a far larger version of London near the end of World War II. As Pynchon writes:

[The Rocket] comes as the Revealer. Showing that no society can protect, never could—they are as foolish as shields of paper...Before the Rocket we went on believing, because we wanted to. But the Rocket can penetrate...We can't believe Them anymore. Not if we are still sane and love the truth.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Variations on the same scene also appear in movies such as *Videodrome* (1983), *Westworld* (1973), *Virtuosity* (1995), *Eve of Destruction* (1991), *I Robot* (2004), *Akira* (1988), and *T3: Rise of the Machines* to name only a few.

⁹² Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 5.

⁹³ The Schwarzgerät also goes by two abbreviations in Pynchon's novel; S-Gerät and SG-1. The following discussion will use all three interchangeably.

⁹⁴ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 728.

Pynchon's V2 comes to us "as the Revealer." It proves that "nowhere is safe," that nothing is certain, and that society itself is a mere "structure of lies" designed to comfort those it cannot protect.⁹⁵ Indeed, like its future incarnation in the shell of the ICBM—child of Trinity, descendant of Germany—the Rocket also revels in assaulting the validity of an existing, but now obsolete perception of human ontology. The notion of worldwide rehabilitation and even social resurrection under the nightmare of Armageddon now deemed an invalid form of hope. The Rocket can *penetrate*. It destroys without effort.

Given the sense of devastation and irreparable damage caused by the missiles launched from Peenemünde, it should be no surprise that the nihilistic qualities of Wernher Von Braun's innovations should also apply to the Rocket itself, because even though the missile comes to us as the Revealer, ironically enough, it also refuses to be revealed. Since the elements ensconced within its interior, and the mysteries controlling its operation, are destroyed at the moment of disclosure. Its contents irreversibly obscured at the point of revelation. Like the image of a blast crater, there is no object in the centre of that devastation.⁹⁶ No answer to the unknown hole inside the Rocket's checkered shell. There is only the "aftermath," since any breach to an existing V2 yields nothing but wreckage orbiting an empty pit.⁹⁷ Everything is exposed in a single instant. Expelling mass sections of knowledge and power that mix and collide violently before they too dissipate under the "powdery wipe of Nothing's hand."⁹⁸ Recall the futile efforts of Tyrone Slothrop, as he searches fruitlessly for the centre of the Schwarzgerät:

⁹⁵ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 728.

⁹⁶ As Pynchon writes, "Each morning—at first—someone routed in Civil Defence routed ACHTUNG a list of yesterday's hits. It would come to Slothrop last, he'd detach its pencil smeared buck slip, go draw the same aging Humber from the motor pool, and make his rounds, a Saint George after the fact, going out to poke about for droppings of the Beast, fragments of German hardware that wouldn't exist, writing empty summaries in his notebooks—work therapy." Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 24.

⁹⁷ Ibid. Pynchon also describes a similar situation later in the novel: "...a rocket has suddenly struck. A terrific blast quite close beyond the village: the entire fabric of the air, the time, is changed—the casement window blown inward, rebounding with a wood squeak to slam again as the house still shudders. Their hearts pound. Eardrums brushed taut by the overpressure ring in pain. The invisible train rushes away close over the rooftop...They sit still as the painted dogs now, silent, oddly unable to touch" (59).

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 24.

It's nothing he can see or lay hands on—sudden gases, a violence upon the air and no trace afterward...a Word, spoken with no warning into your ear, and then silence forever. Beyond its invisibility, beyond hammerfall and doomcrack, here is its real horror, mocking, promising him death with German and precise confidence, laughing at all of Tantivy's quiet decencies...no, no bullet with fins, Ace...not the Word, the one Word that rips apart the day...⁹⁹

Despite the Schwarzgerät's inherent volatility, there is a way to investigate the ontology of any black box without risking the construction's total annihilation, because if the cyborg is indeed a similar device, then any meaningful analysis of the man-machine should employ a methodology appropriate to such a construction. As Ashby writes, “[i]n our daily lives we are confronted at every turn with systems whose internal mechanisms are not fully open to inspection, and which must be treated by the methods appropriate”.¹⁰⁰ Even though Ashby remains largely silent on the issue of “appropriate” inspection, especially in relation to metaphorical or non-technical manifestations of the black box, it is Latour who identifies the necessary methodology, lauding a technique which avoids any potential chaos by moving backward in time, to a point before closure, before certainty, before the elements surrounding the creation of a specific fact colluded into a named structure with definitive actions and characteristics. As Latour declares:

The impossible task of opening a black box is made feasible (if not easy) by moving in time and space until one finds the controversial topic on which scientists and engineers are busy at work. This is the first decision we have to make: our entrance into science and technology will be through the back door...not through the more grandiose entrance of ready made science.¹⁰¹

By stepping through “the back door of science in the making,” we can bear witness to the cyborg's construction, and thereby watch something akin to ‘cyborgs in the making.’ Indeed, by using Latour's method we can expose and understand the cultural framework by which that body was created, and more

⁹⁹ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ W. Ross Ashby, *Introduction to Cybernetics*, p. 86.

¹⁰¹ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 4.

importantly, account for the social values and political ideals that were instilled prior to the subject's eventual closure.¹⁰²

Even *Gravity's Rainbow*, a book published almost fifteen years before *Science in Action*, follows the trajectory described by Latour, since the secrets of Pynchon's missile are not disclosed until the end of the novel. Creating a 'moment of truth' in which the reader is not only allowed to view the industrial assembly of the final V2, but also encouraged to experience the moments prior to its eventual closure in the most appropriate manner possible. Pynchon depicts the coming revelation as if it were an explosion in reverse, exposing the Schwarzgerät's interior, and the disparate parts of Rocket 00000, as the bits of a broken missile seem to collapse in on one another, falling "in a geographical way, a Diaspora running *backwards*, seeds of exile flying *inwards* in a modest preview of gravitational collapse, of the Messiah gathering in the fallen sparks", until eventually, time and space recede in, toward the instant of birth, otherwise known as "pre-launch."¹⁰³

The ensuing scene reveals far more than just the origins of the Rocket itself, but also the pseudo-erotic rituals of a ceremonial rebirth focused through the overtly political lenses of racial purity, biological supremacy, masculine sexuality, and most importantly, the image of death both 'little' and 'mega.' For the Schwarzgerät within Pynchon's V2 is not black at all, but rather a white man, wrapped in white film, lodged in the centre of a white womb. He is more than just a human payload, but also the racial epicentre of Western society. The beating heart of a racist, patriarchal, humanist culture, placed inside the parabolic arc of a proto-typical ICBM.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he is a body

¹⁰² Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 4. Latour writes: "Uncertainty, people at work, decisions, competition, controversies are what one gets when making a flashback from certain, cold, unproblematic black boxes to their recent past. If you take two pictures, one of the black boxes and the other of their open controversies, they are utterly different. They are as different as the two sides, one lively, one severe, of a two-faced Janus. 'Science in the making' on the right side, 'all made science' or 'ready made science' on the other; such if Janus *bifrons*, the first character that greets us at the beginning of our journey. "

¹⁰³ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 737.

¹⁰⁴ The German technology used to launch, guide, and sustain the trajectory of the V2 was used in the creation of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. Within this framework, the end of Pynchon's novel becomes far less surreal, since the conceit of a V-2 landing on an LA movie theatre in 1973 functions as both a reminder of that connection, and an indicator of how the same fear which infected London at the end of WWII, is now relevant to everyone, everywhere. As Friedrich Kittler writes: "Pynchon's Second World War is able to end with the intercontinental weapons of the next war, insofar as Blicero's manned V-2...lands on the last page of the novel in Hollywood, 1973, the year the novel is published. Its base delay-

firmly prefigured not only as the technological prelude to the coming Cold War, but also as a manifestation of the immense ‘wargasms’ that will inevitably follow.¹⁰⁵ Pynchon’s black box represents a black future. The end of everything facilitated—funnily enough—by the apparent hyper-sexuality of a Western white man. Pynchon writes:

A giant white fly: an erect penis buzzing in white lace, clotted with blood or sperm. Deathlace is the boy’s bridal costume. His smooth feet bound side by side, are in white satin slippers with white bows...The golden hairs on his back, alloyed German gold, pale yellow to white, run symmetric about his spine, run in arches fine and whirled...Each freckle or mole is a precisely-set anomaly in the field...He is gagged with a white kid glove...The glove is the female equivalent of the Hand of Glory, which second-story men use to light their way into your home: a candle in a dead man’s hand, erect as all your tissue will grow at the first delicious tongue flick of your mistress Death. The glove is the cavity into which the Hand fits, as the 00000 is the womb into which Gottfried returns.¹⁰⁶

Cavities are filled, throats are gagged, and vessels both biological and mechanical are slowly packed with their corresponding payload. Homoeroticism abounds but then so does the far more conventional spectre of heterosexual intercourse, exposing the Schwarzgerät as something that is not simply penetrative, and therefore highly sexualized, but more problematically, as an object which assumes the qualities of both a penis and a recently ejaculated pool of semen. Each of which are sealed inside the form of a much larger phallus, as if the material amalgamation of man and machine were analogous to that of an empty gun transforming into a “cocked” and loaded weapon. Like a bullet sliding into the chamber of a corresponding pistol, phallus penetrates phallus until both are primed for an act of explosive ejaculation.

action fuse targets precisely the movie theatre in which Pynchon and his readers are sitting.” Friedrich Kittler, “Media and Drugs in Pynchon’s Second World War,” *Literature, Media, Information Systems: Essays*, ed. John Johnston (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1997), p. 114.

¹⁰⁵ The term ‘wargasm’ refers to the collusion of sex and death in the act of war, and most blatantly in an image of atomic Armageddon. One such example is the practice of representing a nuclear explosion as a form of intense sexual release. The most famous instance of this sex/A-bomb amalgamation is found within Stanley Kubrick’s Cold War satire *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). Specifically, in the image of Major Kong straddling an atomic bomb as it dives toward its target.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*, p. 750.

Clearly, the V2 and its interlocking Schwarzgerät are more than just innocuous manifestations of the cybernetic body, but also highly provocative images loaded with very specific racial affinities, sexual signifiers, and political leanings. Associations that unfortunately, do not conflate, confuse, subvert, and/or reassemble what we think of as social reality or lived experience, nor provide “new way[s] to conceive of power and identity.”¹⁰⁷ On the contrary, Pynchon’s *Rocket* merely reinforces what so many cyborg theorists are desperately trying to escape. Namely: the old phallogocentric ideologies of patriarchal oppression and racial supremacy. Elements that would almost certainly have remained obscure, if not for Pynchon’s return to a point before “the open controversies” of human-machine integration were transformed into the closed construct of a sealed black box.¹⁰⁸ To do otherwise is to “poke about” as Slothrop does, desperately striving to reconstruct an image from its own waste without any clue as to how the original once looked.¹⁰⁹

Like the plot of *Gravity’s Rainbow*, World War II is also our starting point. Ground 00000 for the V2, the nuclear age it would eventually spawn, and the creature they would both generate. After all, it was the work of Norbert Wiener and his contemporaries during the early 1940s, which laid the foundation for the burgeoning field of cybernetics.¹¹⁰ The scientific basis that would later form the theoretical core of the living cyborg, or the sealed Schwarzgerät we have subsequently labeled as such. Thus, like early articulations of the Gothic body, and their subsequent “ruination of traditional constructs of human identity at the fin-de-siecle”, the Second World War, and the period immediately following, represents a time in which the stability and integrity of the human were transformed into subjects akin to the psychotic, the mutant, and “the abhuman.” Or, what Kelly Hurley refers to specifically as,

¹⁰⁷ Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, “The Cyborg Body Politic,” *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 459.

¹⁰⁸ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*, p. 24.

¹¹⁰ This work would eventually culminate in the publication of Wiener’s most important book: *Cybernetics: Or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1948). For more on the early history of cybernetics see: Peter Galison, “The Ontology of the Enemy Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision,” *Critical Inquiry* 21.1 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 228-266.

“the body metamorphic and undifferentiated.”¹¹¹ Bear in mind, even though prior manifestations of the cybernetic also dealt with similar issues regarding the ontological erosion of organic and inorganic, and although Liberal-Humanist concepts regarding the human form were already weakened by the influence of industrialisation, as well as the wartime horrors of 1914-1919. It was the dangerous combination of world-ending politics and eye-melting mega death that instigated the necessary collusion of science and culture, human and machine, ideal and real, into a singular image purporting a singular purpose. From Schwarzgerät to Schwarzenegger, it was the epoch’s potent combination of sex, death, and unimaginable violence that not only initiated the cyborg’s spectacular production, but also its near disappearance in the popular imagination: its ubiquity thereby facilitating the image’s ensuing transparency. As Slavoj Žižek writes:

the proper place to begin [any analysis] is the very beginning, more precisely: the point just prior to it, the ultimate stage of ‘prehistory’...where things are still visible [and] which, a moment later become invisible.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siecle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

¹¹² Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 161.

2: Mutual Orientation: Science, Cybernetics, and the Bodies of the Cold War

2.1 Porous Boundaries

Cybernetics was created in the early 1940s to encompass control and communication in the animal and the machine, and is a science born from the need “to create and assist” in the mechanization of “military tasks previously performed by human beings.”¹¹³ As Paul Edwards writes in his book, *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*,

complete *automation* of these activities—such as aiming anti-aircraft guns or planning air defense tactics—was not a realistic possibility in the 1940s and 1950s. Instead computers would perform a task while humans, often in intimate linkage with the machines, did the rest.¹¹⁴

For such an amalgam to be successful, man-machine “integration required that people and machines be comprehended in similar terms, so that human-machine systems could maximize the performance of both components.”¹¹⁵ As such, “a general mathematical theory of self-regulating mechanisms, [was designed to] transcend the boundary via the concept of feedback”; specifically, the concept of negative feedback or “circular self-corrective cycles, in which information about the effects of an adjustment to a dynamic system is continuously returned to that system as input,” so that it can then instigate and regulate the next adjustment.¹¹⁶ Any person operating a system built under the guidance of cybernetics was now seen as an indivisible component of that exchange; man and machine operating as one, linked together as interpenetrated systems sharing information and energy. Subsequently, scientific ideas regarding the differences between organic and inorganic were no longer governed by words like ‘alive’ or ‘inanimate’, because “a uniform behaviouristic analysis [was now] applicable to both machines and living organisms, regardless of...complexity.”¹¹⁷ Such a science meant that people and machinery could be studied, adjusted, integrated, and transformed in

¹¹³ Paul Edwards, *The Closed World*, p. 147.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 181.

¹¹⁷ Arturo Rosenblueth, Norbert Wiener, and Julian Bigelow, “Behaviour, Purpose, and Teleology,” *Philosophy of Science* 10 (1943), pp. 18-24.

exactly the same ways, because the broad classes of behaviour governing the biological and the mechanical were now identical, due in large part to the articulation and use of black box theory.

The use of the black box and other cybernetic principles had a number of significant socio-political impacts. The most important being the essential transformation of the human body into an incredibly porous form filled with huge metaphorical holes through which data and energy could be transferred and shared with all sorts of mechanical counterparts. Due to Wiener's science and Ashby's ideas, there were no longer any clear distinctions separating objects living and dead, animate and inanimate, because the material boundaries which contained each were now irrelevant under both the systems of cybernetics and the gaze of the cybernetician. A combination which not only effaced the objects themselves, since both human and machine were symbolically transformed into a pair of indistinguishable constructions, but one which also produced a major conceptual shift in our subsequent understanding of each part. After all, under such a scenario, relationship supersedes everything as the black boxes contained therein are essentially transformed from two distinct ontological entities, into a single conduit designed for connection and exchange. As Ashby writes:

The theory of the Black Box is merely the theory of real objects or systems, when close attention is given to the question, relating object and observer, about what information comes from the object, and how it is obtained. Thus, the theory of the Black Box is simply the study of the relations between the experimenter and his environment, when special attention is given to the flow of information.¹¹⁸

If the analysis ended here then most formulations of both cyborg ontology and cyborg politics would be indisputable. Their logic based in sound reasoning and historical fact, because under such a system any material barriers separating human from machine would become meaningless, and thus any previous concepts regarding the ontology of either would be utterly destroyed. Concordantly, the physical boundaries which define and separate all things would continue to erode until the disparities divorcing each soon became non-existent or immaterial; their corporeal autonomy now subordinate to the data

¹¹⁸ W. Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, p. 110.

flowing between them. Subsequently, contemporary theories declaring the cyborg a subversive figure, or correspondingly, as humanity's evolutionary heir, would become feasible, because when examined through a cursory understanding of cybernetics the cyborg suddenly has the potential to alter not only what we think of as 'human,' but to also revolutionize the political values inherent to that human form.¹¹⁹ Such integration could render all humanist ideas about the supremacy of 'Man' obsolete, since "any imagined state of purity and fixity" would in turn, become "a fiction."¹²⁰ Thus, the body would no longer be considered impenetrable or whole, nor its form impervious to change or alteration, because any clear delineation between "agent and object, external and internal, organic and artificial" would no longer exist. To paraphrase Elaine L. Graham: "We [could] no longer rely...on such distinctions to demarcate the normatively 'human' as an enclave against the non-human."¹²¹

Unfortunately, a number of cultural theorists have ended their analyses here, and proposed that the growing influence of digital computing, along with the exponential increase in technological growth, both in medicine and manufacturing, have led to the death of the Liberal-Humanist subject. Essentially stating, that 'Man' as a socio-political entity died with the pacemaker, since according to scholars like N. Katherine Hayles, "the age of the human has [now] given way to the posthuman."¹²² Thus, just as Classical "theories of representation and language, of the natural orders, and of wealth and value" changed entirely "from the nineteenth century onward," so have

¹¹⁹ For a few articles which frame the cyborg as a potentially revolutionary figure see: Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science Technology and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-181; Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, "The Cyborg Body Politic: Version 1.2.," *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 453-468; Grayson Cooke, "Human-1/ Cyborg-0: A Personal History of Human-machine Relation," *Nebula* 3.1 (April, 2006), pp. 19-20, Accessed 2 December 2006: <http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Cooke.pdf>; Diane Greco, *Cyborg: Engineering the Body Electric*, CD-ROM (Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1995); Howard Rheingold, *Virtual Reality* (New York: Summit, 1991); Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Stelarc, "Towards the Post-Human: From Psycho-body to Cyber-system," *Cyber_Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era*. Ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), pp. 262-269; see also Stelarc's website: <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/>

¹²⁰ Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human*, p. 12.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 33.

¹²² N. Katherine Hayles, "The Life Cycle of Cyborgs: Writing the Posthuman," p. 321.

their humanist successors at the end of the 20th.¹²³ Moravec, Hayles, Gray, and Graham; each assert that the conceptual framework, which Michel Foucault once traced back to the Enlightenment, is now crumbling due to its alleged subversion by newer theories drawn from more aggressive technologies.¹²⁴

However, such a reading is also shallow and simplistic, because even though the study of production has indeed given way to the investigation of reproduction—of simulacra—and although the effects of cybernetics have infected and permanently sullied the purely biological, nothing has changed. Rather than succumbing to erasure, “like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea”, the porous bodies currently saturating Western culture still exemplify the same problematic political affinities, as well as the same social inequalities championed by their more ‘solid’ humanist predecessors.¹²⁵ Indeed, if the cyborg is a gauge by which to measure such a massive social shift, and if cybernetic principles are the means by which cyborgs are made, then life has only become more entrenched in the values we are supposedly learning to escape.

After all, any analysis, no matter how brilliant, is meaningless when one discounts the influence of history, when one ignores the context by which the object being analyzed was actually produced. To do so is to examine cyborgs and cybernetics in a vacuum, to not only treat the image and the science as *separate*, but to also see them as beings outside of time, and to therefore ignore the many social, political, and cultural repercussions that each

¹²³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, Vintage, 1994), p. xxiii. Foucault writes: “...from the nineteenth century onward...the theory of representation disappears as the universal foundation of all possible orders; language...as an indispensable link between representation and things, as an indispensable link between representation and things, is eclipsed in its turn; a profound historicity penetrates into the heart of things, isolates and defines them in their own coherence, imposes upon them the forms of order implied by the continuity of time; the analysis of exchange and money gives way to the study of production, that of the organism takes precedence over the search for taxonomic characteristics, and, above all, language loses its privileged position, and becomes, in turn, a historical form coherent with the density of its own past.”

¹²⁴ David Cronenberg once said: “Technology has really taken control of evolution...It is no longer the environment that effects changes in the human body. It’s our minds; it’s our concepts, our technology that are doing that.” This quote is taken from audio commentary on *Videodrome*, dir. David Cronenberg (Universal Pictures, 1982), DVD (Criterion Collection, September, 2004).

¹²⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, p. 387.

structure carries with it.¹²⁶ Like all black boxes, cyborgs and the science that spawned them, are intimately linked to the time in which they were created, and are thus perfect reflections of the many fears and desires permeating their particular birthing points.¹²⁷ They can never be disconnected from their initial context, because their bodies both possess and propagate the values and ideals of the time in which they were produced. To ignore that, is to ignore the essence of the subject itself.

2.2 Malleability

Despite its inception during WWII, Wiener's science did not come to full fruition until the 1950s when the United States began to use cybernetics in the fight against Communism. It was America's overwhelming need to effectively combat and contain Soviet aggression that propelled cybernetics to the forefront of the country's military applications: a role which led to the formulation of the first material cyborg, as well as the subsequent production of innumerable cyborg-like bodies.

For example, in 1960 phonetic doubles, Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline published their paper, "Cyborgs and Space." Written at the height of the Soviet-American Cold War, this was a time not only coloured by intimidation and paranoia, but also by the very real threat of nuclear Armageddon, and more importantly, by the need to acquire and maintain every

¹²⁶ To paraphrase Jean-Francoise Lyotard on the concept of postmodernism: the suffix 'post' elaborates the conviction that "it is both possible and necessary to break with tradition and institute absolutely new ways of living and thinking." In response, postcolonial theorist Leela Gandhi writes: "Almost invariably, this sort of triumphant utopiansim shapes its vision of the future out of the silences and ellipses of historical amnesia...[and] is informed by a mistaken belief in the immateriality and dispensability of the past." Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982-1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 90; Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 7.

¹²⁷ Peter Galison writes: "In general, the cultural meaning of concepts or practices...is indissolubly tied to their genealogy. To understand the specific meaning of the cybernetic devices is...to track them back to the wartime vision of pilot-as-servomechanism. In the air-ground battle, it was a short step Wiener and Bigelow to take pilot-as servomechanism directly over into the AA gunner-as-servomechanism, and thence to the operation of the heart and proprioceptive senses. From the body, it was us more generally...whose intentions could be seen as none other than self-correcting black boxed entities and finally nature itself that came to be seen as a correlated and characteristic set of input and output signals." Peter Galison, "The Ontology of the Enemy Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision," *Critical Inquiry* 21.1 (Autumn, 1994), p. 264.

kind of advantage at absolutely any cost.¹²⁸ Bear in mind, the world is fifteen years into the biggest political struggle in history, and America is at a terrible disadvantage, because in less than two decades the Soviet Union has not only transformed itself into a viable military and economic superpower, but has also managed to beat its more established counterpart in almost every area that matters. The Soviets have the bomb and the prestige of being the first country in space, as well as an apparent ideological edge as more and more Third World countries begin to adopt revolutionary governments based on Socialist principles.¹²⁹ Moreover, two years into the future, the struggle for global domination between Capitalism and Communism would prove nearly cataclysmic, as each governmental system tested their resolve against the other, during the days of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the words of Robert S. McNamara:

Like most Americans, I saw Communism as monolithic. I believed the Soviets and the Chinese were cooperating in trying to extend their hegemony...At the time Communism still seemed on the march. Mao Zedong and his followers had controlled China since 1949 and had fought with North Korea against the West; Nikita Khrushchev had predicted Communist victory through 'wars of national liberation in the Third World, and had told the West, 'We will bury you.' His threat gained credibility when the USSR launched *Sputnik* in 1957, demonstrating its lead in space technology. The next year Khrushchev started turning up the heat in West Berlin. And now Castro had transformed Cuba into a Communist beachhead in our Hemisphere. We felt beset and at risk...I did not see the Communist danger as overwhelming, as did many people on the right. It was a threat I was certain could be dealt with, and I shared President Kennedy's sentiment when he called on America and the West to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle. 'Let every nation know,' he said in his inaugural address, 'whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.'¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 29-33. The article was originally published in the journal: *Astronautics*, (September 1960).

¹²⁹ By October 1957, the Soviet Union had embarrassed and terrified an already paranoid United States by launching Sputnik, the first satellite, into Earth's orbit. Meanwhile, in 1961 America would once again lose to its rival when Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin blasted off the planet to become the first person in space.

¹³⁰ Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (Toronto: Random House, 1995), p. 30.

Of course, timing, as comedy reminds us, is also everything, and considering the publication date of “Cyborgs and Space,” as well as a state sanctioned mind-control programme already well under way by this point, one could surmise that perhaps one of those “burdens” was the destruction of their own bodies in the frantic search for a new kind of American; a superior American; one who is not subject to the frailties of biology, or the dangers of his environment. After all, when surrounded by uncertainty and “beset” by enemies, America under the Cold War became an extremely dangerous and tumultuous place. It was a nation driven not only by the quest for military superiority, but also by the desire for supreme dominance in every sector of un/civilized life; whether it be social, moral, cultural, political, psychological, or even biological. Behold NASA’s promise of participatory evolution, as theorized by Clynes and Kline:

If man attempts partial adaptation to space, instead of insisting on carrying his whole environment...with him, a number of new possibilities appear. One is then led to think about the incorporation of integral exogenous devices to bring about the biological changes which might be necessary in man’s homeostatic mechanisms to allow him to live in space *qua natura*.¹³¹

At best, such endeavors are nothing but general self-interest cloaked in the guise of international improvement; an ambitious act of imperialism in a time of increasing confinement. At worst, however, they constitute an almost ruthless attempt to circumvent the course of natural evolution by artificial means; a process which demands a rate of biological change that can only be described as “breathtaking.”¹³² Clynes and Kline continue:

¹³¹ Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline, “Cyborgs and Space,” p. 30.

¹³² John F. Kennedy, “Man, Moon, Decade,” Rice University, Houston Texas (May 25, 1961), Accessed 30 August 2007: <http://www1.jsc.nasa.gov/er/seh/ricetalk.htm>. As Kennedy declares: “No man can fully grasp how far and how fast we have come, but condense, if you will, the 50,000 years of man’s recorded history in a time span of but a half-century. Stated in these terms, we know very little about the first 40 years, except at the end of them advanced man had learned to use the skins of animals to cover them...Christianity began less than two years ago. The printing press came this year, and then less than two months ago, during this whole 50-year span of human history, the steam engine provided a new source of power...Last month electric lights and telephones and automobiles and airplanes became available. Only last week did we develop...nuclear power, and now if America’s new spacecraft succeeds in reaching Venus, we will have literally reached the stars before midnight tonight. This is a breathtaking pace, and such a pace cannot help but create new ills as it dispels old, new ignorance, new problems, new dangers.”

The problems which exist in space travel are many and varied...In some cases, we have proposed solutions which probably could be devised with presently available knowledge and techniques. Other solutions are projections into the future which by their very nature must resemble science fiction. To illustrate, there must be more efficient ways of carrying out the functions of the respiratory system than by breathing, which becomes cumbersome in space. One proposed solution for the not too distant future is relatively simple: Don't Breathe!¹³³

From a postcolonial perspective, it is difficult to ignore not only the paper's political subtext, but also its potentially racist undercurrents. To "breathe" is to be dependant, and if 'we' as Americans can eliminate dependency, we can also eliminate weakness. In doing so, we can better subjugate our Communist enemies through the relentless expansion, and exploitation of, parts unknown or unclaimed. Furthermore, and perhaps more ominously, we can also recreate or reconfigure the human body as superhero, and thereby not only assume a position of biological superiority, but also one of total moral authority; a stance which would not simply redefine the concept of normalcy, but also reconstruct the standards of what is generally considered genetically acceptable.¹³⁴

Their repeated emphasis on both 'naturalness' and 'heredity' is anything but comforting, because even though Clynes and Kline assure the reader that significant alteration of the human body will not result in the creation of a monstrosity, their assertions still echo the underlying ideals of racial purity and physical perfection fuelling another set of monstrous acts from only two decades before. As David Thomson writes when describing the cybernetic Ash from Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979):

Ian Holm, now, rises to his greatest moment in the film, not just a robot but a defective robot. 'You can't,' he tells her. 'It's a perfect organism, its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility.' Lambert sees the bizarre Kinship. 'You admire it,' she says. Ash admits he admires the *purity, the absence of conscience or considerations of morality*. It is in his performance, here, that we detect the possible soul of a machine, the desire for the new level of life to be recognized, or appreciated.¹³⁵

Subsequently, despite assertions that the cyborg itself was originally conceived as "a human enlargement of function", as an evolutionary tool that could

¹³³ Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," p. 30.

¹³⁴ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 151.

¹³⁵ David Thomson, *The Alien Quartet* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 57. Emphasis added.

liberate what is best in humans from the slavery of machines so that “robot-like problems are taken care of automatically and unconsciously, leaving man free to explore, to create, to think, and to feel.”¹³⁶ And despite their optimism that the incorporation of these cybernetic components would forever change humanity *without* altering our “heredity” as a species, the fact remains that to engineer a person so that he or she may float about happily in the vacuum of space, is to create a creature that is not only outside the realm of humanity, but also beyond the bounds of basic Western morality. In fact, rather than liberating what is best in humans from the slavery of machines, this form of artificial advancement guarantees instead the subjugation of the ‘human spirit’ to the ideological concerns of the day, since the motivations which drive the cyborg come from a time and place where utopian dreams about the enlargement of the human soul have absolutely no relevance to the culture at large.

For instance, Michel Foucault’s theories on the “administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” due to the subsequent emergence of biopower and biopolitics, achieves here only nightmarish implications.¹³⁷ Imposing upon the individual far stricter limitations than even he could have imagined, since machine integration serves as yet another method by which the state can exert control over the lives of both its soldiers and its citizens. Bear in mind, even though posthuman proponents believe that

¹³⁶ Chris Hables Gray, “An Interview with Manfred Clynes,” *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 47-48; Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, “Cyborgs and Space,” p. 31.

¹³⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 139. The original quotation begins: “The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various disciplines—universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations.”

François Ewald employs Foucault’s idea in relation to contemporary biotechnologies, stating: “The living being is no longer a spectator intrigued with himself; he has by now acquired the mastery of himself as a living being. Ours is the era of biotechnologies, of the industrial and controlled production and reproduction of the living. We often discuss these new powers as if they were a surprise. As if we, as apprentice sorcerers, had been overtaken by the power of our own conquests. But we forget that this new mastery would not have been possible without the remarkable reorientation that, in the Classical Age, transformed the nature of political power, giving birth to what Michel Foucault calls ‘biopower.’” François Ewald, “Bio-power,” *History of the Present 2*, (1986), p. 8.

such integration frees us from the constraints of biopower, and thus from the imposed “institutional forms which shape one’s activity into [predetermined] patterns” of behaviour, such a conviction is simply untrue.¹³⁸ Instead, representations of the posthuman cyborg body repeatedly reinforce those constraints by solidifying state power over both human bodies and bodily space. It is the government, the military, and perhaps more insidiously the corporate world, who are urging us to change. Thus, while the possibility of producing a free self unbounded by institutionalized thinking, as well as more overt forms of governmental oppression certainly might exist, such a significant subjective stance is also buried to the point of non-existence beneath another more powerful need.

2.3 Truth

Even prior to the publication of “Cyborgs and Space,” human-machine integration was already becoming the norm in military bases and installations throughout America’s sphere of influence. Vast computer networks developed under the guise of strategic air defense, and constructed using the principles of cybernetics, were manned and operated by men who viewed everything through the glow of a monitor.¹³⁹ Radar beeps replaced the physical sensation of watching a plane rocket through the sky, while an abstracted language born from this same technology seeped into every kind of meaningful discourse; from the terms used to describe a potential atomic holocaust, to the easy communication used between friends:

Turgidson: What’s cooking on the old threat board? Nothing! Nothing at all? I don’t like the look of this Fred. Alright, tell you what you better do old buddy, you better give Elmo and Charlie a blast and bump everything up to condition red, and standby to blow her. I’ll get back to you.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ François Ewald, “Bio-power,” *History of the Present 2*, (1986), p. 9.

¹³⁹ In *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), the image of the radar screen is one of the central metaphors for technological misrepresentation. In the later half of the film there is an important scene involving a missile and the crew of a B-52 bomber: “DSO to Captain, I have an unidentified radar blip...distance 60 miles... approximate speed mach three. It looks like a missile tracking us...confirmed definite missile track commence evasive action right.” The entire scene takes place inside the belly of a bomber. There are no shots of the missile or the outside world. The threat is described solely in terms of its radar image, while the only view of the surrounding wilderness is seen through the windshield of the plane. The continuous close-ups of the radar screen emphasize the role of the tracking system as a kind of abstracted eye.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

Real terms like “threat board” and “condition red,” parodied in the 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove*, continually refer to an computerized command structure still central to the smooth operation of even today’s military (Figure 9). More specifically, they refer to a structure that is so insular and so obsessed with the need for ever-more efficient means of communication among its members that the discourse exemplified by the speaker has little to do with anything happening in the material world, since language itself has been persistently stripped until nothing remains but a series of call signs. These signs constitute a small collection of linguistic markers, each of which were “taken from [and deemed appropriate by] a general list of over 1000 ‘highly intelligible’ common words...[used] in battlefield communication.”¹⁴¹ Resulting phrases such as “Come in Delta Zero, do you read?” convert “*natural* language into a technology, a code or cipher device”, designed to increase efficiency within war-time systems.¹⁴² As a result, communication itself is transformed, because language is no longer about the transfer of meaning and ideas, but rather about the dispatch and reception of cryptographic programmes, and the processing of received data.¹⁴³ In effect, words themselves begin to eschew reality altogether by turning inward toward the technological practice that recreated them:

Navigator: Target orange reference checks. Target distance, eight miles.

Co-Pilot: Roger, eight miles. Telemetric guidance computer into orange grid.

Bombardier: Telemetric guidance computer into orange grid.

Navigator: Target distance, seven miles. Correct track indicator minus seven.

Co-Pilot: Roger, seven miles. Set GPI acceleration factor.

¹⁴¹ Paul Edwards, *The Closed World*, p. 217.

¹⁴² *Ibid*

¹⁴³ In the early 1940s, a special lab was set up at Harvard University. Known simply as PAL (Psycho-Acoustic Laboratory), its purpose was to solve the many communication breakdowns plaguing the allies during WWII. After all, in war-time systems such as airplanes, tanks, submarines, and basic infantry units, there is a great deal of unwanted sound. Much of which, was rendering communications between individuals and military units almost impossible. In order to cut through the interference, PAL worked on the straightforward tasks of soundproofing airplanes and other weapons, while also simplifying military language so that instructions could be spoken and understood more quickly; even under the most stressful conditions. For more on PAL see: Paul Edwards, *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997); Edward G. Boring and M. Van de Waters, ed., *Psychology for the Fighting Man* (Washington, DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1943); David Palermo, *Psychology of Language* (Glenview: Scott Foresman, 1978).

Bombardier: GPI acceleration factor set.
Navigator: Target distance, six miles
Co-Pilot: Roger, six miles. Pulse ident transponder active...¹⁴⁴

This type of linguistic alienation—or indeed fetishization depending on your perspective—is a significant event in relation to the human mind, because it not only forces the brain to think in radically different ways, but also transforms the manner in which people interact with one another, and relate to their environment. After all, if a new dialect is introduced into a group’s speech patterns their cognitive processes will change as well; especially if that pattern is grounded in a specific practice rather than conventional linguistic ideas regarding the accurate representation of things. Thus, when the very nature and *purpose* of language is changed to accommodate new technologies, as well as new methods of human-machine interaction, communication becomes irrevocably myopic as opposed to potentially expansive, since language itself is now crushed into a kind of binary code. Forcing it to not only become part of the total circuit connecting man to machine, but in the case of the Cold War, also part of the panoptic, computerized, command, control, and communication (C3I) systems dominating the West’s political landscape.¹⁴⁵

This reduction and eventual eradication of human language not only becomes one of the many symptoms indicative of ever-increasing

¹⁴⁴ *Dr. Strangelove*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (Columbia Pictures, 1964).

¹⁴⁵ In 1959, one year before the term ‘cyborg’ was even coined, Air-force servicemen were already deeply embedded within a large-scale C3I system known as SAGE, or Semi Automatic Ground Environment. This was a massive digital network designed to monitor the enemy, and if necessary, aid in issuing the appropriate atomic response. “The computer behind SAGE was a machine that had been created in the late 1940s as a flight simulator for the training of air pilots”, but, according to Manuel De Landa, “its creator, Jay Forrester, soon had different plans for it. Forrester understood the scale of the logistical enterprise behind a fortress of continental proportions, and began envisioning new roles for his computer in the world of Control, Command, and Communications. When the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb, the radar curtain gave way to the nuclear umbrella, a new mutation of the fortress destined to enlarge its ‘walls’ to worldwide proportions.” Although the program, “was obsolete before it was completed,” to quote Paul Edwards in *The Closed World*, “[SAGE] unleashed a cascading wave of command-control projects from late 1950s onwards, tied largely to nuclear early warning systems. These systems eventually formed the core of a world wide satellite, sensor, and communications web that would allow global oversight and instantaneous military response.” Indeed, to employ Edwards again, using one of his earlier essays: “[SAGE] was to be a total system, one whose human components were fully integrated into the system.” Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 55; Paul Edwards, *The Closed World*, p. 75; Paul Edwards, “A History of Computers and Weapons Systems,” *Computers in Battle: Will They Work?*, ed. David Bellin and Gary Chapman (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1981), p. 54.

technological integration among the military, but in turn, also highlights a drastic diminution of function within Clynes and Kline's articulation of the so-called "human soul." Contrary to their previous claims regarding that soul's positive "enlargement" through cyborg bodies and cybernetics systems, such a myopic discourse only serves to limit individual expression, thought, imagination, feeling; while at the same time, prompting individuals to become even more alienated from the reality of their actions. Facilitating a process which not only seeks to translate all meaning flawlessly, but to also render the act of thought itself absolutely moot, since the reception of received information is now designed to trigger only action. Indeed, within a language that has no danger of misinterpretation, there can be no connotation, no critical thinking, and therefore no imagination inherent to any verbal transaction. In their place, there is only an inflexible cipher: a denotative code that cannot be misinterpreted. There is only the 'truth.'¹⁴⁶

"[C]ybernetics has...[always] proceeded along lines that sought to understand the human being as a set of informational processes". As N. Katherine Hayles notes, once "information was defined as a probability function and thus as a pattern rather than a presence, cyberneticists argued that humans were essentially patterns and could be encoded into information without losing anything important."¹⁴⁷ For example, in 1950, the principal founder of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener, suggested it was theoretically possible to telegraph the body of a living person from one location to another without risk of distortion. Declaring: "the individuality of a body is that of a flame

¹⁴⁶ The "first AI [Artificial Intelligence] project ever [conceived and implemented] was a program for Mechanical Translation funded by the [U.S.] Air Force in the early 1950s." According to Manuel De Landa, the "project ran into insuperable difficulties in 1966 when a report from the National Academy of Sciences called for the suspension of further research...[However, today] limited versions of those systems [continue to] exist, capable of operating in a limited domain of experience, although they still require human assistance in order to complete their tasks...the most successful [versions] are those that take in as much context as possible, not translating a text word by word, but treating words as parts of sentences or even paragraphs. The idea is to create a formal representation of the source text in which *ambiguities of meaning have been removed* [emphasis added]. The next step is to map this disambiguated representation into a formal version of the target language, finally rendering this formal model as regular text. If there were such a thing as a universal language such a thing would be simplified. The machine could simply translate the source text in this lingua franca and then to the target language. While the search for linguistic universals will probably continue, practical applications of machine translation are using the [aforementioned] approach instead." Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines*, pp. 214-215.

¹⁴⁷ N. Katherine Hayles, "The Posthuman Body: Inscription and Incorporation in Galatea 2.2 and Snow Crash," *Configurations* 5.2 (1997), p. 244.

rather than...a stone.” It is “a form” and a pattern, as opposed to a “bit of substance.”

This form can be transmitted or modified and duplicated...there is no absolute distinction between the types of transmission which we can use for sending a telegram...and the types of transmission which are...theoretically possible for transmitting...a human being.¹⁴⁸

While Wiener’s theories are clearly preposterous, at least in practical terms, factual manifestations of the human body as a malleable and compliant medium were—and remain—all too real. Moravec, Clark, Kurzweil, and Garreau; even now, intellectuals purport a vision of the self that perpetuates a version of Wiener’s hypothesis. As if cybernetics, a field which has always “sought to understand [the individual] as a set of informational processes,” had somehow succeeded beyond all measure; influencing an entire culture with utopian dreams of unlimited potential through the benevolent use of science and technology.¹⁴⁹ In fact, Western manifestations of what I can only call the ‘negotiable body,’ have ceaselessly extended beyond the writings of a few fantasists and self-proclaimed prophets, as this much lauded, but ultimately problematic group of like-minded futurists, is merely the last bastion for a methodology long since discredited on the grounds of gross misconduct. Schemes begun by governments both just and corrupt—although who can tell the difference—and plans, which in their present form, mimic only the most incredible aspects of contemporary science fiction, in order to dispel a dreadful history of human waste that has continually characterized their use. The extremes of Eric Hobsbawm’s “short 20th Century” redressed and repaired without reference to prior horror.¹⁵⁰

After all, thirty-eight years after Wiener’s initial hypothesis, and coincidentally the proto-beginnings of American mind control, Hans Moravec postulated that in the not-too-distant future, it will not only be desirable, but also necessary to download human consciousness into the hard skull of a

¹⁴⁸ Norbert Wiener, “Organization of the Message,” *Cyber_Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), pp. 49-50. An original printing of the essay can be found in Wiener, Norbert. *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Avon Books, 1967).

¹⁴⁹ N. Katherine Hayles, “The Posthuman Body,” p. 244.

¹⁵⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

“shiny new robot.”¹⁵¹ Proposing that a person’s memory, subjectivity, and experience are not intrinsically anchored to the sensory capabilities of the flesh, but are instead the sole products of some intangible design imprinted upon the brain. Their existence, mere elements of a “pattern” that provides a person with nothing less than identity, intelligence, essence, and personal consciousness. As Moravec writes, “The rest is mere jelly.”¹⁵² The subsequent depreciation of embodied experience, and perhaps too of human life as a whole, becomes increasingly disturbing as science displaces the significance of human sense perception. Promoting a dream of the self that endorses above all, a clear division between mind and body, between what is “essential” and what is “meat,” and perhaps more tellingly, between what is hard, powerful, potent, and ultimately escapist, and what is weak, flabby, flaccid, and perhaps all too real—and/or human—for its own good. Like government sanctioned experimentation from decades before, Moravec and his ilk also profess an affinity for the production of empty heads. Men and women transformed into compliant puppets whose strings must be pulled and cut for the benefit of all; their bodies mere “husks” from which the mind is wiped, so that something new and decidedly inhuman can stand and act in its stead.¹⁵³ Behold Moravec’s delight at the nightmare of transmigration, an act of brainwashing which goes far beyond anything ever dreamed of by the agencies of organized Intelligence:

The surgeon’s hand sinks a fraction of a millimeter deeper into your brain, instantly compensating its measurements and signals for the changed position...Layer after layer the brain is [stimulated], then excavated. Eventually your skull is empty, and the surgeon’s hand rests deep in your brainstem.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 110.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁵³ N. Katherine Hayles, “The Posthuman Body,” p. 245. Hayles writes: “Hans Moravec has proposed that human consciousness can be downloaded into a computer, leaving the body behind as a discarded husk. As these examples suggest, the cybernetic construction of the posthuman has systematically downplayed or erased embodiment in ways that have not happened in other critiques of the liberal humanist subject, especially in feminist and postcolonial theory.”

¹⁵⁴ Hans Moravec, *Mind Children*, pp. 109-110. The original quote reads ‘simulated’ rather than ‘stimulated.’

Vacant heads filled only by the power of a near omnipotent hand. The image evokes the devastating techniques of Drs. Sydney Gottlieb and Donald Cameron, the Sleep Rooms of Montreal's McGill University, and the varied projects of MKULTRA.¹⁵⁵ Each is easily recalled through Moravec's unintended homage to the psychiatry of the CIA, and the beginnings of a particularly brutal form of MAD science.¹⁵⁶ The results of which are not the posthuman dream of bodily transmigration, but the terrible reality of mass victimization.

Officially April 13, 1953 marks the moment where it all began; the date "on which the coordinated MKULTRA project was approved by [CIA director] Allen Dulles".¹⁵⁷ It also signifies the start of an ensuing obsession with both the "reorganization" and "reorientation" of the human mind for the purposes of confession, control, and the invisible execution of "executive actions" through the production of "broken men."¹⁵⁸ These were ordinary people remade into unwitting assassins. Men and women triggered and

¹⁵⁵ Sydney Gottlieb was an American military psychiatrist and chemist. He was head of the CIA's Technical Services Staff (TSS), which coordinated the various MKULTRA programs. Dr. Donald Ewen Cameron was a Scottish-American psychiatrist who graduated from University of Glasgow in 1924. He was responsible for the day to day operation of the Sleep Rooms, and the methodologies used therein. For example, as coordinator Dr. Cameron "prescribed large quantities of drugs, repeated courses of electroshock [sometimes numbering in the thousands], and a technique he developed called 'psychic driving' [which involved] repeatedly playing back selected words to a patient [in order] to break down psychological barriers and open up the patient's unconscious." Gordon Thomas, *Journey into Madness: Medical Torture and the Mind-controllers* (London: Bantam Press, 1988), p. 135. As a point of interest, a biography of Dr. Cameron located on the McGill University website fails to mention MKULTRA, and the omission is glaring. Quote: "On the clinical side, he established in-patient and out-patient services, and a day-hospital programme. He developed laboratories for psychiatric research, and promoted advances in psychiatric training through undergraduate curricula and teaching hospital programmes. Cameron's high reputation in the psychiatric field is attested by his appointment in 1945 to the American panel to examine Rudolf Hess at the Nuremberg trials. After retiring from the Allan in 1964, he returned to Albany as Research Professor at the Albany Medical School and Director of the Laboratory for Research in Psychiatry and Aging at the Veterans' Administration Hospital." http://www.archives.mcgill.ca/resources/guide/vol2_3/gen01.htm#CAMERON.%20DONALD%20EWEN

¹⁵⁶ For more on the Sleep Rooms at McGill University see: Anne Collins, *In the Sleep Room: The Story of the CIA Brainwashing Experiments in Canada* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Ltd, 1988); Gordon Thomas, *Journey into Madness: Medical Torture and the Mind-controllers* (London: Bantam Press, 1988).

¹⁵⁷ John Ranelagh, *The Agency: Rise and Decline of the CIA* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), p. 206.

¹⁵⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, "An Analysis of Confessions in Russian Trials," 1950. Cited in John Ranelagh, *The Agency: Rise and Decline of the CIA*, p. 203. As Ranelagh writes: "MKULTRA had been prompted by a CIA analysis of confessions in Stalin's show trials, and in particular by the public confession of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary of February 3, 1949. Mindszenty was obviously a broken man when he confessed, and the CIA was interested in how he had been broken" (202).

controlled by masters from afar, as they went about the business of killing.¹⁵⁹ Their brutal victimization forcing in turn, a kind of auto-assisted evolutionary leap into the realm of the monstrous—the domain of Frankenstein—as the suicidal politics of Mutually Assured Destruction guaranteed the real-life manufacture of the Manchurian Candidate, and forever sutured the image of a shattered and systematically reassembled subject to the dubious politics of the cyborg body. Bear in mind, projects BLUEBIRD, ARTICHOKE, and CHATTER:

[Each] was ‘coordinated with...similar research work...aimed at developing, what was in effect, a *human robot*.’ The work was carried out by the CIA’s Office of Scientific Intelligence and was officially described as intending to ‘exploit, along operational lines, scientific methods and knowledge that can be utilized in altering the attitudes and beliefs, thought processes, and behavior patterns...This will include the application of tested psychiatric and psychological techniques, including the use of hypnosis in conjunction with drugs.’¹⁶⁰

In all, there were 149 separate initiatives “funded under MKULTRA.”¹⁶¹ Most were studies on the truth-telling effects of specific drugs such as marijuana and LSD, while others were considerably more bizarre, often veering into the sphere of mind-bending parody through the production of cyborg cats and dogs, and the ensuing development of exploding monkeys. Seemingly, like all systems and social structures governing the disparate factions of humanity the world over, animals and the environment are also unwitting victims of the West’s rampant paranoia, as logic disintegrates under the perpetual stress of imminent nuclear annihilation. “A lot of money was spent,” as Victor Marchetti, a special assistant to Allen Dulles recalls. “They slit this cat open, put batteries in him, wired him up. The tail was used as an antenna. They made a monstrosity.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Ranelagh writes: “Doctors and biologists in the Technical Services Section [TSS] working on MKULTRA subprojects were ambitious to press the frontiers of the disciplines even further, to the point of ‘executive action’—the agency’s in-house euphemism for assassination.” John Ranelagh, *The Agency: Rise and Decline of the CIA*, p. 207.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 205.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 207.

¹⁶² Marchetti continues: “They tested him and tested him. They found he would walk off the job when he got hungry, so they put another wire in to override that. Finally they’re ready. They took it out to a park and pointed it at a park bench and said, ‘Listen to those two guys. Don’t listen to anything else...just those two guys!’ They put him out of the van, and a taxi

Unfortunately, “the cybernetic construction of the posthuman has systematically downplayed or erased the issue of embodiment in ways that have yet to happen in other critiques of the liberal humanist subject,” especially in realms such as “feminism and postcolonial theory.”¹⁶³ However, nearly forty-five years after the end of World War II, Haraway contradicts the history of cybernetics—its use and misuse—by stating that cyborg politics “is the struggle for language and the struggle *against* perfect communication, *against* the one code that translates all meaning perfectly,” and that cyborgs are, first and foremost, revolutionary figures which reject their inherent centrality in order to align themselves with the margins of society.¹⁶⁴ Yet how can this be, when the creation of the cyborg not only paralleled the decidedly “Phallogocentric” production of truth, but was in turn, also responsible for that “dogma’s” success?¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, how can an image so rooted within the political discourse and cultural paranoia of the Cold War suddenly turn into something it never was; friend of the oppressed, ally for the ‘Other,’ and a model for resistance against a reigning hegemony? It cannot, at least not without leaving a very detectable trail through every successive representation of the cyborg body. As such, it did not, because as a general rule no such trace can be found anywhere within Western popular culture.

Of course, Haraway argues that visible traces do exist, and that feminist science fiction authors like Anne McCaffrey, Octavia Butler, and James Tiptree Jr., also known as Alice B. Sheldon, prove her theories about the cyborg body and its allegedly subversive ideologies.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, she states that since these writers have, in her opinion, formulated a viable alternative to the conventions of the Western narrative; namely, a story arch that refuses “individuation, separation, the birth of the self, the tragedy of autonomy, the fall into writing”; that by extension, all cyborgs must follow this same path.¹⁶⁷

comes and runs him over. There they were, sitting in the van with all those dials, and the cat was dead!” Cited in John Ranelagh, *The Agency: Rise and Decline of the CIA*, p. 208.

¹⁶³ N. Katherine Hayles, “The Posthuman Body,” p. 244.

¹⁶⁴ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 176.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁶ Anne McCaffrey, *The Ship Who Sang* (New York: Del Rey, 1969); James Tiptree Jr., *Star Songs of an Old Primate* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978); *Houston, Houston, Do You Read?/Souls* (New York: Tor Books, 1989); Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (London: Beacon Press, 2004); *Wild Seed* (London: Gollancz, 2000).

¹⁶⁷ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 177.

In fact, Haraway asserts that human-machine integration as a whole is a mixture rooted within liminal space; a subjective base that not only aligns the image with communities that have been pushed to the margins of society, but also with the inclusive ideologies and resistant politics of those marginalized communities. Specifically: the tactics of subversion, power through literacy, and solidarity by means of affinity.¹⁶⁸

However, this is simply not the case when it comes to the vast majority of cyborg bodies represented throughout 20th century popular culture, because despite the creature's jarring synthesis of organic and inorganic components, the cyborg is not a liminal being. Its politics and history are simply too strong to discard. Rather, they are elements which surround, penetrate, and bind the image to the hegemonic centre of the civilization in which it was generated. As such, the small and relatively ghettoized field of feminist science fiction is not the most accurate means by which to measure the meaning of this particular body, because however valuable a genre it may be, the authors within that genre do not present an image that admits the problematic nature of its own history, and which, in so doing, contends with that history. Instead, Haraway's examples present an idealized version of the cyborg body and its politics. One that provides the culture with something to aspire to and work toward, but which does not carry the same level of meaning and influence as its more vicious, well-known, and subsequently, more culturally reflective and relevant cyborg cousins. After all, the overwhelming majority of human-machine amalgamations manifest themselves as the exact inverse of those listed by Haraway, often reflecting the cold brutality of other, more representative cyborg-like characters, such as the insistent, unremitting, and glass-eyed Colonel Joll of J.M. Coetzee's, *Waiting for the Barbarians*.¹⁶⁹ As Coetzee writes:

¹⁶⁸ According to Haraway: "‘women of colour’ might be understood as a cyborg identity, a potent subjectivity synthesized from fusions of outsider identities". This is a subjective stance that could prove very valuable if feasible, since it could grant "great riches" to those who "explicitly [embrace] the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clean distinctions between organism and machine and similar distinctions structuring the Western self. It is the simultaneity of breakdowns that cracks the matrices of domination and opens geometric possibilities." Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 174.

¹⁶⁹ Despite Colonel Joll's obvious affinity for the truth, there is also one other major indication which binds the character to the image of the cyborg body. For example, Joll is inextricably linked to "two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire." Like Dr.

Father, do you see this gentleman [Joll]? This gentleman is visiting us from the Capital. He visits all the forts along the frontier. His work is to find out the truth. That is all he does. He finds out the truth. If you do not speak to me you will have to speak to him. Do you understand?¹⁷⁰

Like Joll, cybernetics is a cold shrine to the truth. It is a house of code, of understanding, and of perfect communication, which finds its fullest articulation in the phallic image of the unrelenting cyborg; itself “a devotee of truth”.¹⁷¹ One need only think of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s turn as the now ubiquitous Terminator; itself a Cold War figure whose every word regarding the terrible realities of a machine-infested future seems to carry the weight of a hundred-thousand bibles. His terse expressions effecting only shock and silence, as the seriousness of his tone (“the tone of truth!”) prompts no real consideration on the part of the characters, but instead, only futile attempts at preventing that which has already happened.¹⁷² In other words: action devoid of thought.

Any accurate assessment of the cyborg body and its politics must include an examination of this overwhelming majority represented by figures like the Terminator, because the only proper measure for the accurate study of a particular image within a particular culture is by watching that image play out in the collective unconscious of the larger population. Or, to be more specific, by examining its behaviour throughout the history of 20th century popular media, so that one can see how the image actually manifests itself and creates meaning for that population; and not say, how we *wish* it would. Technology, after all, is consistently time specific, and as such it is always politically attuned. It cannot stand a part from the time in which it was created, and as such, the cyborg’s heavy social, cultural, and political baggage tends to make any deviant reading of human-machine integration a cultural

Strangelove, he is physically joined to a piece of technology, which operates without aid to protect his eyes from the rays of the sun. Since Joll is almost never described as being without his sunglasses, they become in effect, just as much a part of his body as his eyes or his arms. J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 1

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁷² When pressed by the Magistrate, Colonel Joll explains that he has been trained to hear the “tone of truth,” which denotes when the speaker is telling the truth under torture. In the end, the Magistrate remains skeptical of Joll’s powers, stating: “Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt” (5).

anomaly at best; a bizarre variance that is not just the exception to the rule, but rather the one exception that *proves* the rule.

Ironically, even some of Haraway's textual examples fall short of anything that resembles a liberating narrative with progressive politics. Anne McCaffrey's *The Ship Who Sang* is almost laughable in its attempt to reconstitute "[g]ender, sexuality, embodiment, [and] skill", because even though a woman born with severe and crippling birth defects is essentially more able than even the healthiest male, she is still something of a simpering fool when it comes to interaction with her male "brawns."¹⁷³ Indeed, at one point, McCaffrey even goes so far as to have one of the men defend the protagonists "virgin honor." Moreover, since she is driven by unimaginably powerful form of atomic power, and ultimately subservient to all of her respective partners, McCaffrey's ship is often nothing more than a feisty sidekick or 'uppity' wife; her existence a mere echo of the subordinate parent in America's idealized vision of the nuclear family.

Marge Piercy, on the other hand, and her 1976 novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* is one of the primary texts from which Haraway's original manifesto was ultimately derived. As Haraway writes:

Influenced by Piercy in my 'Manifesto for Cyborgs,' I used the cyborg as a blasphemous, anti-racist feminist figure reshaped for science-studies analysis and feminist theory alike...Piercy developed her theory about the cyborg as lover, friend, object, subject, weapon, and golem in *He, She, It* (1991). Her cyborgs and mine became trans to their origins, defying their founding identities as weapons and self-acting control devices, thus trying to trouble U.S. cultural commitments to what counts as agency and self-determination for people—for other organisms and machines.¹⁷⁴

Although *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a landmark in revolutionary feminist science fiction, and although *He, She, and It* is certainly excellent on all counts, Haraway's explanation of each is somewhat overblown. Yod, the golem-cyborg of Piercy's latter work, whose UK title is *Body of Glass*, is not only a character trapped in a sexual, and therefore Oedipal relationship with

¹⁷³ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 178. For more see: Anne McCaffrey, *The Ship Who Sang* (New York: Del Rey, 1969).

¹⁷⁴ Donna J. Haraway, "Cyborgs and Symbionts," p. xvi. For more on Marge Piercy see: *Woman on the Edge of Time* (London: Women's Press Classic, 2000); *He, She, and It* (New York: Fawcett Books, 1993); or *Body of Glass* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

his symbolic mother, but is also a black box which, at the end of the novel, explodes upon penetration, and in so doing, annihilates his Father along with him. Piercy writes:

‘I have died and taken with me, Avram, my creator...I die knowing I destroy the capacity to replicate me’...Yod [the cyborg] was the product of tensions between Avram and Malkah and their disparate aims as well as the product of their software and hardware...¹⁷⁵

Interestingly, there is even a strong link between the research of Clynes and Kline and the novels of Marge Piercy. For example, working from Rockland State Hospital from the mid 1950s, Drs. Manfred Clynes, and Nathan S. Kline in particular, used “human mental patients as part of [their] psychiatric research on neural-chemical implants and telemetric monitoring.”¹⁷⁶ In fact, Kline himself was openly “associated with the Psychiatric Research Foundation in New York, an organization established to promote controversial investigations into psycho-pharmacology”; a field that would swiftly find itself inextricably intertwined with scores of government mind-control programs from exactly the same period.¹⁷⁷ Today, the institution bears a new name. Re-branded in 1982 as the Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research, the hospital pays homage not only to its namesake, but also to his somewhat dubious research on the link between stimulants, depressants, psychedelics, and the control of human psychosis.

Piercy used Rockland State Hospital as “background for the brain-implant experiments practiced on psychiatric patients in”, what Donna Haraway calls, “her *transformative* feminist science-fiction story, *Woman on the Edge of Time*.”¹⁷⁸ Published in 1976, Piercy’s book describes the general treatment of psychiatric patients in the United States during the mid to late 20th Century. Re-labeling Rockland State with the near-transparent name of “Rockover State,” Piercy paints a damning portrait of psychoanalysis, psychopharmacology, and the general system of American biopolitics as it relates to gender, race, and the American underclass. Piercy writes:

¹⁷⁵ Marge Piercy, *Body of Glass*, pp. 580-581.

¹⁷⁶ Donna J. Haraway, “Cyborgs and Symbionts,” p. xvi

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

The nurse began removing the head bandages. Cautiously Connie and Sybil edged nearer and nearer till Connie called out, "Is it true you got needles stuck in your...head?"

"No Lie. Electrodes, they call them."

Connie stared expectantly as the bald scalp emerged from the swathing...But I don't see anything!"

They inside, girl. What you expect, I look like a god-damn pincushion? They stupid, but they not that stupid!"

Alice they are electrodes, where are the wires?" Sybil asked cautiously.

"You old fashioned. No Wires. They use a little radio and they stick that inside too!"

"Now, you cut this out," the nurse said suddenly..."Quiet down or I'll give you a shot that will lay you out flat.

Back at their own beds, Sybil whispered, "The nurse didn't contradict us about the electrodes. Could it be true?"

"But what for?"

"Control. To turn us into machines so we obey them," Sybil whispered.¹⁷⁹

In many ways, Joanna Russ is the most subversive author discussed by Haraway, as *The Female Man* is not only a remarkable novel, but one that also defies explanation. Unlike Anne McCaffrey's ship, or even Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass*, Russ has indeed given us a new "story to tell," a new "account of the unconscious...one that does a better job of accounting for subjects of history." As such, there is a great deal of hope within Russ' writing, but again, it is only that; hope.¹⁸⁰ After all, her work is not the norm. Instead, cyborgs like Zero in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* represent the majority of human-machine manifestations.¹⁸¹ They are rapists and war-machines; emblems and agents of patriarchal power. They have no interest in subversion.¹⁸² They do not seek autonomy, and are not politically subversive. The cyborg does not understand the concept of subjugation or the imposition of 'Otherness'. Instead, the body powers forward without thought to cost or consequence; selfishly seeking the fulfillment of its own pleasure, as well as the fruition of its own political agenda.

¹⁷⁹ Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, p. 200.

¹⁸⁰ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large," p. 15; Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).

¹⁸¹ Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977).

¹⁸² Although Haraway cites the work of Octavia Butler in her manifesto, during her interview with Constance Penley and Andrew Ross she also expressed some reservations about Butler's work. As Haraway remarks: "Octavia Butler is a very frustrating writer in some ways because she constantly reproduces heterosexuality even in her poly-gendered species." Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large," p. 16.

The roots of such destructive behaviour are of course patently obvious in the films which came before Haraway. James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984), Sidney Lumet's *Fail-Safe* (1964), and Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964); each reflect worlds that are not only threatened by fear, paranoia, and political brinksmanship, but also by the distinctly patriarchal dangers of cybernetics, and the true nature of human-machine integration. Within each film there are numerous visual and auditory references to the various types of mental, ocular, and linguistic abstractions permeating mid 20th century America. From the endless analyses that pour from machines and analysts alike; to the vast banks of computer monitors that fuse with, and replace the human eye; to the bizarre techno-babble that simultaneously describes, alienates, and fetishizes real events. Within each film, the subsequent amalgamation of flesh and non-flesh, both physical and metaphorical, plays a central role in fulfilling the ultimate goal of both the cyborg and the Cold War, as its body not only signifies the inevitable outcome of atomic confrontation, but also a massive death drive forced onto the public by the politics of a pre-existing hegemony. Even within the context of the more contemporary Terminator sequels, the mere existence of the cyborg's hard body continues to represent the inevitable end of all things.

2.4 Black Hands

Despite the importance of Pynchon's V2 and the ubiquity of James Cameron's Terminator, the dual images of these Aryan man-machines are not the prototypes for every subsequent representation of the cyborg body and its politics. That particular honour belongs to one of the most iconic characters in the history of cinema; if not *the* most recognizable scientist in the history of Hollywood.¹⁸³

Dr. Strangelove, who—among other things—remains even now a brilliant parody of both Wernher Von Braun and his near-anonymous colleagues in Operation Paperclip, is the centrepiece of Kubrick's 1964 film, functioning not only as the “apocalyptic ‘nuclear wise man’”, but also as a

¹⁸³ Christopher Frayling describes Strangelove as “one of *the* great archetypes of the scientist in film.” Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 105.

kind of grim reaper. An “angel of death” waiting for the right moment in which to initiate a nuclear response that is nothing less than total (Figure 10).¹⁸⁴ His very existence foretelling at worst, the end of human life and civilization; and at best, the design and subsequent erection of the ultimate patriarchal fantasy in its stead. Like Strangelove’s echo in the body of a German Terminator, Fuhrer knows best as even the Nazification of America’s nuclear family becomes a desirable possibility in the shadow of imminent Holocaust.¹⁸⁵ As Strangelove declares,

Mr. President, I would not rule out the chance to preserve a nucleus of human specimens. It would be quite easy for some of our deeper mineshafts. The radioactivity would never penetrate into a mine some thousands of feet deep...[Human selection] could easily be accomplished with a computer...set and programmed to accept factors ranging from youth, health, *sexual fertility*, intelligence, and a cross section of necessary skills.¹⁸⁶

Adding: “man is an amazingly adaptable creature...the conditions would be far superior to those of the *so-called* concentration camps, where there is ample evidence [that even the] most wretched creatures clung desperately to life.”¹⁸⁷

There is no ambiguity in the politics of Dr. Strangelove. It is very clear where he stands in regards to atomic death, patriarchal oppression, National Socialism, racial exploitation, sexual violation, and any number of other dubious practices and ideas. Nor is there any doubt regarding his status as a cyborg, since from the very beginning, Strangelove is immediately placed within the sphere of the man-machine by his apparent disabilities and numerous prostheses. His wheelchair, for example, physically integrates his body into a steel mechanism facilitating his locomotion. His spectacles, although dark, allow him to see. While the doctor’s machinic status is compounded yet again by the presence of a mysterious black glove fitted over the form of his famous right hand.¹⁸⁸ An appendage that not only recalls the

¹⁸⁴ *Dr. Strangelove*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (Columbia Pictures, 1964).

¹⁸⁵ In the 2002 action film, *Collateral Damage*, one of the film’s many bad guys says the following about Arnold Schwarzenegger’s character: “You know how Germans are. Like cyborgs...” *Collateral Damage*, dir. Andrew Davis (Warner Bros, 2002).

¹⁸⁶ *Dr. Strangelove*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (Columbia Pictures, 1964).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁸ It is important to note that Strangelove is not the only cyborg. Kubrick’s vision of the cyborg body is also represented in his depiction of the B-52 bomber and its crew. For instance, the opening image of the bomber crew is a close-up of Major Kong reading a

last 30 years of German history, but one which appears to act autonomously, and without regard for the owner's physical health or mental commands.

According to author Peter George in his novelization of Kubrick's film—which bizarrely, is also an adaptation of George's original book—Strangelove lost his hand in “the British bombing of Peenemünde,” where like his immediate historical forebear, Dr. Wernher Von Braun, “he [too] was working on the German V-2 rocket.”¹⁸⁹ However, the story does not end here, since this missing hand, this thing “that hate[s] the rest of [his] body for having” compromised his Nazi past, also reaches further back to the beginning of the 1930s, and the end of the 1920s, in the years immediately before and after the rise of National Socialism.¹⁹⁰ After all, Strangelove's autonomous prosthesis not only recalls the black gloves of Hitler's SS, but also the right hand of throwback Rotwang in Fritz Lang's 1926 film *Metropolis* (Figure 11).¹⁹¹ As Christopher Frayling writes:

Playboy magazine in mid-flight. After which, the audience's viewpoint switches to different areas of the plane where they can see other crew members sleeping, playing cards, or doing nothing at all. More than just a set-up for all subsequent scenes involving the B-52 bomber crew, Kubrick is emphasizing the plane's ability to fly without the input of the pilot or his group; thereby transforming the human body into few pounds of dead weight lodged inside the belly of an automated machine. However, once a military action is commenced the human component becomes an integral part of the overall whole, because the machine now starts to rely on the reflexes of its crew in order to survive. In a sense, the bomber and its crew become extensions one another, since the plane increases a person's overall speed and strength dramatically, while in turn, the crew allows the plane to survive in combat situations, and accomplish its mission. The bomber crew may not undergo any physical alterations, but the implications of a cybernetic relationship are certainly evident.

¹⁸⁹ As author Peter George writes in the novelization of Terry Southern's screenplay: “Dr. Strangelove...had long exerted an influence on United States defence policy. He was a recluse and perhaps he had been made so by the effects of the British bombing of Peenemünde, where he was working on the German V-2 rocket. His black-gloved right hand was a memento of this...He gazed out through myopic eyes which were assisted by frameless bifocals...” Peter George, *Dr. Strangelove* (London, 1963), pp. 34-35, 141; quoted in Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁹⁰ Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 103. This quote is originally by Peter Sellers, and can be found in: Ed Sikov, *Mr. Strangelove: A Biography of Peter Sellers* (London: Hyperion, 2002), pp. 189-99.

¹⁹¹ Rotwang and Strangelove are not the only villains with a robotic black hand. Aside from Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, Dr. Julius No of the James Bond film *Dr. No* (1962) also has two stylized but powerful prosthetic hands. The originals were lost while the bond villain was conducting atomic experiments. Coincidentally, Ken Adam, the production designer for *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), also designed the sets for *Dr. No*. For more on Ken Adams and his involvement in either film see: Christopher Frayling, *Ken Adam: The Art of Production Design* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005); “Base Instincts” *The Guardian* (September 13, 2002), Accessed 15 November 2007: <http://film.guardian.co.uk/features/featurepages/0,,791041,00.html>. For more on *Dr. No* see; Ian Fleming, *Dr. No*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2004); *Dr. No*, dir. Terrence Young (Eon Productions, 1962).

Strangelove is the reincarnation of Rotwang...just as the cavernous War Room in which he operates was partly based on Berlin-born designer Ken Adams' memories of having seen *Metropolis* in the mid-1930s; *Metropolis* he said, was part of 'my visual education'...Strangelove, with his black...hand, crimped white hair...is the Rotwang of the nuclear age.¹⁹²

Weirdly, *Metropolis* was also part of Adolph Hitler's education, since "[he] and [his soon to be right hand] Joseph Goebbels loved the movie when they saw it"—quote—"in a small town."¹⁹³ Certainly, there are "sequences of choreographed mob activity" permeating both Thea von Harbou's novel, and her husband, Fritz Lang's film, that easily parallel the mass hysteria of a Nazi rally. To quote Harbou: "Dark, angry waves were the heads before Freder. These waves [of the mob] frothed, raged and roared. Here and there a hand shot up in the air."¹⁹⁴ The parallels between Harbou's throng of disgruntled workers and Riefenstahl's representation of an enraptured German people are of course frightening, but more than this, the story's varied cultural connections seem to run far deeper and darker than even Lang and Harbou intended (Figure 12). In fact, Christopher Frayling even goes so far as to suggest that

in the debate about the impact of [the film] on design in the real world, it could...be argued that the 'Moloch' sequences set in the huge underground furnaces helped to prepare the visual ground for the [ovens] of the concentration camps. Certainly, von Harbou likes to describe the machine-city as 'wanting living men for food', its furnaces requiring 'the endless stream of human beings processed through the machine room.'¹⁹⁵

Clearly, a concrete correlation between the two cannot be confirmed, since "the sinister implications of...these references are created by hindsight."¹⁹⁶ Yet, in many ways indisputable evidence is also irrelevant. What matters here are the innumerable points of connection that allow such speculation to occur, because *Metropolis* is not simply a significant film, but also a priceless cultural artifact that reflects the time and place in which it was made. In truth, it seems

¹⁹² Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁴ Thea Von Harbou, *Metropolis* (London, 1926); cited in Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁵ Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*

only natural that uncanny elements of an imminent German future should manifest in a film that looks forward as well as back (Figure 13).

2.5 Strange Love

Like Lang's futuristic vision of an ultra-modern Germany run by the "alchemy" of a "medieval" madman, Kubrick's post WWII villain is also far more than just a simple parody of American Cold War policy, but a wonderful interpretation of the many elements which make up the mid-20th century's social, cultural, and political climate.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, like the stunning visuals of the city of Metropolis, and the menacing machines which ensure its survival, Kubrick's depictions both subtle and gross, combine beautifully to reflect an atmosphere of suspicion and paranoia which not only allows Strangelove—son of Rotwang—to grow and thrive, but to a certain extent, also exist in his own peculiar apocalyptic way. Bear in mind, as both a character and a movie, *Dr. Strangelove* is far more than just a biting satire of Mutually Assured Destruction, but also a rich study of human sexuality, and a powerful statement on the bizarre neuroses that consistently spring forth and shatter the earth when desire supersedes reason.

From the very beginning, sex is one of Kubrick's primary issues as the opening sequence presents the audience with two "fornicating flying machines".¹⁹⁸ Their massive hulls depicting sexual intercourse from the male perspective as the image of a huge B-52 'Stratofortress' meets its equally masculine mate in mid-air—the KC-135 fuel tanker. Notably, Kubrick's camera is lodged in the belly of the 'male' tanker with the shot looking down along the shaft of the phallus, as the fuel line penetrates and spills itself into the approaching plane. In sexualizing such an event Kubrick has not only re-contextualized these machines through the lens of the homo-eroticized male body, but also reframed the scene with techniques stolen from the hardcore pornographer. Oscillating between tight close-ups of the actual coupling, and

¹⁹⁷ Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 63. Frayling writes: "[Rotwang] is the modern scientist who wears a belted medieval smock; his desk is lit by coils of neon light, while his shelves are crammed with worm-eaten leather-bound folios; his pitched roof, gingerbread Gothic house is surrounded by high-tech skyscrapers...but in the fireplace there are some bellows, like at an alchemist's, and a stuffed crocodile would not be out of place."

¹⁹⁸ David Pascoe, *Aircraft* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), p. 106.

wide shots of each plane in mid-coitus, Kubrick's camera somehow prefigures the decidedly sleazy POV perspective of contemporary porn, as the 'top' tanker begins to penetrate and undulate against its more submissive 'bottom.' As Randy Rasmussen writes:

The tanker's nozzle becomes a ludicrously detailed penis while the undulating movement of the...camera imposes a sexual choreography on the two mechanical giants. Sex and the capacity for mass destruction become intertwined and confused.¹⁹⁹

While poetic and largely true, one should note, however, that Rasmussen is also much too restrained when making this especially important point. In my opinion, "sex and the capacity for mass destruction" are more than just "intertwined and confused." Rather, sex and the desire for total annihilation are one and the same when fused in the body of the B-52, since moments of orgasm, and the actual tools of nuclear Armageddon, overlap and collude to the point of seamlessness.

For instance, the B-52, which was known affectionately to Strategic Air Command crews as the BUFF, "an acronym" that according to David Pascoe, "allegedly spell[s] out 'Big Ugly Fat Fuck'", is represented here as nothing more than a "fuck."²⁰⁰ A huge hit and run weapon whose only job is to find the target, deliver its payload, and then move on to blast open and fill up the next hole with yet another enormous tool. Although somewhat vulgar, the plane's oversexed representation appropriately foreshadows the huge explosions which occur at the end of the film, as "Major Kong [rides] his great phallic" weapon into "apocalyptic orgasm." His ensuing obsolescence not only signifying the beginning of a massive never-ending 'little death,' but also the delivery of an efficient and effective 'Dear John'; a bomb "apologetically [but properly labelled] for the end of someone's world."²⁰¹ Indeed, Kong's enormous cyborg phallus is doubly appropriate in relation to the masculine and now decidedly heterosexual perspective of the B-52. Because really, once your payload is blown there is no longer a reason left to stay. Especially after

¹⁹⁹ Randy Rasmussen, *Stanley Kubrick: Seven Films Analyzed* (London: McFarland & Company Inc, 2001), p. 7.

²⁰⁰ David Pascoe, *Aircraft*, pp. 105-106.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 106.

having found, touched, and set-off the “cobalt-thorium-G [spot]” of a once frigid Mother Russia.

Writer Robert Kolker maintains that in general terms, “*Dr. Strangelove* is a discourse of death.” That its “language and images...bespeak the confusion of life and death and the desire to see one in terms of the other.” He also contends that Kubrick’s movie is really about a

language that creates its own destruction, its own death, and the death of the world. [Because in a film] that delineates a love of destruction and death, a *Merwürdigliebe*...everything done and everything said manifests this love and hastens its consummation.²⁰²

There is no doubt that the various forms of love expressed by Kubrick are nothing short of strange, but given the text’s consistent preoccupation with ‘essence,’ penetration, erection, and orgasm, it is perhaps more precise and more appropriate to label *Dr. Strangelove* as a discourse of ‘little deaths.’ As a movie which perpetuates a language that cycles back continually to a single but all-consuming vanishing point; namely, sexual satisfaction in the name and image of the masculine cyborg body.

Kong falling toward the earth on the back of American mega death, only to disappear in a white flash of a million little deaths is only the most obvious example to correlate a connection between sex, death, and cyborgs through the warped lens of Mutually Assured Destruction. Moreover, despite Kolker’s assertions of “confusion,” the collusion of death and desire in the context of Kubrick’s film constitutes the purest and most successful attempt at communication in a Cold War system. After all, nothing is more perfect than communication without language, the clear delivery of feeling from one person to another in an exchange devoid of abstraction, even if that interaction requires one’s total consumption by the desires of another. In a way, physicality is almost irrelevant. All that matters is the mechanistic extension of one’s sexual desire, and its subsequent consummation in the body of another, even if that exchange both consumes and destroys.²⁰³

²⁰² Robert Phillip Kolker, “*Dr. Strangelove* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*,” *Perspectives on Stanley Kubrick*, ed. Mario Falsetto (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1996), p. 141.

²⁰³ For clear visual evidence see Chapter 3, figures 22 and 23.

For Kubrick to extend the purpose of such language to coincide with the purpose of an explosive cyborg phallus seems only logical in the context of the Cold War. Especially since both elements collude so well in the highly sexualized image of the atom bomb. Indeed, what screenwriters Terry Southern and Stanley Kubrick do so well is juxtapose “a series of linguistic and visual reductions...[that] give the characters utterances which defeat meaning” against those which project it flawlessly.²⁰⁴ Thus, like “the auto-destruct mechanism on the SAC bomber’s radio, the characters words undo and destroy themselves”, but *only* when that technology fails.²⁰⁵ When working efficiently, such linguistic reductions successfully eradicate the possibility of connotation; transmitting only the proper code, a cipher that must always be translated and implemented, while at the same time, never truly understood.²⁰⁶ To recall the story’s one failed attempt at thoughtful analysis:

Bombardier: Major Kong, is it possible that this is some kind of loyalty test. You know, give the go code and then recall to see who would actually go?

Major Kong: Ain't nobody ever got the go code yet. And old Ripper wouldn't be giving us plan R unless them Russkies had already clobbered Washington and a lot of other towns with a sneak attack.

Bombardier: Yes sir.²⁰⁷

To truly comprehend the level of conflict that occurs when a Cold War turns ‘hot,’ is counterproductive to the very goals of that system. No intelligent person would ever commit to the possibility of total annihilation, and neither would anyone else with even a glimmer of comprehension for the kind of destructive power contained within all nuclear weapons. Yet, Kubrick presents us with a world in which sanity is practically non-existent, and not only because a reductive and seemingly ‘doctored’ discourse has made even the

²⁰⁴ Robert Phillip Kolker, “*Dr. Strangelove and 2001: A Space Odyssey*,” p. 141.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*

²⁰⁶ Major Kong asserts his lack of understanding on more than one occasion, stating that at the end of this nuclear holocaust you, the bomber crew, “are all in line for some important promotions and personal citations...And that goes for every last one of you, regardless of your race, your colour, or your creed.” Kong’s ignorance about the realities of “going toe to toe with the Russkies” in the world-ending madness that is nuclear combat, is played to great comic effect by actor Slim Pickens. However, Kong’s refusal or inability to fully grasp the truth of his situation is more than just a running gag, but in actuality aids in the conveyance of an important point about his subsequent “use of language to express [only] the obvious, the reductive, and the redundant...destroying meaning wherever it threatens to emerge.” Robert Phillip Kolker, “*Dr. Strangelove and 2001: A Space Odyssey*,” p. 142.

²⁰⁷ *Dr. Strangelove*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (Columbia Pictures, 1964).

most insane acts sound rational, but because those in power have ordered their followers to commit those acts without even a moment's pause. Only a mindless "Yes sir" will do.

Unsurprisingly, Kubrick's comic take on the Cold War and its effects not only on language, but also on the much larger field of human comprehension, could not be considered peculiar. His vision is not so far from the truth, because the material world of the early 1960s was also a crazy one. Supporting a political environment which operated not only outside the realm of reality—or even the bonds of sanity!—but which also firmly itself rooted within the blind and far more forgiving boundaries of technological hubris and sexual metaphor. Interrelated elements which combined their efforts to contain Soviet influence through the erection of a tightly controlled "North American continental fortress," while simultaneously maintaining that need for protection and total isolation through another more suggestive discourse.²⁰⁸ Specifically: one which also managed to extend selfishly inward, but this time toward the sexual centre of the male genitalia, as opposed to the armoured plating which can surround and defend it.

Sadly, any gaze that fixes itself upon the image of the phallus also signifies an internalized desire to prove that "banana's" effectiveness and rigidity; thereby, facilitating a desire which often borders on obsession when applied to both the military and the government.²⁰⁹ In fact, this feeling is often so powerful that it can prevent each branch from accomplishing their respective duties, including their primary goal of protecting the nation's citizenry, because in transposing the sexualized metaphor of the male phallus onto the central motivations behind military policy, a nation will ultimately strive to reject diplomacy and prove its potency through offensive strategies based on "pre-emptive strikes" and "total commitment."²¹⁰ In the eyes of

²⁰⁸ Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 54.

²⁰⁹ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 678. For more on Pynchon's use of banana imagery please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.7.

²¹⁰ The policy of prompt use was a central component of the Air Force's 'defense' strategy during the Cold War. In reality, prompt use never had anything to do with defense, since, as Paul Edwards writes; it was actually "a doctrine of pre-emptive strike" (84). In other words, the U.S. military was prepared to start WW3 at the slightest provocation from the Soviet Union. U.S. military planners knew that defense against an airborne nuclear attack would prove futile, because "even excellent air defenses could prevent only 10 percent of attacking

many U.S. Generals, nuclear war was not something to be avoided, but was instead seen as one great move towards sexual potency on a national scale. Initially, such a statement might seem ridiculous, since the idea of one man trying to prove his machismo through the subsequent destruction of all things living seems absolutely insane. But the truth is, such a dangerous form of psychological motivation once appeared absolutely real; its veracity locked up in the language of strength, proof, and inflexibility. To put it simply, a real leader must prove he is willing to ‘push the button.’ That he has, for lack of a better phrase, “the balls” to go through with such an act. Otherwise, he becomes womanish, revealing a fatal weakness in the eyes of his enemy, and leaving his land open to the possibility of rape by more effective atomic tools.

Sterling Hayden’s portrayal of General Jack D. Ripper is the best possible example of just such a conceit, because like the officer’s highly problematic namesake, the character is not only a dangerous sexual predator, but also a man rendered impotent by a myriad of ineffectual politicians that collectively strive to bind his power and stunt his desires. Yet, unlike Ripper’s infamous woman-killing predecessor, the General’s needs, both sexual and professional, are suffocated rather than fulfilled by one especially important ‘muff.’ U.S. President Mirkin Muffley represents the most immediate danger to the integrity, power, and potency of the American nation. Even his name, which signifies both a pubic wig and a vagina, implies the subsequent emasculation of the world’s most masculine superpower at the hands of weak-willed diplomats, and other political eunuchs. As Ripper explains:

Ripper: Mandrake, do you recall what Clemenzo once said about war?

Mandrake: No. I don't think I do sir, no.

Ripper: He said war was too important to be left to the Generals. When he said that fifty years ago, he might have been right. But today, war is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training, nor the inclination for strategic thought. I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, communist subversion, and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids.²¹¹

planes from reaching their target” (86). The Air force fought against possible defense plans in favour of the attack-oriented policy of Strategic Air Command (SAC). General Curtis LeMay, the commanding officer of SAC was once quoted as saying that he “could not imagine a circumstance under which the United States would go second in a nuclear war” (85).

²¹¹ *Dr. Strangelove*, dir. Stanley Kubrick (Columbia Pictures, 1964).

It is no coincidence that within this specific scene, Kubrick chooses to shoot the General from below (Figure 14). Depicting him not only in a monstrous light, as something threatening, inhuman, and decidedly deadly, but also and perhaps more importantly, as a creature shot from a highly sexualized camera angle.

The lens itself is resting at waist level, looking up from the perspective of Ripper's own erect penis. Seemingly, the camera had been positioned rather carefully, as if to peer through the end of his genitalia.²¹² Its lens projected upward toward another phallic symbol protruding from the General's mouth. Such a connection is not entirely out of place, since Ripper's potency and "essence" have now been regained due to his defiance, and subsequent destruction of the feminized administration that once tried to control him. In a sense, Ripper has not only been able to 'grab his 'balls'' back, but is also ready and willing to impose that sexuality on a world which is essentially 'asking for it.'

Naturally, Ripper is not alone in experiencing feelings of personal and professional impotency, but reflects a general feeling of castration felt throughout the voluminous war room. Some characters, such as Muffley and his staff, seem to embrace this feeling of impotence on a personal and professional level, since the thought of proving themselves militarily is not only an affront to their collective morality, but also to their sensitive, and rather sexless constitutions. Other characters like the highly virile, if not sociopathic, General Buck Turgidson, strive to offset the strict limits imposed on their desires through overcompensation in their private lives (Figure 15). Indeed, at one point near the beginning of the film, Turgidson is "perched over" the bed of his mistress as

he makes a sexual boast couched in the metaphor of a rocket launch—one of the film's many verbal and visual links between sexuality and military hardware. The camera cuts immediately to the image of a machine gun barrel tilted upward on its jeep mount. In the context of the General's remark, the weapon becomes phallic, just as the mid-air refueling scene

²¹² Ridley Scott would employ similar tricks in his 1979 film *Alien*. Examples are his 'low' camera-work are especially evident at the end of the film when Ripley, is trapped in the closet with very little clothing, while the monster stalks the cabin of the shuttle. For a full description see chapter 3, as well as figure 18.

was imbued with sexual meaning by romantic background music. Turgidson, of course, is unaware of the link he forges between sex and weapons. And that is one of the core problems in *Dr. Strangelove*, where most characters, lacking insight into their motivations, confuse their personal concerns with professional duties.²¹³

Yet, while most of the film's administration strives to compensate, hide, and/or co-exist with their individual forms of lack, one man looks the opposite way. Biding his time until the moment arrives in which he can cast off all feelings of flaccidity, and stand erect for the first time; or at least, for the first time in a long while.

2.6 Master-race

Dr. Strangelove is more than just the scientific counterpart to General Ripper's psychosis, but also represents the shadow of American President, Mirkin Muffley. As the dark half of a whole body long since split, he is the wild and passionate Mr. Hyde to Muffley's calm and rational Dr. Jekyll. Id versus superego, desire versus reason; the two are not only played by the same man, but their constant and close proximity also connotes the image of two figures on either side of the looking glass (Figure 16). As Rasmussen writes, they are

variations on a single character. Muffley's balding head, transparent eyeglasses, and tranquil voice are superficially suited to a person of emotional detachment, propriety, and reason. Strangelove's flaring, bleached blond hair, dark glasses concealing hysterical eyes, tense voice, and mouth clenched in a mirthless smile betray lurking, violent passions.²¹⁴

Dark versus light, black versus white; *Dr. Strangelove* could be construed as a parable about the penalties incurred when the violent passions of the Id go unchecked by the calming influence of the more rational mind. Or, it could be a story about dangers encountered when the desires of the Id merge with the hubris of the Ego to overtake the limits imposed by the Superego. Either way, *Strangelove* chooses to escape the impotence of Muffley's political waffling by surreptitiously pushing civilization to the brink of world-ending 'wargasm.'

²¹³ Randy Rasmussen, *Stanley Kubrick: Seven Films Analyzed*, p. 14.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 31. Peter Sellers also plays the British soldier Lionel Mandrake; perhaps, the sanest character in the film. With the same actor playing three separate men (a trinity), the film not only carries an element of Warholian repetition, but also of rampant reproduction, or simulacra.

Like General Ripper, it is not until the shackles of diplomacy have been cast aside, that Strangelove finally regains his masculinity, because only when the bombs are dropping does the doctor's once folded body stand erect with a priapic stutter. His stiff cyborg form now rising for the first time just as the world—and the film!—are blown apart in an act of orgasmic obsolescence. Mouth open, lungs screaming, Strangelove not only signals the birth of the cyborg master-race, but also one final act of celebration as the 'Muff' is displaced, and the veracity, vitality, and potent political power of the male phallus is once again reinstated, forced upon, and pushed into the earth. With Gaia raped, the cyborg takes its rightful place as humanity's only heir. "Mein Führer, I can walk!"

The technological transformations and social changes occurring in mid-twentieth America were extremely influential in regards to how we think about and represent the cyborg body. One could argue that these mechanical changes to the human form are the culmination of numerous historical forces that combined to create and activate a man-machine image which has haunted Western culture since the early nineteenth century.²¹⁵ It is no coincidence then that a character so deeply marked by this history should dominate a film about the very processes that birthed the image on which that character is based.

After all, if Dr. Strangelove is any indication of the politics associated with the cyborg body, there is obviously a very clear link between cyborgs, cybernetics, and the dangerous social, cultural, and political climate that sprung from Second World War, because even though NASA and MKULTRA are not responsible for birthing the original notion of human-machine integration, they were instrumental in the creation, promotion, and subsequent development of the creature as a physical possibility. Each organization

²¹⁵ According to Julie Wosk: "During the nineteenth century artist's images of automata became central metaphors for the dreams and nightmares of societies under-going rapid technological change. In a world where labour-saving inventions were expanding human capabilities and where a growing number of people were involved in factory systems calling for rote actions and impersonal efficiency, nineteenth-century artists confronted one of the most profound issues raised by new technologies: the possibility that people's identities and emotional lives would take on the properties and emotional lives of the machines." Julie Wosk, *Breaking Frame: Technology and the Visual Arts in the Nineteenth Century* (Newark: Rutgers University Press, 1994), p. 81. For more on the development of this idea, as well as possible alternative origins for similar modifications to the human animal see: Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siecle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

provided both the theory and the motivation to generate such a body, while the parallel development of digital computing and artificial intelligence supplied the technological base from which to build that self.²¹⁶ It was in the 1960s that the cyborg was named, defined, understood, and invested with purpose. It was here that the image was given a life outside fiction and art, where it acquired the power to exist and participate in the wider world, and essentially became real. It is no wonder then that cyborgs during and after the late 1950s, often carry the same values and ideas regarding gender, violence, sexuality, and embodiment as their Cold War creators, since the image was born from and incubated within this particular context.²¹⁷ Even the cybernetic creatures that exist today tend to bear the same kind of Cold War mentality, since quite a number of our modern man-machines, both fictional and real, still symbolize and refer to the same ideas and events that not only define *Dr. Strangelove*, but also Dr. Strangelove.

In spite of the numerous socio-political shifts which occurred after the Second World War, and despite our subsequent reworking of the human body to encompass a new and contradictory lived experience, Western culture did not suffer a true change in our collective subjectivity or ontology, but only a modification of what we as Westerners already were, or thought we were. Strangelove's journey towards his filmic body is clearly not the sign of a changing consciousness, nor is it representative of a larger social transformation. It does not qualify as a political and subjective reformation, nor does it even carry the potential for such a change, because rather than rejecting hegemonic ideas which support patriarchy, militarism, racism, and exploitation, Dr. Strangelove happily reinforces those concepts by improving

²¹⁶ For further reading on the history of AI Research and development see: Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

²¹⁷ William James further articulates the importance of naming, and thus of *imbuing* and *defining* a concept of thing in his essay, "The Pragmatism of Truth." James writes: "All truth gets verbally built out, stored up, and made available for everyone. Hence we must *talk* consistently just as we must *think* consistently; for both in talk and thought we deal with kinds. Names are arbitrary, but once understood, they must be kept to. We musn't now call Abel 'Cain' or Cain 'Abel.' If we do, we ungear ourselves from the book of Genesis, and from all its connections with the universe of speech and fact down to the present time. We throw ourselves out of whatever truth that whole system may embody" (James, 147) Pynchon picks up on this same idea in *Gravity's Rainbow*, writing: "'Raketemensch!' screams Säure, grabbing the helmet and unscrewing the horns off of it. Names by themselves may be empty, by the *act of naming*..." (Pynchon, 366). William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," *Journal of Philosophy and Science, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 4.6 (March 14, 1907).

the majoritarian system that sustains both him, and his ideas. His cyborgic transformation is not about autonomy or individuality, but a modification based on the confirmation, concentration, continuation, and propagation of the status quo. It is a self rooted in orthodoxy, and the search for supremacy, not in self-knowledge, and the desire for personal sovereignty.

Strangelove's cyborg-self is deeply imbedded within the politics and discourse of the Cold War, making his place within that world as inescapable. He does not rise above America's paranoid political climate, because he is somehow more than human, but instead falls downward towards the centre of that world, as he becomes increasingly involved in its continued operation and existence. Subsequently, the final words of both *Dr. Strangelove* and Dr. Strangelove seem all the more appropriate, as his body was not only conceived by MAD science and incubated by its political system, but also instilled with problematic values and nihilistic goals. In short, *Dr. Strangelove* signifies the ascendancy of American power, and the rise of the Western phallus, even as it illustrates the inevitability of their mutually assured destruction.

As a rule, all cyborgs follow this same path, since all are derived from a single template; a being originally designed as an "exogenously extended organizational complex" specifically adapted to conquer space without the benefit of elaborate tools, suits, or bio domes.²¹⁸ As such, cybernetic bodies are rooted in Cold War paranoia and colonial practice, since the original creature was initially created not only to acquire and exploit for the benefit of empire, but also to eradicate potential competitors. Issues of expansion and exploitation are thus unavoidable elements of the cyborg-self, because even if its creators intended to produce a being outside those concerns, their final product inevitably became a slave to the dominant ideas and anxieties of the culture it sprung from. As Wiener once wrote:

Those of us who have contributed to the new science of cybernetics thus stand in a moral position which is, to say the least, not very comfortable. We have contributed to the initiation of a new science, which, as I have said, embraces technical developments with great possibilities both for

²¹⁸ Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," p. 30.

good and for evil. We can only hand it over into a world that exists about us, and this is the world of Belson and Hiroshima.²¹⁹

Revolution, whether political or subjective, is clearly not part of the cyborg's agenda, because any inherent political leanings must be reflected in its overall representation, and frankly the kind of optimism demonstrated by Haraway does not coincide with a majority of the cyborg bodies found in Western popular culture.²²⁰ In fact, each only serves to further obscure an image which is already difficult to explicate, while simultaneously undermining the progressive feminisms and subjectivities that each theorist is trying to support. Accordingly, the following chapter will attempt to articulate a clear alternative to contemporary visions of cyborg politics, so that the image itself can not only be placed within the correct context, but also the appropriate political framework: a goal which, if successful, will illuminate not only its structure, but also its role within that culture.

²¹⁹ Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, p. 38. J. Robert Oppenheimer is said to have made similar comments regarding nuclear technology after his involvement in the 'Manhattan Project'. The most famous of which is "I am become death, destroyer of worlds", supposedly said directly after the first successful atomic explosion at the New Mexico Trinity Test Site, 16 July 1945. But as scholar James Hijiya also explains: "In 1959 [Oppenheimer] said that every time the United States 'has expressed the view that there is no harm in using the superweapons, provided only that were used against an antagonist who had done wrong, we have been in error.'...nuclear weapons [are] instruments of 'aggression, of surprise, and of terror'; that making armaments was the devil's work'; that the bomb 'mercilessly' dramatized the 'inhumanity and evil of modern war', and that the physicists who built the atomic bomb had 'known sin'; that he himself had blood on his hands." For further reading see: James A Hijiya, "The 'Gita' of J. Robert Oppenheimer," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 144.2, (June 2000), pp. 127-128; For more on Oppenheimer's remark see Len Giovannitti and Fred Freed, *The Decision to Drop the Bomb* (New York: Coward McCann, 1965), p. 197; Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, p. 678. As an aside, I find it strange that two scientists working toward such dissimilar goals should not only make similar statements about their work, but also produce two objects as intimately connected to one another as the cyborg and the A-Bomb.

²²⁰ Optimistic theories on the cyborg, like those of Diane Greco, are based quite heavily on the work of Donna Haraway. As Greco writes: "The cyborg conflates, confuses, and reassembles technology and social reality. Technology provides the tools for interactions with others, and from this interaction, cyborgs (like us) construct narrative histories of selfhood that acknowledge limits of self and other, limits thrown into relief by the very visceral awareness that this technology interpenetrates the body." Diane Greco, *Cyborg: Engineering the Body Electric*, CD-ROM (Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1995).

Part 2: Deciphering Cyborg Politics

3: A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Haraway, *Alien*, and the Politics of Popular Representation

3.1 Pumping Irony

During an interview for the upcoming film *Pumping Iron* in 1976, champion bodybuilder and burgeoning mega star, Arnold Schwarzenegger, said the following:

The greatest feeling you can get in a gym, or the most satisfying feeling you can get in a gym, is the pump. Let's say you train your biceps. Blood is rushing into your muscles, and that's what we call 'the pump.' Your muscles get a really tight feeling like your skin is going to explode any minute. It's really tight, it's like somebody blowing air into your muscles, it just blows up and it feels different. It feels fantastic. It's as satisfying to me as coming is; as having sex with a woman and coming. So can you believe how much I am in heaven? I'm like getting the feeling of coming in the gym. I'm getting the feeling of coming at home. I'm getting the feeling of coming backstage when I pump up, and when I pose out in front of 5000 people, I get the same feeling. So I'm coming day and night. I mean it's terrific, right?²²¹

3.2 Reading a Manifesto for Cyborgs

Nine years later, and mere months after Schwarzenegger's subsequent rebirth in the figure of the first Terminator, Donna Haraway published an article that would not only mark a turning point in contemporary feminist theory, but also the birthing point for the newly emerging field of cyborgology.²²² Written in response to second-wave feminists like Catherine McKinnon, Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" provided a dramatic alternative to the ideas put forward by similar writers from the same period, and by what can only be called other exclusionary feminisms born from the heady days of 1970s.²²³ Building on

²²¹ *Pumping Iron: 25th Anniversary Special Edition*, DVD (HBO Video, 2003).

²²² Every reading of the cyborg body since 1985 has had to include, refute, or at the very least acknowledge Haraway's ideas within the structure of its argument. As such, there are innumerable essays and books indebted to her manifesto. Many of which have been extremely important in the further articulation and development of cyborgology. For further reading on Donna Haraway see: Donna J. Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York, Routledge, 1989); *Donna Haraway Reads the National Geographic on Primates*, dir. Donna J. Haraway (New York: Paper Tiger Television, 1987); *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997); *The Haraway Reader* (New York, Routledge, 2004).

²²³ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 159. Haraway writes: "McKinnon argues that feminism necessarily adopted a different analytical strategy from Marxism, looking first not at the structure of class, but at the structure of sex-gender and its generative relationship,

the work of Chela Sandoval, as well as Haraway's previous research regarding the gendered roots of science in culture, as well as the constructed nature of 'Nature' itself, Haraway argued for the adoption of a subjective position that promoted affinity as opposed to unity, collaboration as opposed to incorporation, and coalition as opposed to what she saw as an emerging socialist-feminist hegemony. One which "achieves its end—the unity of women—by enforcing the experience of, and testimony to, radical non-being."²²⁴ In other words, a theory that inadvertently accomplishes "what Western patriarchy...never succeeded in doing": forcing feminists to accept "the non-existence of women, except as products of men's desire."²²⁵

Haraway sought to achieve these goals by exploring the incongruous and highly masculine fusion of animal and machine, and by professing a kind of "blasphemy" that would not only re-orient feminist theory away from the 'Goddess,' but also find a means of solidifying the various factions within the feminist movement without enforcing one set of values or experiences on the larger whole.²²⁶ Ironically, it was the fragmented structure of the cyborg body

men's constitution and appropriation of men sexually. Ironically, McKinnon's 'ontology' constructs a non subject, a non-being. Another's desire, not the self's labour, is the origin of 'woman.' She therefore develops a theory of consciousness that enforces what can count as 'women's' experience—anything that names sexual violation, indeed, sex itself as far as women be concerned. Feminist practice is the construction of this form of consciousness; that is, the self-knowledge of a self-who-is-not" (158-159). McKinnon writes: "Implicit in feminist theory is a parallel argument: the molding, direction, and expression of sexuality organizes society into two sexes—women and men—which division underlies the totality of social relations. Sexuality is that social process which creates, organizes, expresses, and directs desire, creating the social beings we know as women and men, as their relations create society. As work is to Marxism, sexuality to feminism is socially constructed yet constructing, universal as activity yet historically specific, jointly comprised of matter and mind. As the organized expropriation of the work of some for the benefit of others defines a class-workers—the organized expropriation of the sexuality of some for the use of others defines the sex, woman. Heterosexuality is its structure, gender and family its congealed forms, sex roles its qualities generalized to social persona, reproduction a consequence, and control its issue." Catherine McKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory," *Signs* 7.3 (Spring, 1982), p. 516. For more on McKinnon see, Catherine McKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

²²⁴ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 159. For more on the work of Chela Sandoval see: "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed," *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 407-422; *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

²²⁵ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 159.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149. "This chapter is an attempt to build an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, and materialism. Perhaps more faithful as blasphemy is faithful, than as reverent worship and identification...I know of no better stance to adopt from within the secular-religious, evangelical traditions of United States politics...Blasphemy protects one from the moral majority within...Irony is about humour and serious play. It is also a rhetorical

that provided Haraway with the metaphorical framework by which to congeal and strengthen the position of all women. A template—now propagated by a German Terminator—that would supposedly grant equal space to all perspectives and ideas no matter how diverse or antithetical, and which would therefore fail to facilitate the exclusion of one value system in favour of another: a strategy often employed by white feminists in the name of confederacy.²²⁷ This new framework would strive to create partnerships between divergent factions, producing a relaxed network of affiliated groups that could work toward positive social change while remaining adaptable to fluctuating social, cultural, and political climates. Like the diverse and dualistic structure of the cyborg itself, Haraway's ideas would be inclusive, not exclusive, and as such willing to embrace new methods and new modes of thinking without resorting to the old cry of unity. As Haraway writes:

Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other. The relationships for forming wholes from parts, including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are at issue in the cyborg world. Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos²²⁸

strategy and political method, one I would like to see more honoured within socialist-feminism. At the centre of my ironic faith, my blasphemy, is the image of the cyborg..."

²²⁷ Arnold Schwarzenegger's father, Gustav Schwarzenegger, was a known Nazi. As a member of the Nazi party from March 1, 1938, and a member of the S.A. from May 1, 1939, the elder Schwarzenegger was a "convinced Nazi" well before his home country of Austria was annexed by Germany on March 12, 1938 (*USA Today*). As of now, the details of his war record are unknown, but "Ursula Schwarz, a historian at Vienna's Documentation Center for Austrian Resistance, said she believed Gustav Schwarzenegger's war record was run of the mill for an Austrian of his generation" (*CommonDreams.org*). Nevertheless, the connection exists. For more on Arnold Schwarzenegger's Nazi connections see: "Records: Arnold's Father was Member of Nazi Storm Troops," *USA Today* (August 24, 2003), Accessed 16 November 2007: http://www.usatoday.com/news/politicselections/2003-08-24-arnold-father_x.htm; "Spotlight Thrown on Nazi Past of Schwarzenegger's Father," *CommonDreams.org* (August 25, 2003), Accessed 16 November 2007: <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0825-06.htm>

²²⁸ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 151. For Haraway solidarity does not require unity because unity is a fiction. Unity of thought and opinion lead only to stagnation and the patriarchal traps of heritage and tradition. Elements the cyborg manages to escape, supposedly, because it resists wholeness in favour of fragmentation; thereby avoiding the centre in favour of the margins. Accordingly, liminality becomes position of strength, since it allows a person to critique, appropriate, and disrupt the social order while remaining simultaneously separate and malleable. To quote Haraway: "Stripped of identity the bastard race teaches us about the power of the margins... Women of color have transformed... the evil mother of masculinist fear into the originally literate mother who teaches survival. This is not just literary deconstruction, but liminal transformation" (176-177).

The Terminator, which Haraway later described as “the sign of the beast on the face of postmodern culture, the sign of the Sacred Image of the Same”, is certainly not the body Haraway had in mind.²²⁹ However, even now almost twenty-five years after it first appeared, Schwarzenegger’s “mensch-machine” still haunts the feasibility and purpose of her manifesto; hanging there, just beyond the fringe of her ideas, even as she seeks to subvert its power by pulling the cyborg away from the context of the Cold War.²³⁰ Encouraging her fellow scholars to not only re-evaluate the supposedly genderless nature of contemporary technologies, but to also resignify the cyborg body by constructing a fresh set of cybernetic values in order to illuminate the gendered realities of all technology. An act that would ideally “strike fear into the...supersavers of the new right...[by] both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories.”²³¹ Terminators beware.

Clearly, these are values which seek to place the cyborg beyond the work of Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, as well as beyond the reach of both Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, by bestowing a subjective position contrary to the patriarchal overtones of psychoanalysis. As Haraway once remarked during an interview with both Constance Penley and Andrew Ross in 1991:

As a strategic and emotional matter, I really am hostile to the Oedipal accounts and their mutants, not because I don’t recognize their power, but because I am too *convinced* of their power. Again, it’s the problem of being in the belly of the monster and looking for another story to tell.²³²

It was this search for new stories that made Haraway’s manifesto so significant. Moreover, it was her articulation and subsequent skewing of the cyborg body into the realm of feminist theory that really laid the foundation for

²²⁹ Donna J. Haraway, “Cyborgs and Symbionts,” p. xv.

²³⁰ The German mensch-machine is manifest not only in Arnold Schwarzenegger, but also in the music of Kraftwerk, and even in the British band Ultravox! For example, Kraftwerk’s 1978 album is actually called *Die Mensch-Machine*, while Ultravox’s 1977 LP *Ultravox!* contains the song, “I Want to Be a Machine”; a title which alludes to a very famous 1963 statement, in which Andy Warhol declared the same desire.

²³¹ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 181. Strangely, Haraway’s reference to space stories is not directly connected to the Clynes and Kline paper, “Cyborgs and Space.” Haraway had never seen the article until it was shown to her by Chris Hables Gray in the early 1990s, see: Donna J. Haraway, “Cyborgs and Symbionts,” p. xix, note 2.

²³² Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs at Large,” p. 14.

the further development and study of the cyborg in general. Today it remains a near-universally accepted fact by feminists the world over that technology can no longer be left to the pleasure of the Superpower and Übermensch. Thanks to Haraway's manifesto, "Nature" is no longer recognized as "resistant to patriarchal capitalism," because as Constance Penley put it, "women...had better start using technologies before technologies start using them."²³³

Donna Haraway defines the cyborg as a "hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction."²³⁴ Reiterating an obvious truth since the man-machine is not simply a cybernetic monster comprised of organic and inorganic components, but also *the* image of "our time". As Haraway writes, today "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short we are cyborgs."²³⁵ After all, images of human-machine integration saturate almost every aspect of our culture; infecting not just narrative, but also the workplace and the home. Even in 1995, about 25 million people in the United States alone were

estimated to be cyborgs in one form or another, including those with electronic pacemakers, artificial limbs, drug implant systems, implanted corneal lenses, and artificial skin. A much higher percentage [were] involved in jobs which [made] them metaphoric cyborgs, [such as computer programming, robotic surgery, and basically any other profession involving prolonged exposure to, and/or mediation through, high technology].²³⁶

This statistic ignores an even larger percentage exposed to cybernetic imagery on a day to day basis; people who see and hear cyborgs in innumerable media such as film, television, music, advertising, literature, art, and architecture. Moreover, given the rise in computer sales and use, as well as jobs involving machinery and technology, not to mention the tremendous scientific and technological advancements which have occurred since the mid 1990s, these are percentages which could only have increased since the survey was first performed.²³⁷

²³³ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large," p. 12.

²³⁴ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 149.

²³⁵ Ibid, p. 150.

²³⁶ N. Katherine Hayles, "The Life Cycle of Cyborgs," p. 322.

²³⁷ Since the competition of that particular survey in the mid-1990s, there have been a number of advances which have only further linked the human body to concepts of information, data streams, and the increasing collusion of the bio and mechanical. For example, the human

Cyborgs populate our everyday lives, and most of the time, they are so ubiquitous that we do not notice them. A simple search through one's memory will reveal filmic versions of human-machine amalgamation stretching from *Metropolis* (1926) to *Star Wars* (1977) to the *The Terminator* (1984). In television, there was the cybernetic bargain known as *Six Million Dollar Man* (1973-1978) as well as his less successful, and somewhat hysterical, female counterpart, *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978). There is also the murderous Borg race of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994), and the stringently logical Cybermen who first appeared on the UK's long-running *Doctor Who* series in 1966. In the field of popular music, Kraftwerk are perhaps the best known representations of human-machine integration; often presenting themselves as artificial people and/or products. Such self-representation complements Kraftwerk's somewhat unusual view of themselves, since they refuse to be seen as musicians, but rather as scientists.

More interestingly, contemporary architecture is also populated with cyborgic forms; designs which combine curved organic shapes with both high-tech construction techniques and materials such as glass. Notably, the link between cybernetics and architecture is not a new idea. Cybernetician Gordon Pask postulated just such a connection nearly thirty-six years ago in his paper, "The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics." Of course, like any true cybernetician Pask viewed the connection between the two disciplines in a systematic sense, using terms like "releasers" and "feedback" to describe buildings and constructed space. As Pask writes in relation to Spanish architect Antoni Gaudí:

genome was completed in April 2003, and reduced DNA to a computer code. The completion of such a project has strong similarities to that of The Visible Human Project. Another undertaking by the medical sciences which sought to better understand the human body and its anatomy by slicing up the cadaver of a condemned prisoner into thousands of transparent slivers, and then scanning those slices into a computerized database. Not only translating the human form into a kind of text, but also transforming it irrevocably into something illusive, incorporeal, and totally non-existent outside the confines of a computer—and even then, only partially. As Catherine Waldby writes of the Visible Human: "Just as Da Vinci's ratiocinative anatomies have served as icons for humanist knowledge and technical modernity, so the Visible Human Project has been taken up as a new iconography of 'Man' for the virtual future, a future in which all content, even the mysterious materiality of the human body, can be hyper-mediated, transported and traversed by computer. It circulates in the media as evidence of the near future, token of empowering biotechnical innovations yet to come" Catherine Waldby, *The Visible Human Project: Informatic Bodies and Posthuman Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2000). p. 4. For more on the Visible Human Project see the website for the U.S. National Library of Medicine: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible_human.html

[Cybernetic architecture] reaches maturity in Gaudí's work, especially the Parque Guell which, at a symbolic level, is one of the most cybernetic structures in existence. As you explore the piece, statements are made in terms of releasers, your exploration is guided by specially contrived feedback, and variety (surprise value) is introduced at appropriate points to make you explore.²³⁸

Later, architect John Frazer would align himself and his work with an aesthetic philosophy deeply indebted to cybernetics, and thus to those texts produced previously by Gordon Pask. Indeed, as Frazer wrote in his book, *An Evolutionary Architecture*:

An evolutionary architecture will exhibit metabolism. It will enjoy a thermodynamically open relationship with the environment in both a metabolic and a socio-economic sense. It will maintain stability with the environment by negative feedback interactions and promote evolution in its employment of positive feedback (Frazer, 253).²³⁹

As such, the cyborg has not only become one of the most pervasive and powerful images of the 20th and 21st Centuries, but as Haraway declares, it has become “our ontology; it gives us our politics.”²⁴⁰

Yet, what are those politics and upon what are they based? Personally, I am not convinced the cyborg, its subjectivity, and the politics therein, are as revolutionary, or as beneficial as Haraway would have us believe. Judging from cyborg representation over the last 60 years, the image often aligns itself with the absolute inverse of Haraway's innovative and potentially valuable brand of feminism. Indeed, even though her readings of certain feminist science-fiction texts are for the most part, correct; her assumption that all cyborgs can and must naturally follow suit is absolutely untrue. Bear in mind, despite Haraway's acknowledgement that cyborgs are in essence, “the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism,” she dismisses

²³⁸ Gordon Pask, “The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics,” *Cyber_Reader*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), p. 78.

²³⁹ John Frazer, “An Evolutionary Architecture,” *Cyber_Reader*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), p. 253. For more on the connection between cybernetics and architectural design see: Marcos Novak, “Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace,” *Cyberspace First Steps*, ed. Michael Benedickt (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Neil Spiller, *Digital Dreams: Architecture and the New Alchemic Technologies* (London: Ellipses, 1998); *Maverick Deviations (Architectural Works)* (London: Wiley/Academy, 2000); Neil Spiller, “Vacillating Objects,” *Cyber_Reader*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), pp. 306-309.

²⁴⁰ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 150.

the implications of this potential bombshell far too quickly.²⁴¹ And despite her assertions that cyborgs often challenge dualisms “systematic to the logics and practices of the domination of women, people of colour, nature, workers, [and] animals”, she has ignored the fact that the cyborg itself is a walking-talking dualism.²⁴² One, which in spite of an inherent ability to blur and corrode the boundaries of its own internal dichotomies, nevertheless enforces the values and ideals of a culture based on the principles of self over other, mind over body, culture over nature, male over female, whole over part, civilized over primitive. Behold Exhibit A(lien).

3.3 Reading a Manifesto for Misogyny

Ash rips a clump of hair from Ripley’s head. On the floor, she “hurriedly moves on all fours trying to get out of [her attacker’s] reach”. Yet, before she can run away, Ash “grabs her by the back of her flight suit, and with superhuman strength, throws her against a wall.”²⁴³ Ash is standing over Ripley who now lies on a bed surrounded by pornographic photos and female pinups. With his eyes blinking rapidly, he rolls a XXX magazine into a tight hard tube, and begins to stuff it down Ripley’s throat (Figure 17). She awakes under the sudden pressure and tries to fight off the attack, but once again Ash is much too strong. As the magazine starts to penetrate further, the sound of Ripley’s muffled cries brings her colleagues, Parker (a black man) and Lambert (a white woman), into the room. Parker picks up a fire extinguisher and strikes the abuser. Ash releases the magazine and Ripley is freed, but the force of the blow causes Ash to whirl and thrash about the ship. Spewing whiteness from his mouth in an uncontrollable fit, as his damaged and flailing body emits “a high-pitched squealing sound, proclaiming his alienness,” while his neck continues to spew liquid goo into every corner of the bedroom.²⁴⁴ This is a male orgasm gone horribly wrong; or perhaps more disturbingly, horribly right.

²⁴¹ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 151.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 177.

²⁴³ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley* (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 48.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 49.

Again Parker hits Ash with the extinguisher, and this time manages to rip off his head. As Ash's body falls to the floor it squirms and convulses while endlessly spraying white glop from its throat. To stop it, Parker beats Ash more and more while the white man's inhuman physique thrashes about in what is; a) either a vain attempt to resist the black man's blows; or b) the orgasmic throes of homo-erotic masochism. Either way, the struggle continues until Ash is subdued. With the officer's apparently lifeless body still spurting, and with Parker now covered in Ash's whiteness, the black man remarks: "Jesus... It's a robot. Ash is a goddamn robot."²⁴⁵

In truth, Ash is a godless cyborg; a man "[c]ast violently out of the robotic closet" to reveal a creature whose behaviour and appearance are not simply "contextualized as inhuman transgression," but also irrevocably coded as that of rapist.²⁴⁶ Judging from his violent treatment of Ripley, and his subsequent expulsion of white ejaculate all over Parker's black body, Ash clearly imbues a number of disturbing sexual fetishes, as well as some very telling racist tendencies. Propensities which seek to erase, assimilate, incorporate, and/or destroy all those deemed to be threatening or inferior. However, before we investigate Ash's representation as rapist, as well as his inherent racism, we should first examine his basic role as cyborg within *Alien* through his familial relationship with two very important characters also trapped aboard the *Nostromo*.²⁴⁷ In doing so, this discussion can not only provide a better understanding of the man-machine's role within the film, but

²⁴⁵ *Alien*, dir. Ridley Scott (20th Century Fox, 1979).

²⁴⁶ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 49.

²⁴⁷ The name of the ship in *Alien* is also synonymous with *Nostromo* by Joseph Conrad. Indeed, like Conrad's novel, *Alien* also takes place in the space-born equivalent of a mining town. After all, Ridley Scott's *Nostromo* is described as a "commercial towing vessel" lugging 20 million tonnes of "raw ore." Presumably, the load is being towed back to Earth for use by "The Company." The reason for such a striking literary parallel is fairly obvious. Conrad's novel is about capitalism and responsibility, not to mention exploitation and greed. In many ways, *Alien* is about those very same themes, although Scott's film is far more oblique in its approach. When making *Aliens* in 1986, Cameron would expand upon the original film's Conradian references by not only giving us more information about the Company—which is itself, a reference to "The Company" in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*—but also by means of more subtle inclusions. For example, the name of the military vessel transporting Ripley and the Marines to planet LV-426 is called the *Sulaco*. The ship is named after the town in Conrad's *Nostromo*. For more see: Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007); *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Penguin Classic, 1994).

also better explicate any underlying political affinities attached to this particular character.

For instance, today there remains a widely accepted belief within Sci-Fi cinema studies that *Alien* is more about gender, reproduction, genetics, and family than it is about gore and guts, and considering Ridley Scott's representation of the cyborg, the ship, its crew, and the monster within, this idea is absolutely correct since the movie itself reads like a rather chilling parody of the old maxim: "It takes a village to raise a child." After all, not only is Ash a sexually abusive misogynist, but also a 'man' who throughout the film, is consistently fashioned into the role of Father: the vital counterpart to the ship's negligent and all-knowing computer system, otherwise known as MU/TH/UR.²⁴⁸

More than any other motif, parental and Mother imagery in particular pervade Ridley Scott's *Alien*.²⁴⁹ They infect the gales of unfamiliar planets, and permeate even the nothingness of space, defining the relationships generated between each and every character; whether male, female, alien or otherwise. In fact, the film's maternal themes are so pervasive that even the men in this movie are not only contained within, and controlled by the limits of a giant metallic womb, but are also menaced by their own reformation into potential Mothers, as each of them is transformed into a disembodied uterus for the film's namesake. Producing a mere inkling of what feminist scholar, Barbara Creed, once coined as a manifestation of the "monstrous-feminine."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ MU/TH/UR 6000 is the ship's centralized command, control, and communications system, or C3I. C3I has its roots in Cold War discourse and was founded during the late 1940s and early 50s in order to manage America's enormous military, both in wartime and peacetime, through digital computing.

²⁴⁹ Points about birth and communal child rearing are represented quite clearly in the way the Alien reproduces. After all, even though Ash and MU/TH/UR never gave birth to the creature, it was implanted in a member of the crew, who was then treated as a surrogate Father/Mother/Egg, only to be discarded once the Alien burst from his chest. Once out, Ash and MU/TH/UR ensured the monster's continued survival, and perhaps even provided the creature with food by marking the entire crew as "expendable."

²⁵⁰ Shown throughout the film as "a complex representation of women as archaic mother," the most prominent feature of Barbara Creed's theory of the "monstrous-feminine" is her articulation of the colossal womb. A reproductive site that is simultaneously generative and acidic; a kind of uterine womb/tomb that not only gives birth, but also threatens to consume, "devour and reincorporate her offspring." In many ways, the presence of such a dominant and destructive feminine archetype continually reaffirms the presence of the Vagina Dentate; the dark female orifice that threatens to remove one's manhood, even as it confirms one's masculinity. After all, aside from the mouth of the Alien itself, the MU/TH/UR embodied within the Nostromo occupies this Freudian nightmare more than any other presence within

Creed's term specifically refers to a grotesque female archetype in which the power of the Mother is continually reaffirmed, while her all-encompassing Motherhood, or womb/tomb, is vilified and perverted to the point of nightmarish snuff film. As film critic David Thomson writes:

What made audiences scream in 1979, what had some people vomiting as they ran away, was the eruption from within. For I think very few people then foresaw that the monster was going to demand birth from the body. We had never seen one breaking out of another...We had not really understood the title *Alien* until this scene, and the absolute parasitic subduing of one organism by another...the body seemed very secure then. And the nausea, the gulping, the retching, came in the sudden upheaval of understanding, of what had been done down Kane's throat. For the man had been made pregnant.²⁵¹

Ash 'the cyborg' and his partner 'the ship,' are a strange familial pair to be sure. Especially since the womb that produced their alien 'Son' is external to both their respective bodies. Yet make no mistake, both are members of the same parental coupling, and each combine to gestate, nurture, and protect their progeny. Kane, that "poor bastard" who died on the dinner table, is merely a surrogate.

3.4 Reading a Manifesto for Rapists

The Alien is not only the violent centre of Ridley Scott's future family unit, but a being whose sleek and phallic body also acts as the perfect complement, double, and/or reflection to Ash's hyper-masculine cyborg self.²⁵² For

the film, because the ship contains, embodies, and reflects a copious amount of "womb-like imagery", such as "long winding tunnels leading to inner chambers...rows of hatching eggs, the body of the mother-ship, the voice of the life-support system, and the birth of the Alien" itself. Moreover, the MU/TH/UR-ship is also filled with warm, soothing, and ethereal spaces, as well as dark passages bordered by sharp metallic sphincters which not only squeal as they contract, but presumably, also sever as they tighten and close. Inevitably, Creed's theory of the monstrous-feminine is even present in the poster for *Alien*; in the abject, oozing, and acidic egg with the vaginal cleft at its base: a dark vagina that not only threatens to produce, but perhaps, to also continually reproduce a race of horrible, misshapen, unnatural, inhuman monsters. Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 7. For more on the monstrous-feminine see: Barbara Creed, "Alien and the Monstrous Feminine," *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Annette Kuhn (New York: Verso, 1990), pp. 128-141; Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁵¹ David Thomson, *The Alien Quartet* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 49.

²⁵² MU/TH/UR and the ship's science officer, Ash, combine their forces to acquire, gestate, and protect the Alien killer. The two stop at nothing to ensure the Alien's survival, even rescinding all other priorities, including the health of the crew, to achieve this end. In this sense, these two characters are the Alien's adoptive parents. The fact that Ash is the only

example, one is a penis made manifest, and as such, the epitome of naked masculine sexual aggression; an extraterrestrial monster that is constantly fulfilling its wish for domination, penetration, and bodily violation; the other is a carcass literally brimming with ejaculate, its overt sexuality suggesting the Son follows the Father, as there are several physical and behaviour links joining the two characters.²⁵³

The relationship between the cyborg and the Alien is nothing if not disturbing, because both the Father and the Son constitute differing halves of a larger whole. As if each piece of this bizarre pair plays an essential role in the production of what can only be seen as the ultimate rape fantasy. That is, the fabrication of a huge phallic erection, the endless ejaculation thereof, as well as the domination and sexual violation of the movie's only two women, thereby. After all, the Son is a monster coded as male, a body constructed from a stiff and impenetrable exterior that can puncture and dissolve through anything in the known universe. Moreover, it is also a creature whose jaws literally drip with sexual lubricant, and whose tendons are composed of shredded condoms.²⁵⁴ The Son has a body made for sex, with a form impossibly hard and at the ready, but unfortunately, one which also lacks the necessary 'seed' to complete its primary function. Conversely, Ash carries nothing but his seed,

consistent character on the ship with access to MU/TH/UR, and the only one to whom MU/TH/UR discloses everything to, only compounds their close familial relationship.

²⁵³ There is also the possibility that Ash could be construed as the 'Son' rather than the 'Father,' since as Gallardo and Smith point out, he often relays information and follows orders "like a dutiful son." However, this model does not work nearly as well, because from a psychoanalytic perspective Ash never follows an oedipal trajectory when forced into the role of Son. Whereas, a decidedly oedipal relationship is present with Ash as Father, Alien as Son, and MU/TH/UR as—of course—the Mother. After all, the Alien crawls around inside MU/TH/UR like a child forcing itself back into the safety of the womb. Moreover, we can only presume that the Alien would also kill Ash if the two ever met, since the creature shows no mercy to all humanoid life-forms. Furthermore, if we were to assume Ash is the Son, then the question remains, where does the Alien fall into the film's familial dynamic? The Alien could be construed as Kane's son, but this is not only a faulty supposition, but also a rather clumsy one, since it creates a very unwieldy family tree filled with half-brothers, and distant relations. Instead, it would be more appropriate to stick with my original formulation and label Kane as a kind of surrogate pod—an egg, which both Ash and MU/TH/UR helped lay, nurture, and then discard. Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 29.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 26. As Gallardo and Smith note: "Special effects wizard Carlo Rimbaldi was called in to make the [Alien's] head. Appropriately, for such an obviously phallic creature, 'six stretched and shredded condoms doubled as tendons' to allow the Alien's lips to curl...and its jaws [were] smeared in KY jelly [a sexual lubricant] before shooting." For more information see the made-for-TV documentary: *The Alien Saga*, dir. Brett Zachy (20th Century Fox, 2002).

futilely striving to penetrate others with his hopelessly soft body, so that he can not only ejaculate, but presumably, also violate and impregnate.

Inevitably, the film's *alienation* of *Erection* and *Ejaculation*, of noun and verb, ensures that such an aggressive merger and monolithic manifestation of masculine power will never occur between Father and Son. At least not in the world of *Alien*, since the physical estrangement between the cyborg and the monster-phallus signifies an enormous sense of lack within each individual self. Indeed, even though both creatures are powerful males, each is ultimately fragmented and impotent, because neither retains enough of their manhood to retain the title of Man. Strangely, some theorists have taken this point and misconstrued it as proof of a "third sex" within the film franchise.²⁵⁵ Framing both Ash and Alien as androgynous bodies typifying both male and female characteristics, insisting, as Gallardo and Smith do, that even if

Ash is gendered [as] male... he cannot properly be described as having a 'sex' at all. Even if he does have a penis and testes, they are not real biological organs and serve no real biological function. His 'sex' would serve a performative purpose only, allowing him to pass as a normal male in tight quarters.²⁵⁶

Such a formulation would naturally align Ash with Haraway's manifesto, since she also maintains that cyborgs are "creatures in a post-gendered world" and that they have "no truck with bi-sexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity."²⁵⁷ Yet, the notion of a third or "post-gendered" sex within *Alien* is ultimately faulty, because the idea treats the film far too literally. In truth, Ash is a male. He acts like a male, looks like a male, and performs sexually as a male—albeit an impotent male. The fact that his penis is not a natural organ is irrelevant. It is there. And if it does not exist physically, then he is certainly laying claim to the patriarchal rights inherent to that appendage through acts of violence, feminization, and rape. The very absence or unnaturalness of the penis merely makes his inherent lack all the more sinister. Rape after all, is an act of the profoundly inadequate,

²⁵⁵ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 50.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 51.

²⁵⁷ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 150.

since as a feat of violence it is rooted in a “[man’s] sense of psychological weakness toward women.”²⁵⁸ As Celia Farber remarked during an interview with Camille Paglia:

In the case of rape, a man has to use brute force to obtain something that a woman has—her very sex. So naturally she’s weaker physically, and will always be oppressed by him physically. But in that moment when he decides that the only way he can get what he wants from her emotionally, or sexually, or whatever, is to rape her, he is confessing to a weakness that is all encompassing. She is abused, but he is utterly tragic and pathetic. One is temporary and the other is permanent.²⁵⁹

Positing the cyborg as a rapist, which on the surface is an extremely powerful role, only serves to compound the figure’s innate sense of lack, and its desire to fill that lack by means of gross overcompensation. Because even as a sex offender exerts power to confirm or assert his own masculinity he is also simultaneously verifying that he has none.²⁶⁰ Accordingly, Ash’s body is not simply incomplete, but also driven by a desire to mend that fragmentation through massive overcompensation, and to essentially repair itself by enforcing the illusion of wholeness on its varied and broken parts.²⁶¹ Like a child

²⁵⁸ Camille Paglia, “Rape and Modern Sex War,” *Sex, Art, and American Culture: Essays* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 52.

²⁵⁹ Camille Paglia, “The Rape Debate, Continued,” *Sex, Art, and American Culture: Essays* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 52. As an aside, I should note that using Camille Paglia’s views on rape is not without some danger. For instance, are the psychological effects of rape really temporary as Paglia and Farber assert? I doubt it. Yet, even if Paglia’s views on rape are somewhat suspect, her thoughts on the rapist are in many ways absolutely correct, and therefore worth consideration. For a few responses to Camille Paglia’s highly controversial comments on the subject of rape and male sexuality see: Leslie Rebecca Bloom, “A Feminist Reading of *Men’s Health*: Or, When Paglia Speaks, the Media Listens,” *Journal of Medical Humanities* 18.1 (December 1997), pp. 59-73; Helen Benedict, *Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Beth Loffreda, “Of Stallions and Sycophants: Camille Paglia’s Sexual Personae,” *Social Text* 30 (1992), pp. 121-124; Sue O’Sullivan, “Camille Paglia’s *Sex, Art, and American Culture*,” *Feminist Review* 49 (Spring, 1995), pp. 108-114. For a history on the damaging treatment of women by the judicial system after rape see: Peggy Reeves Sanday, *A Woman Scorned: Acquaintance Rape on Trial* (New York: Doubleday, 1996); Stephen J. Schulhofer, *Unwanted Sex: The Culture of Intimidation and the Failure of Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Andrew E. Taslitz, *Rape and the Culture of the Courtroom* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

²⁶⁰ Jonathan Goldberg writes: “For excessive coming...disconnects phallus and penis. In such dispersal, the body itself is shattered even as it is built.” Jonathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities,” p. 236.

²⁶¹ In their 1972 book, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari make the following remark: “...the machine remains desire, an investment of desire whose history unfolds, by way of the primary repression and the return of the repressed” (41). Although Deleuze and Guattari are referring directly to the idea of “desiring-machines,” or a mechanisms which are “proof of the loss or repression of desire”, their statement can still be applied to the body of Ash (40). After all, as a synthetic person Ash is not only a product of

undergoing the mirror phase, both the rapist and the cyborg cling to their own form of the Symbolic drama, rushing from “insufficiency to anticipation”. In the words of Jacques Lacan, such an effort

manufactures for the subject, captive to the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality which we shall call orthopaedic, and to the assumption, finally, of the armour of an alienating identity, which will stamp the rigidity of its structure on the whole of the subject's mental development.²⁶²

To put it simply, Ash not only seeks to create an overall identity, but to also impose a feeling of unity upon his person through the subjugation of other people and his environment. Unfortunately, this unity is always temporary since a rapist must always take (his) sex from another, and thus continually recreate and/or reassert his own sense of self by reliving the same scenario over and over again. Thus, contrary to the views proposed by Haraway's manifesto, women will *always* be “the resource for appropriation or incorporation” by the rapist-man-machine, because “the relationships for forming wholes from parts, including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are [*never*] at issue in the cyborg world.”²⁶³

There are five scenes within *Alien* involving overt acts of sexual abuse against both men and women. Three of which are successful, two of which are attempted. Two of those violations are committed by the Father, while the remainder belongs to the Son. In each instance, MU/TH/UR remains distant and uninvolved, as her apparent inaction serves only to condone the actions of both her partner and their progeny. Hence, the film's familial

The Company, but in relation to the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, he is also “product” which has had the process of production “grafted” on to it by the process of production itself (39-40). Ash is both a desiring-machine, and a machine that desires. For more see: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004).

²⁶² Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the ‘I’ Function,” *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), p. 4. To clarify, Lacan refers to this stage of development as ‘orthopaedic,’ because a child in this phase of life is underdeveloped, and therefore incapable of living without help from another. It also refers to the initial stages of the child's burgeoning identity, because during this time the child's sense of self-awareness is still being formed. For a comprehensive reading of the mirror phase and its implications see: Elizabeth Grosz, “Psychoanalysis and the Body,” *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999). For more on the life and work of Jacques Lacan see: Jane Gallop, *Reading Lacan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Elisabeth Roundinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

²⁶³ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 151.

subtext can be formulated as such: Abusive Father (Cyborg) + Negligent Mother (C3I) = Rapist Son (Phallus). Predictably, Lt. Ellen Ripley, the film's female protagonist and feminist heroine, is subjected to at least two counts of attempted rape by both the Father and the Son. In the first instance, Ripley manages to escape, but only after succumbing to a forced act of fellatio from a eunuch cyborg. Luckily, she is able to break Ash's grip before his orgasmic climax, thereby avoiding the taboo, abject, and possibly incestuous violation of being forcibly contaminated by another's bodily fluids. Kane, on the other hand, and Parker in particular, as the film's only non-white, are not nearly so fortunate.

Ripley's second sexual assault occurs at the end of the film at the hands of the Alien-Son. It is here, on the deck of an escape pod named the *Narcissus* that elements from two previous rape scenes are played out simultaneously.²⁶⁴ First, the Son's effort to 'complete' Ripley's previous abuse at the hands of his Father; and second, the Son's desire to relive his previous violation of Lambert; the ship's only other female crewmember. In this final scene between Ripley and the Alien, the violent desires of both the Father and the Son are aligned along a single trajectory. Binding the characters inextricably, as they share a wish to not only penetrate Ripley's "hard-body," but to also satiate a mutual need to meld death and desire in the act of physical pleasuring.²⁶⁵ To quote Harvey Greenberg's description of the movie's final scene:

²⁶⁴ The work of Joseph Conrad appears once more in *Alien*. This time the film is referring to Conrad's 1897 novella *The Nigger of 'The Narcissus'*, which is about the crew of a merchant ship sailing from Bombay to London. Again, the parallels between Scott's movie and Conrad's fiction are hard to miss, especially since themes of isolation pervade Conrad's novella. After all, Scott's escape vessel is a designed for a single occupant. There might also be a connection in terms of crew numbers between each vessel, because aboard Conrad's *Narcissus* there are eight sailors, while aboard Scott's *Nostromo* there are an equal number of occupants, if one includes the Alien. For more see: Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of 'The Narcissus'* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007); Norris W. Yates, "Social Comment in the *Nigger of Narcissus*," *PMLA* 79.1 (March, 1964), pp. 183-185.

²⁶⁵ The "hard-body" is not a natural body, but is instead akin to a kind of "techno-body" drawn from the "technique or technology" of bodybuilding. The conceit of the human hard body, whether male or female, was a major theme in Hollywood during the 1980s, often reflecting a significant cultural and political shift felt under the Reagan administration. Although, *Alien* was released one year before Ronald Reagan took office, Ripley's lean and muscular frame, as well as the courage and level-headedness which allowed her to dispose of the Alien, certainly codes her as a hard bodied hero. Or at the very least, as a sort of proto-type for the ultimate hard-body: namely, Velasquez, the female 'grunt' in the sequel *Aliens*. For more on the hard-body see: Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen*

Unlike the blinding speed of its earlier assaults, [the Alien] moves slowly, languorously. It stretches its phallic head out, as if preening. Ripley, her horrified gaze fixed hypnotically upon it, retreats stealthily into the equipment locker. It extends a ramrod tongue [the phallus within the phallus], tipped with hinged teeth from which drips luminescent slime (KY jelly!), and hisses voluptuously. The very air is charged with the palpable threat of rape—and worse.²⁶⁶

Concordantly, there are several filmic elements within this scene, which betray the use of XXX photographic techniques. As Gallardo and Smith point out, many of the shots, especially those of Ripley semi-naked and in the closet, are filmed from below “with a hand held camera in extreme close-up focusing on the face, vagina, and phallus [Alien], all to which [the director] will add a soundtrack featuring panting and climactic screams a bit later.”²⁶⁷ Moreover, without any ‘protection’ by which to counter the Alien, whether it be weapons to ward off physical harm, or clothes to guard against the male gaze, Ripley is left with nothing but her sex (Figure 18). The film’s once formidable heroine is now rendered totally vulnerable to an assault in nothing but her spotless white panties and extra small undershirt. Any shred of subjectivity, power, or personhood that she once had has now been literally ‘stripped’ away, leaving only weakness, subjection, and objectification.²⁶⁸

As the creature slowly approaches Ripley, an identical soundtrack to the one played during Lambert’s violation sounds in the background. Thereby, helping to “re-create the scene as a sexual encounter,” and as such further embed our heroine in the midst of an archetypal rape-slasher scenario, in

Ripley, p. 85; Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

²⁶⁶ Harvey R. Greenberg, “Reimagining the Gargoyle: Psychoanalytic Notes on *Alien*,” *Close Encounters: Film Feminism and Science Fiction*, ed. Constance Penley et al (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 83-84. Note: it is interesting that the idea of the phallus within the phallus echoes the interior of Rocket 00000 at the end of *Gravity’s Rainbow*; the hyper-masculine recalled.

²⁶⁷ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith. *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 56.

²⁶⁸ Sigourney Weaver describes the scene as such: “You’re almost seeing me through the alien’s eyes. Suddenly I go from a dark green animal to a pink and white animal. Ridley and I had so much fun working out the ending. There were so many different endings. One of them was that the alien would surprise me and I would run into the closet where I’d take off my suit and put on another. So there would have been a moment when the alien would see me between suits and be fascinated. Because the alien isn’t evil. It’s just following its natural instincts to reproduce through whatever living organisms are around it.” David Thomson, *The Alien Quartet*, pp. 70-71.

which the Man with the Knife approaches the “Final Girl” who seemingly, has no place left to run.²⁶⁹ With the slow movements of the Son now echoing his previous performance with Lambert, we as audience members cannot help but recall the image of her small form frozen in terror as the creature stood above her *fully erect* for the first time. In both scenes, the Son’s teeth are bared and hissing; the KY jelly once smeared across its jaw now dripping from both his phallic tongue, and penis-like head. Of course, while the former is a bona-fide rape-murder, the latter can only be classified as attempted. After all, in the scene depicting the Alien’s successful violation of Lambert, Parker-the-male-protector is quickly dispatched leaving the girl to cower in a corner, terrified and screaming, as her hysteria merely helps to further embed the monster in a position of violent physical dominance.

The creature plays with her, moving languidly toward Lambert, until the monster finally ensnares her leg with a long hard tail, thereby solidifying its stance as a rapist through the manner in which it kills her. Namely, by snaking its limb between her legs, and then sweeping the appendage upward to apply an overtly sexual, if not obscure deathblow. Fortunately, “the audience does not get a chance to see what [happens] to [Lambert], but the sounds of [her] hyperventilating broadcast over the intercom are strongly reminiscent of the grunts and heavy breathing [that occur] during sex.”²⁷⁰ Yet unlike Lambert, Ripley’s experience in successfully extricating herself from the violent advances of the film’s familial unit has taught our heroine how to defend herself against similar attacks. The trick, as she learned from the destruction of Ash, is to acquire and assume the Phallus; to become a symbolic male by wielding a sword or a gun, and then by repaying the hostility inflicted upon one’s person by essentially raping the offender.²⁷¹ Because just as Lambert punctured the cyborg-Father with a metallic rod to save her friends, Ripley escalates to a slightly more effective weapon, when she arms herself

²⁶⁹ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, pp. 56-57. The mixture of sex and death in this final scene becomes even more palpable as “Ripley pants heavily in her spacesuit, her eyes half closed in what could be interpreted as either terror or ecstasy with very little stretching of the imagination” (57).

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁷¹ The assumption of the phallus by a violated female becomes even clearer in the James Cameron sequel, *Aliens*, where Ripley goes back to planet LV-426, assumes a weapon-phallus, and then takes revenge for the rape of her life against an entire race of Alien sex offenders. *Aliens*, dir. James Cameron (20th Century Fox, 1986).

with a mini-harpoon gun against the Alien-Son. Apparently, in the early stages of phallus-envy, a girl has to start small in order to ‘hang’ with the ‘big boys’ later on, since Ripley’s final triumph over the Alien finishes with her minor penetration of the Son, just as Lambert’s victory over Ash ends with her parallel penetration of the Father; a blow which she incidentally administers from behind (read: anal).

Subsequently, instances of female violation are mirrored only by an equal number of forced feminizations to the male body, because just as Ripley and Lambert triumphed over their respective aggressors with the acquisition of a symbolic phallus, so do Father and Son rape their way through the ship by remaking men into valueless non-men. Kane, the Alien’s first victim and the ship’s Executive Officer, is the epitome of male emasculation through forced feminization (Figure 19). He is, if you recall, (s)mothered by the Alien “Facehugger” at the beginning of the picture; a creature which in turn, acts as a living delivery system for the abject egg that will quickly produce the penile “Chestburster,” or infant Alien. As Gallardo and Smith write:

Covering Kane’s face completely, the Facehugger suppresses (or erases) his voice and face and renders him immobile. The overall image is dramatic and repulsive: blanketed in the monstrous flesh, Kane no longer looks human at all. A scan reveals that the Facehugger has inserted a member down Kane’s throat, completing a representation of fellatio [which will be repeated later when Ash attacks Ripley], since its ‘hands’ are holding Kane’s head to force its appendage deep inside his body. Co-writer Dan O’Bannon, who (years later) termed the image ‘homosexual oral rape,’ contends that he created it to make the men in the audience cross their legs.’ The action of ‘crossing one’s legs,’ of course, is a gesture of protecting the penis and the testicles that, in turn, point to the Alien assault as castration: Kane is being made ‘not a man.’²⁷²

Of course, Gallardo and Smith also contend that the “Facehugger’s aggressive sexual subjugation and transformation of the male body...could [also] be interpreted as a type of sexual disciplining, an S&M Othering, that forcibly disciplines the male body into a new type of sexual being.”²⁷³ However, this line of logic is ultimately faulty, as I am more inclined to agree with their latter, and seemingly self-contradictory comment, “all humanity is *female* (a

²⁷² Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith. *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, pp. 36-37.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 41.

womb) in the face of the Alien.”²⁷⁴ For instance, Kane’s mouth is distorted into a vaginal opening, while his chest and body are figuratively transformed into a massive uterus. Given this conversion, or mode of castration, the grotesque birth of the phallic “chestburster” seems highly appropriate, since as the figurative embodiment of Kane’s lost manhood, the “little-dick-with-teeth” literally slithers away from his open corpse after breaking loose from his now useless body (Figure 20).²⁷⁵

The separation of Kane’s manhood from his masculinity, or more specifically, their mutual *alienation*, foreshadows the upcoming divide between the Alien phallus and the cyborg orgasm, because like Ash’s ejaculate, the phallic Chestburster also emphasizes the creature’s ontology as a member of the male gender, or perhaps more appropriately, as a ‘male member’ in the constant and futile search for never ending sexual gratification. In effect, the cyborgic Ash and the machinic Alien not only embody aspects of both the rapist and the penis, but also reduce what Haraway calls, “the perspective of the cyborg,” from a rather wide panorama, with the ability to include all viewpoints and opinions, to a tiny myopic pinhole at the end of the white man’s urethra.²⁷⁶ After all, if the film’s feminization of men is epitomized by the Alien’s violation and symbolic castration of Kane, then such an act is indisputably explicated by Parker’s abuse at the hands of the cyborg: a scene, which unfortunately, extends the man-machine’s influence and dubious

²⁷⁴ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith. *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 42. Emphasis added. Gallardo and Smith’s comment is based on the work of film critic Amy Taubin. For more on Taubin see: “Invading Bodies: Alien 3 and the Trilogy,” *Sight and Sound* (July-August 1992), pp. 8-10; “The Alien Trilogy: From Feminism to AIDS,” *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, ed. Pamela Cook and Philip Dodd (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 93-100.

²⁷⁵ Amy Taubin, “Invading Bodies: Alien 3 and the Trilogy,” p. 9. Taubin writes: “When the baby alien (or as one 42nd street movie house denizen exclaimed, ‘little-dick-with-teeth’) burst from John Hurt’s chest, it cancelled the distinction on which human culture is based [male/female].”

²⁷⁶ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 176. Haraway writes: “From the perspective of cyborgs, freed of the need to ground politics in our privileged position of the oppression that incorporates all other dominations, the innocence of the merely violated, the ground of those closer to nature, we can see powerful possibilities. Feminisms and Marxisms have run aground on Western epistemological imperatives to construct a revolutionary subject from the perspective of a hierarchy of oppressions and/or a latent position of moral superiority, innocence, and greater closeness to nature. With no available original dream of a common language or original symbiosis promising protection from hostile ‘masculine’ separation, but written into the text of a play that has no final privileged reading or salvation history, to recognize ‘oneself’ as full implicated in the world, frees us of the need to root politics in identification, vanguard parties, purity and mothering. Stripped of identity the bastard race teaches us about the power of the margins...”

political leanings beyond both the feminine and the masculine, and into the racial. Recall Exhibit A.

3.5 Reading a Manifesto for Racists

After the cyborg ceases to convulse, Parker creeps over to inspect the corpse, but as he does so, Ash's headless body grabs him suddenly and the two begin to struggle on the floor once more. In the end, Ash emerges on top, spewing white ejaculate from his neck until it covers Parker's face and form. The body's grotesque shape endlessly churning out its white insides until a woman stabs him from behind with a long pointed staff. Immediately, Lambert's blow diffuses Ash; literally *turning the man off* in a loaded act of penetration. After which, the cyborg falls limp against Parker. Satiated, we cut to the next scene.

Ash's head now sits atop a table, completely severed from his body save a few wires connecting the bottom of his neck to the hole where his head should be. With his head carefully placed upright by Ripley, Ash's eyes are half-closed while his mouth is wide open, suggesting a kind of post orgasmic bliss (Figure 21). The white glop that spurted from his head and neck only minutes before is now smeared all over his face; some of which still dribbles from his lips. Ripley then activates the cyborg's head, and after a large expulsion of white fluid from Ash's mouth, the cyborg declares with hollow digital inflection:

Ash: "You still don't understand what you're dealing with do you...Perfect Organism. Its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility."

Lambert: "You admire it..."

Ash: "I admire its purity. A survivor. Unclouded by conscience, remorse, or delusions of morality."

If the previous scene is any indication of the "cyborg perspective," then those who adopt that perspective are anything but "freed of the need to ground politics" in what Haraway calls, the "privileged position of the oppression that incorporates all other dominations."²⁷⁷ Like Ash, we are not only neck deep in those dominations, but are also spewing out ever more sinister forms of whiteness in order to incorporate, and obliterate all those who are not Us. Parker is the most obvious example, since as the only non-white person in the

²⁷⁷ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 176.

film, Ash effectively transforms him into a man saturated with whiteness. Expunging the black man's racial identity, and replacing it with a far less threatening colour—or should I say, *absence* of colour—as Parker's dark skin is totally submerged beneath Ash's overwhelming pallor.²⁷⁸

Parker is literally whitewashed by the cyborg, and is therefore colonized to the point of erasure, as the character's perpetual spurting is not only the manifestation of an endless male orgasm, but also the continual expansion, proliferation, and distribution of the man-machine's racialized self.²⁷⁹ In effect, it is an attempt by the cyborg to not only make the whole world white, through the mass assimilation of culture and skin colour, but to also degrade, humiliate, and obliterate non-whites by essentially raping them into submission.²⁸⁰

It is worth noting that throughout their struggle, Ash forces Parker into a kind of homosexual intercourse; one which places the cyborg in the dominant role of 'top,' while the black man is placed in the more submissive role of 'bottom.' On the other hand, we should also note that despite the scene's overt homo-social tone, we as readers must always remember, that while construing Ash as "villainous homosexual" is not terribly incorrect. It is more precise and

²⁷⁸ In a way, Parker is not only being erased racially by Ash, but in a sense, he is also being bestowed with the title of 'human', or perhaps more appropriately with the title of 'near-human,' since as a black man who only approaches the idea of 'whiteness' he can never be fully human. For example, as Richard Dyer writes in *White*: "Other people [people of colour] are raced. [We white people are just people.] There is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can't do that—they can only speak for their race. But non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of a race." Such a point is extremely ironic since Ash himself is anything but human on a biological level. However, perhaps his white skin, as well as the whiteness which soaks his insides and constitutes his racially pure 'blood,' can also stand as an open sign for Dyer's theory of a non-racialized, uncoloured, and ultimately unsullied and unqualified form of white humanity. In this sense, Parker would in turn become white or near-white, and therefore qualify as something closer to the humanist ideal—moving from threatening-sexual-savage to palatable-eunuch-man. Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 2.

²⁷⁹ Sue Short provides an alternative—if flawed—reading to the cyborg's inherent racism, writing: "Because it is fundamentally 'impure,' neither simply human nor machine, the cyborg confounds the notion of biological essence or racial purity. It is also because of their mixed origins, and the way in which they problematise discrete divisions, that artificial or partial humans provide a means by which to evaluate 'hybridity' ... a form of resistance [which allows outsiders to] question the ideals of their 'host' culture because they have another point of reference." Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p. 107.

²⁸⁰ For more on the link between rape, feminization, subjugation, and colonialism see: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967); *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968); *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

more appropriate to frame Parker's rape as yet another example of the cyborg's gross overcompensation for its own sense of lack.²⁸¹ Such a reading is extremely fruitful because the cyborg's act of violence can now be read, not only as a need to prove its own virility as a heterosexual male, but also as a drive to verify the creature's own worth as a *white* man; a person whose virility and 'girth' easily matches that of his enemy, and chief sexual rival, the African male.

After all, Parker is awash in Ash's white ejaculate. Moreover, he is raped and feminized even as he is colonized by Ash, since the cyborg's violation and forced feminization of Parker is the means by which he is colonized.²⁸² By pressing the man into a feminine likeness, Ash is not only stripping away Parker's masculinity, but also his *blackness* by overwhelming Parker with his own over-compensation, his own hyper-sexuality, and subsequently, his own cyborgic lack. Concordantly, it is very difficult to view Parker's subjugation, and accompanying racial annihilation, as anything less than a microcosm of white colonialism, because the psychology driving Ash's abuse perfectly mirrors the psychological insecurities, as well as the often brutal processes, lurking behind the white face of colonial rule. As Frantz Fanon writes:

If at a certain stage, [the colonized man] has been led to ask himself whether he is a man, it is because his reality as a man has been challenged. In other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite

²⁸¹ Ximena Gallardo C., and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*, p. 51. Gallardo and Smith write: "Ash's attack on Ripley—which [Ridley] Scott called 'the closest thing to seeing a robot have sex'—belies his castrated nature, his 'lack': like Norman Bates in *Psycho*, Ash must use a substitute phallus to subdue the female. In this context the fear of the android might be read as a metaphor for homophobia and opens the door for a queer reading of Ash as villainous homosexual."

²⁸² Frantz Fanon writes: "...the Negro [must] be castrated. The penis, the symbol of manhood is annihilated, which is to say that it is *denied*...the Negro [for the white man] is fixated at the genital; or at any rate he has been fixated there [by the white man]." Thus, if the black man is to be successfully subdued he must first be symbolically castrated and thus rendered powerless in the eyes of the white man. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 162-165. Note: In his previous book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon provides an interesting case study of the French attempt to castrate and feminize the Algerian male population. As Fanon points out in a section entitled "Case N° 1. Impotence in an Algerian Male Following the Rape of his Wife": the Algerian male "told us that before every sexual encounter he thought of his [raped] wife." *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 206-211.

on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world...²⁸³

Parker is a black man painted white. His blackness is erased by the cyborg's desire. His racial identity is obliterated and then incorporated by Ash into that of the white culture. Moreover, he is in a homo-social sense, initiated into that culture through terrible humiliations designed to not only deaden his own potency as a black male, but to also negate his status as a "terrifying penis" in the mind of the white man.²⁸⁴ Inflicting degradations calculated to make those considered threatening more palatable, submissive, and attractive to the white patriarchal culture that dominates them, while simultaneously resignifying everything considered hostile, divergent, foreign or inferior through the lens of the female, or more specifically, the feminine.²⁸⁵

There are numerous contemporary parallels for this kind of tactic, especially in regards to the sorts of 'interrogation methods' utilized by Americans in present-day Iraq. Admittedly, the connection between *Alien* and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" might seem like a bit of a leap, but when one considers the methods used by the U.S. to subdue its opponents, one can do nothing but wonder at the similarities between American methodologies, and the methodologies that Ash represents. After all, if as a cyborg, Ash really does sign "our ontology", and if he does indeed "give us our politics", then logically he and his ilk are also supplied and influenced by the politics of the present-day.²⁸⁶ In many ways, the photographs leaked from Abu Ghraib reflect the experiences of a people forced to endure the same systems of oppression employed by the cyborg upon the Nostromo, because like Parker, son of HAM, these suspected terrorists are not only being tortured, but are also

²⁸³ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 98. *Black Skin, White Masks* was written in response to Dominique Mannoni's 1964 work, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, in which Mannoni postulated the so called 'dependency principle,' stating: "Not all peoples can be colonized; only those who experience this need [for dependency]...Wherever Europeans have founded colonies of the type we are considering, it can safely be said that their coming was unconsciously expected—even desired—by the future subject peoples" Dominique O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (New York: Preager, 1964), pp. 85-86.

²⁸⁴ Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 177.

²⁸⁵ Fanon continues: "For the majority of white men the Negro represents the sexual instinct (in its raw state). The Negro is the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions" (171). Of course, Fanon knows that such sexual superiority is not real, but again "that is not what matters. The prelogical thought of the [white and powerful] phobic has decided that such is the case" (159).

²⁸⁶ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 150.

trapped in the throes of what could easily be called, a classic American hazing ritual; one fashioned to emasculate, dominate, assimilate, and incorporate all those deemed to be outside the accepted community.²⁸⁷ Qualities which are emphasized very early in *Alien*, when Parker begins to voice his concerns over his paltry salary only to be told by a white captain, to “just shut up and listen to the *man*.”²⁸⁸ A statement which not only refers to Ash-the-cyborg, but also to the white patriarchal capitalist system the man-machine works for, embodies, and represents by proxy.

It is no coincidence then that Ash, a white cyborg who does nothing but erupt his own whiteness onto all things non-white, should speak of things like purity, reproduction, and organic perfection.²⁸⁹ It is also unsurprising that he should eschew desirable human qualities like “conscience, remorse, or delusions of morality” in relentless pursuit of that reproductive purity, because judging from his actions in *Alien*, as well as the many similarities that connect his behaviour to the violence of current events, he is not simply a cyborg and a rapist, but also an agent of colonialism whose job is to subjugate and absorb all those considered threatening or inferior without thought to cost or consequence. It is this steadfast loyalty to one particular ideology that makes the cyborg so dangerous, since such unwavering dependability also implies an inherent inability on the part of the creature to transfer from one political framework to another—i.e. from patriarchy to feminism. In the words of Ash himself: “I thought I was clear. All other priorities rescinded.”²⁹⁰

3.6 What’s the Story Mother?

The politics of the man-machine are equivalent to the politics of endless ejaculation; that is, the politics of the hyper-masculine, of disembodiment, of

²⁸⁷ For a reading on the link between race, torture, and American hazing rituals see: Warren Steele, “Strange Fruit: American Culture and the Remaking of the Iraqi Males at Abu Ghraib,” *Nebula* 3.4 (December, 2006), Accessed 10 October 2007: <http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Steele.pdf>

²⁸⁸ *Alien*, dir. Ridley Scott (20th Century Fox, 1979).

²⁸⁹ In 1872, Samuel Butler wrote the following on the reproductive strategies of machines: “What is a reproductive system, if not a system for reproduction? And how few of the machines are there which have not been produced systematically by other machines?... We are misled by considering any complicated machine as a single thing; in truth it is a city or society, each member of which was bred truly after its kind.” Cited in George Dyson, *Darwin Among the Machines*, p. 31.

²⁹⁰ *Alien*, dir. Ridley Scott (20th Century Fox, 1979).

overcompensation to disavow emasculation, and of lack born from the desire for wholeness, for self. It is a phallogocentric ideology. One which, according to Jonathan Goldberg, “locates an inadequacy within the Symbolic, a lack at the very site of the realization of the equation of penis and phallus.”²⁹¹ Thereby, placing a psychological disconnect at the very heart of the cyborg body, which refuses to join the penile appendage with the paternal signifier, the concept that “designates the privileges of the symbolic.”²⁹² This disconnect is profoundly damaging since it separates the male subject from a feeling of patriarchal privilege that would normally be intrinsic. Thus, the cyborg feels that he must gain his patriarchal rights by taking what belongs to him, or in turn, by proving his worthiness through a kind of “hypermasculinity that fails, insofar as it exceeds, to guarantee the gender category it means to secure.”²⁹³

Ash is not the cyborg of “A Cyborg Manifesto”. His ideological affinities and personal subjectivity are so radically divergent from everything Haraway postulated that he totally subverts her entire understanding of cyborg ontology; making the man-machine’s endless orgasm not only gruesome in the most extreme sense, but also directly contrary to Haraway’s vision of the cyborg body and the politics therein.

For instance, Haraway states that every story beginning with “original innocence” and which “privileges the return to wholeness”—something the cyborg supposedly avoids—imagines

the drama of life to be individuation, separation, the birth of the self, the tragedy of autonomy, the fall into writing, alienation; that is, war, tempered by imaginary respite in the bosom of the Other. These plots are ruled by reproductive politics—rebirth without flaw, perfection, abstraction. In this plot women are imagined either better or worse off, but all agree they have less selfhood, weaker individuation, more fusion to the oral, to Mother, less at stake in masculine autonomy.²⁹⁴

Naturally, these tales of original innocence are very familiar, as they are the humanist narratives one finds throughout Western culture. The stories whose plots and themes have not only shaped and informed all of our lives, but also

²⁹¹ Jonathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities,” p. 236.

²⁹² Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 139.

²⁹³ Jonathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities,” p. 236.

²⁹⁴ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 177.

provided the standard by which to judge and subjugate women and non-whites even as they claim to empower them.

However, according to Haraway, there are better narratives for the subsequent empowerment of these margins, and therefore other “route[s] to having less at stake in masculine autonomy.” Routes “that [do] not pass through Woman, Primitive, Zero, the Mirror Stage and its imaginary.”²⁹⁵ Specifically, a course of action which is governed by Haraway’s cyborg politics and ensuing subjectivity, a route that passes “through women...illegitimate cyborgs, not of Woman born, who refuse the ideological resources of victimization so as to have a real life.”²⁹⁶ In other words, a theory which upholds a set of values considered contrary to conventional Western narratives involving the subjugation of the Other to the values of the Self, and which not only refuses to marginalize or exoticize, but one that firmly rejects psychoanalytic, and/or other intellectual truths designed to degrade the value and position of both non-whites and women.

After all, Haraway’s vision of cyborg politics manifests itself as “the struggle for language, the struggle *against* perfect communication, [the struggle against ‘truth’], against the one [*dominant*] code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism.”²⁹⁷ Her “politics insist on noise and advocate pollution,” culminating in a chorus of polyphonic voices that “[rejoice] in the illegitimate fusions of animal and machine.”²⁹⁸ Naturally, these ideas are absolutely ideal when it comes to granting greater freedom and autonomy to those who are otherwise oppressed. Yet, given Ash’s dramatic ejaculation, and in my opinion *typical* cyborgic reaction, as well as the man-machine’s unflinching pursuit of flawless communication, Haraway’s articulation of cyborg politics is clearly misinformed. Human-machine integration is not a coupling that subverts “the structure of desire, the force imagined to generate language and gender”.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, it does not subvert “the structure and modes of reproduction of ‘Western’ identity, of

²⁹⁵ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 177.

²⁹⁶ Ibid

²⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 176.

²⁹⁸ Ibid

²⁹⁹ Ibid

nature, of culture, of mirror and eye, slave and master, body and mind.”³⁰⁰ If anything, animal-machine fusions simply reinforce every oppressive element mentioned in the previous sections of my argument, because if one continues to examine Ash, and by extension all other manifestations of the cyborg image, one can see a very clear division between the politics and subjectivity represented through those bodies, and the politics and subjectivity expressed in Haraway’s manifesto.

Ash’s world, the world of *Alien*, does not shy away from tales of “innocence” and “wholeness.” Like all other supposedly uncyborgic narratives, it too imagines “the drama of life to be individuation, separation, the birth of the self, the tragedy of autonomy,” and lest we forget, “*alienation*.”³⁰¹ The film not only embraces reproductive politics, but is *ruled* by them, since the entire story is constantly orbiting concerns which are not only linked to Ash’s sense of “purity”, but also inextricably connected to what Haraway calls, “rebirth without flaw, perfection, abstraction.” As a result, the cyborg’s world does not rejoice in “the illegitimate fusions of animal and machine”. Rather it rejoices in the legitimacy of those couplings. Ash, after all, is a company man. Moreover, he is a man *made* by “The Company”; the all-knowing, all-seeing force driving the economic engine of the galaxy, as well as the action of Ridley Scott’s film. Animal-machine integration is therefore a sanctioned merger within this reality. One enforcing the values of the establishment, while perpetuating the very narratives Haraway claims to subvert, because like the principles of both “The Company,” and the white cyborgs who speak for it, all politically correct ideas regarding equality are destroyed, and/or superseded, by the perpetual and obsessive search for supremacy; whether it be political, biological, racial, religious, or economic.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 176

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 177.

³⁰² Even the *Alien* in *Alien* contains oblique references to the origin of the cyborg, as well as the politics of supremacy and paranoia which produced the cyborg body. As Ximena and Gallardo write: “[The *Alien*] is the externalized representation of the dehumanizing force of the Company—as a manifestation of its desire, the *Alien* represents the next evolutionary phase of the human, the perfect combination of man and machine conquering the galaxy without the need of cryo-tubes or remorse” (Gallardo and Smith, 59). Such a reading is eerily reminiscent of the original intentions for the cyborg body as articulated by its originators Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline. To recall “Cyborgs and Space”: “If man attempts partial adaptation to space conditions, instead of insisting on carrying his whole environment along with him, a number of new possibilities appear. One is led to think about the incorporation of

It is essential to note, however, that the political values described above do not spring from cyborg politics. Rather, cyborg politics spring from these political values, because to paraphrase writer Elaine L. Graham: technology may expose the “instability...of the Humanist subject”, but it does not render that subject inert.³⁰³ Nor does it repair the attitudes formed by hundreds of years of colonial rule. As Richard Dyer writes: “the endless choices that constitute the practices of the world are at every point informed by judgments about people’s capacities and worth...Race is not the only factor governing these things...but it is never not a factor, never not in play.”³⁰⁴ Subsequently, any present racial, social, or political problems will be transferred onto the technologies we create, either through use or through representation. This of course, has devastating implications not only for feminist re-workings of the cyborg body, but also for female representation within cyborg narratives, because regardless of what one does, or how one resignifies, there remains a legacy of violence attached to this image that is impossible to erase.

“There are several consequences to taking seriously the imagery of cyborgs as other than our enemies. Our bodies, ourselves; bodies are maps of power and identity. Cyborgs are no exception.”³⁰⁵ Certainly, the logic of Haraway’s argument is highly compelling, urging us as readers to “see from both perspectives at once, because each reveals dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point. Single vision [as Haraway states,] produces worse illusion than double vision or many-headed monsters.”³⁰⁶ Yet, in adopting such a perspective one must be forever vigilant, because there is always the temptation to deny what *is*, in favour of what *could be*. Haraway is surely guilty of such an act, as she not only expounds all potential cyborg

integral exogenous devices to bring about the biological changes, which might be necessary in man’s homeostatic mechanisms to allow him to live in space *qua natura*” (Clynes and Kline, 30). Ximena Gallardo C. and C. Jason Smith, *Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley*; Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, “Cyborgs and Space”.

³⁰³ Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human*, p. 12.

³⁰⁴ Richard Dyer, *White*, p. 1.

³⁰⁵ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 180.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 154. Haraway writes: “From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, about the final abstraction embodied in a Star Wars apocalypse waged in the name of defence, about the final appropriation of women in a masculinist orgy of war. From another perspective, a cyborg might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints.”

virtues as existent facts, but perhaps more perilously, also locates possible merits where none exist.

For example, Haraway maintains that a “cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends)”.³⁰⁷ Moreover, she maintains that as a “monstrous and illegitimate” being the cyborg is “outside salvation history”, and the myth of “original unity” which drives all Western narratives. Existing as a creature beyond the power base of Western culture, and therefore outside the one dualism upon which all others are founded: male/female.³⁰⁸ As Haraway writes:

The cyborg is a creature in a post-gendered world...the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense...An origin story in the ‘Western’, humanist sense depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss, and terror, represented by the phallic mother from whom all humans must separate, the task of individual development and of history, the twin potent myths inscribed most powerfully for us in psychoanalysis and Marxism...The cyborg skips the step of original unity, of identification with nature in the Western sense. This is its illegitimate promise that might lead to subversion of its teleology as star wars.³⁰⁹

This however is clearly faulty, because even though cyborgs are “not innocent” neither are we. Like the generations before us the cyborg is a creature steeped in sin. It may not have been “born in a garden”, but the deserts, cities, and techno-jungles of contemporary Western culture are no less fertile than those of Eden. Each is a point of origin, and each is a paradise to their respective tenants. Eternal bliss versus endless orgasm: the widest gap between these two sites is scarcely more than a crack.

Donna Haraway is only half-right when she states: “the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole.”³¹⁰ Because what she fails to fully comprehend, is that the image does not expect salvation through its father only because it already *is* the Father, and will thus seek out, obtain, and appropriate, whichever mate it

³⁰⁷ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 180.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 154, p. 150, p. 151.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 150-151.

³¹⁰ Ibid, p. 151.

desires in order to verify or complete itself. Even a powerful presence like the monstrous MU/TH/UR is defined in terms of the Father within the *Alien* narrative. Existing without subjectivity or autonomy, serving only to enable the abuser, and ignore the victims. MU/TH/UR is only a ship, and as such, merely a vessel for the Name and Law of the Father. She is a carrier for the values and ideals of the patriarchal line that spawned her, and more specifically, for “The Company” that built her—body and mind.

Indeed, even the inclusion of such an omnipotent feminine presence remains completely analogous to “the [conventional] function of woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious”, because as Laura Mulvey writes; first MU/TH/UR “symbolizes the castration threat by her real absence of a penis”, which is of course, then amplified by her own ownership of numerous vaginal openings and womb-like corridors.³¹¹ Second, she then solidifies that patriarchal unconscious by

raising her child [the Alien] into the Symbolic. Once this has been achieved her meaning in this process is at an end, it does not last into the world of Law and Language except as memory which oscillates between memory of maternal plenitude and memory of lack...[MU/TH/UR's] desire is subject to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound, she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. She turns the child into a signifier of her own desire to possess a penis.³¹²

Under this system, Mulvey's “child” becomes the overtly phallic Alien; the embodiment of uncontrolled masculine lust, a dick on the loose, and even a literal representation of the MU/TH/UR's desire to carry her own male member. This desire is echoed throughout the film by the omnipresent and ever-illusory Company, whose interests are represented by both Ash and MU/TH/UR; cohorts in crime, agents of capitalism. Ash is the Company's active agent—probing bodies, breaking protocol, and killing dissenters—while MU/TH/UR plays a far more passive role, allowing the Father to perform Company business by neglecting the health and well-being of her expendable crew. Consequently, when the film's abusive Father-Son dynamic is mixed with that of the negligent but archetypal Mother, the combination firmly

³¹¹ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema,” *Feminism and Film Theory*, ed. Constance Penley (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 57.

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

implants the man-machine within a very different theoretical framework than the one specified by Haraway. In Ridley Scott's *Alien*, women are not only excluded, but also coded as inferior, while the men are strongly aligned with power and authority. MU/TH/UR stands with the men of *Alien*, just as Mulvey's women are implanted firmly within the male hegemony of post-World War II American culture. Each are

signifier[s] for the male Other, bound by a Symbolic order in which Man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of Woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.³¹³

Some might argue that Ripley is the exception to this rule, since she defies and ultimately overcomes Ash and his doppelganger, the Alien. However, aboard the *Nostromo* Ripley is officially third in command, and is therefore the direct subordinate of two males, as well as the physical and sexual inferior of two more inhuman males.³¹⁴ As such, Ripley is constantly subject to the whims of her superiors, and more crucially, to the wants of her abusers. Her behaviour is therefore continually circumscribed by the desires of another, defining her as a purely reactive force which cannot drive the narrative, since her actions are mere counterpoints to that of the Father and Son. Despite the obvious qualities of courage, power, and guile which have since become synonymous with her over the last 20 years, Ripley exists as a kind of non-entity. She is a hard body defined solely by masculine pleasure and male erections, while her mind is filled only by the fear induced by the threat of male violence. With her subjectivity and her rank consistently undermined or stripped away, Ripley is figured as nothing but frightened prey; running like a battered woman desperate for escape.³¹⁵

³¹³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," p. 58.

³¹⁴ The fact that Ripley retains her rank over Parker and Brett (the white trash hillbilly), does not give Ripley any more authority or power, because in this chain of command her rank as leader is based more on issues relating to race and class than it is on her ability to command and manage a ship.

³¹⁵ Of course, not everyone has the same view when it comes to domestic abuse. For instance, as Camille Paglia once said in a notorious interview with *Spin* magazine: "You know what gets me sick and tired? The battered-woman motif. It's so misinterpreted, the way we have to constantly look at it in terms of male oppression and tyranny, and female victimization. When, in fact, everyone knows throughout the world that many of these working-class relationships where women get beaten up have hot sex. They ask why she won't leave him? Maybe she won't leave because the sex is very hot. I say we should start looking at the battered-woman

3.7 Reading a Manifesto for Mega-death

The fusion of rapist-Alien-son with abusive-cyborg-father to produce an enormous, disembodied, penetrating, forever coming erection, only serves to further entrench the man-machine within the very worst parts of an already existent ideological framework; specifically, the politics of patriarchy, supremacy, exploitation, domination and abuse. There is no liminality in Ash. He does not live on the margins, nor is he beyond the oppressive ideologies of the centre. Like Dr. Strangelove, Ash lives and thrives within that centre as the very embodiment of male oppression both, social and sexual, political and subjective. He is, along with his Alien counterpart, the enemy of all women everywhere, and despite Donna Haraway's assertions to the contrary, it is precisely his 'cyborg-ness' which makes him so dangerous.

For example, Ridley Scott's direct correlation between the cyborg and the misogynist, technology and the phallus, extends even beyond *Alien* into numerous and varied texts found throughout Western culture, since connections between male ejaculation, female penetration, rape, power, privilege, the cyborg body, and the politics therein, are in fact endemic to most cyborg representations. Indeed, all of these elements are inextricably bound, locked together in a tightly coiled mass that is impossible to untangle. To pull at or adopt only one of these strands is to drag the entire load along with you. Consequently, the politics of the cyborg are not only allied with the same sorts of values, and damaging ideologies infecting the *Nostromo* and its crew, but are also linked with the values and ideologies that drove the political system which produced the cyborg in the first place. As a result, the politics of human-machine integration are identical to both the systems of patriarchal oppression and racial domination, as well as the decidedly masculine drive

motif in terms of sex. If gay men go down to bars and like to get tied up, beaten up and have their asses whipped, how come we can't allow that a lot of wives like the kind of sex they are getting in these battered-wife relationships." Of course, whether Ripley and Lambert derive any power or pleasure from their encounters with Ash, the Alien, or the other members of the *Nostromo* crew is highly suspect. But it is, let's say, an 'interesting' (if not dubious) perspective on the film. Especially when applied to the case of Lambert, who does express pleasure in the sexual innuendo exchanged between her and her male colleagues. Camille Paglia, "The Rape Debate, Continued," p. 65.

toward the Cold War's ultimate orgasmic orgy, otherwise known as atomic Armageddon.

The cyborg represents far more than just a history of violence, but more crucially, it represents a history of supreme violence. It is an amalgamation rooted not only in its "teleology as star wars", but in a drive toward total death blown out through the obsolescent act of orgasmic release.³¹⁶ Thus far, we have seen how the cyborg body and its subsequent politics manifest themselves in both Ash and the Alien, as well as through their individual relationships with other members of the Nostromo crew; including the massive techno-womb each of them call MU/TH/UR. However, there are many more representations of similar cyborg bodies instilled with an identical set of political values; figures which are far more explicit in their explication, and subsequent exposition of masculine themes, ideas, and imagery. Yet, rather than inspect each case individually, I will only list five of the most eloquent examples.

In *Raw Deal* (1986), international action hero, and permanently-coded cyborg, Arnold Schwarzenegger, plays a disgraced FBI agent out for revenge against an Italian-American crime family.³¹⁷ In a memorable scene near the end of the film, Schwarzenegger enters a Mafia compound in a large red Cadillac convertible, and begins to kill every single gangster stationed therein. With his right hand on a long double barreled shotgun, he pumps his weapon relentlessly, systematically filling every bad guy in the area with countless bullets. Penetrating their bodies until each of them fall dead: all while playing the Rolling Stones' "I Can't Get No (Satisfaction)," from a tape deck in his car, at full volume.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 151.

³¹⁷ Jonathan Goldberg writes: "one cannot speak of the Terminator's place without recalling that one is also speaking about Arnold Schwarzenegger" (Goldberg, 242). Moreover, to quote Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz: "For the past two decades the label 'Terminator' has become synonymous with Arnold Schwarzenegger himself, not just with a film character, and no matter what he is doing, or how removed it is from a cyborg in a science fiction film" (Blitz and Krasniewicz, 93). Jonathan Goldberg, "Recalling Totalities: The Mirrored Stages of Arnold Schwarzenegger"; Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz, *Why Arnold Matters: The Rise of a Cultural Icon* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

³¹⁸ *Raw Deal*, dir. John Irvin (Live/Artisan, 1986). Naturally, such a scene could be construed as a direct result of Schwarzenegger's earlier career as a bodybuilder, since *Raw Deal's* representation of an endless male orgasm perfectly mirrors Arnold's earlier comments about the nature of "the pump."

In Michael Crichton's pop novel, *The Terminal Man*, Harry Benson is an artificial intelligence researcher gone mad, because ever since a recent car crash he has suffered from a ridiculous brain ailment known only as "thought seizures."³¹⁹ These "seizures" induce a kind of psychic fit, which in turn causes Benson to attack any person who either works with, and/or acts like a machine; including mechanics, gas station attendants, prostitutes, and strippers. However, thanks to a new surgical procedure developed in the realm of psychiatric mind-control, Harry can now reverse these violent fits. To do so, doctors must insert 40 electrodes into the pleasure centres of Benson's brain, which will "short circuit" his seizures with waves of orgasmic pleasure. The surgery is successful, but only for a time. After a short while, Harry learns to control the technology attached to his new and improved mind. Subsequently, the man begins to pleasure himself continuously until the procedure no longer affects his condition.³²⁰ With his brain and body now overloading in masturbatory ecstasy, Benson escapes his psychiatric handlers and runs off to engage in a murderous rampage; strangling, stabbing, and beating the innocent, as his brain orgasms over and over and over again.³²¹

Sixty years earlier, British sculptor Jacob Epstein produced an equally hard, equally phallic, and equally insatiable cyborg in the form of the *Rock Drill* (1913). In fact, prior to its eventual destruction in 1915, Epstein's sculpture was lean and metallic with girder-like legs perched atop a very large, very real, and very suggestive drilling machine. All of which combined to

³¹⁹ Michael Crichton, *The Terminal Man* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), p. 17. Crichton writes: "He was told he had injured his brain in [an] automobile accident and, as a result, had an illness that produced 'thought seizures'—seizures of the mind, not the body, leading to a loss of inhibitions and violent acts."

³²⁰ Crichton characterizes Harry Benson as a cyborg in a number of obvious and somewhat clumsy paragraphs, writing: "Now, however, in this operation we have created a man with not one brain but two. He has his biological brain, which is damaged, and he has a new computer brain, which is designed to correct the damage. This new brain is intended to control the biological brain. Therefore a new situation arises. The patient's biological brain is the peripheral terminal—the only peripheral terminal—for the new computer. In one area, the new computer brain has total control. And therefore the patient's biological brain, and indeed his whole body, has become a terminal for the new computer. We have created a man who is one single, large, complex computer terminal. The patient is a read-out device for the new computer, and his is as helpless to control the read-out as a TV screen is helpless to control the information presented on it." Michael Crichton, *The Terminal Man*, p. 83.

³²¹ Crichton writes: "Following delivery of the blow to the head, she's lifted up and placed on the bed. At this time, she's not bleeding much... But now her killer picks up some instrument and stabs her in the stomach several times. You'll notice that the deepest wounds are all in the lower abdomen, which may have some sexual connotations for the killer. But that's just guessing on our part." Michael Crichton, *The Terminal Man*, p. 173.

represent a sort of hypersexual, hyper-masculine, bio-mechanical body attached to a tremendously large phallic erection that pointed directly down towards the ground. As if the being's sole purpose was to penetrate the earth and excavate the remains until the area was either ready for resettlement, or stripped of its value. Forcibly converting the surrounding environment into a form of valuable capital, or until its surface was raped and disfigured into a palatable likeness of the creature itself. To paraphrase one early 20th century art critic: "it all seems like the naked expression of a definite force."³²²

Even *Gravity's Rainbow* expresses human-machine integration in terms of orgasmic satisfaction, because almost every V-2 rocket within Pynchon's narrative lands in a site predetermined by character Tyrone Slothrop's sexual activities. In fact, the missiles are actually drawn to his erections. They explode in those places where Slothrop has, in a sense, already exploded, causing even the character's "love-making or fantasy" to become superimposed with "the structure of bombs."³²³ As a result, Slothrop's sexuality is not only transformed into a harbinger of doom, but also resignified as a bringer of cyborgic death for all those unlucky enough to reside near the sites of his many conquests.³²⁴ Each erection foretells a time when the

³²² Sculpted in 1913, and then exhibited two years later, the *Rock Drill* was described by critics as a "futurist abortion"; "unutterably loathsome"; "a hideous thing." Only one reviewer found value in the work, writing: "Mr. Epstein has accepted the rock drill...One can see how it fascinated him; the three long, strong legs, the compact assembly of cylinders, screws, and valve, with its control handles decoratively at one side, and especially the long straight cutting drill like a proboscis—it all seems the naked expression of a definite force. Mounted upon it Mr. Epstein has set a figure of the spirit of the drill—an idea of what a man might be who existed only for drilling." Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age* (London: Fraser, 1976), p. 476.

³²³ Friedrich Kittler writes: "Slothrop's erections act as an index...already designating the next strike position. The V-2s follow the erections in the same way that the sound of flight follows the impact. In other words, even Slothrop's love-making or 'fantasy is superimposed with the structure of bombs.'" Friedrich Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," pp. 104-105.

³²⁴ At one point in the narrative, Tyrone's sexuality actually colludes with the arc of the V-2 in a strange moment of prophesy: "The minute he puts it in, though, she goes wicked and a little crazy, slashing at his legs, shoulders, and ass with chewed-down fingernails sharp as a saw. Considerate Slothrop is trying to hold off coming till she's ready when all of a sudden something heavy, feathered, and many pointed comes crashing down onto the small of his back, bounces off triggering him and as it turns out Geli too ZONGGG! eeeeeee...oh, gee whiz. Wings flap and Wermher—for it is he—ascends into the darkness" (Pynchon, 294). This "Fucking bird," as Slothrop puts it, whose name is synonymous with German rocket scientist, Dr. Werner Von Braun, heralds the V-2's forthcoming fall toward the site of Tyrone's present orgasm. Moreover, Slothrop and his temporary lover, Geli Tripping, make love in a roofless home, open to the sky, the rain, and to any other forms of falling debris that might pass within range. This sense of openness could not only emphasize the couple's vulnerability to the falling V-2s, but also highlight the connection between Slothrop's erections and the locations

Rocket's phallic form will drop steadily in; penetrating the earth where our hero has just 'pulled out.' Its terrible mass falling inexorably downward toward a spot where Slothrop once lay; thereby "triggering" itself upon impact just as he was 'triggered' upon insertion.³²⁵ In effect, Pynchon's missile re-enacts that which Slothrop has already completed, because by expelling its sperm-like Schwarzgerät all over the surrounding area, the V-2 not only emphasizes its status as phallus, but also becomes interchangeable with both the form and function of the penis itself.³²⁶

On the other hand, despite the correlation between Rocket and penis, one must never forget that Pynchon figures the weapon as something far more complex than a mere representation of the male member. Instead, he describes the V-2 as having both male *and* female genitalia, each of which remain true to the cyborg within, since both are forever perched on the edge of perpetual climax. For instance, near the end of the novel, during the final stages of Rocket production, Pynchon describes the joining of V-2 and Schwarzgerät as such:

Stuff him in. Not a Procrustean bed, but modified to take him. The two, boy and Rocket, concurrently designed. Its steel hindquarters bent so beautifully...he fits well. They are mated to each other, Schwarzgerät and next higher assembly. His bare limbs in their metal bondage writhe among the fuel, oxidizer, live-steam lines, thrust frame, compressed air battery, exhaust elbow, decomposer, tanks, vents, valves...and one of these valves, one test-point, one pressure-switch is the right one, the true clitoris routed directly to the nervous system of the 00000. She should not be a mystery to you, Gottfried. Find the zone, love lick and kiss...Get ready, Liebchen.³²⁷

The interior of the Schwarzgerät is synonymous with the Rocket's G-spot, which of course, suggests an even greater degree of connection between the

of Rocket-strike. Accordingly, Wernher flaps about the roofless house like a spectre of the coming/ejaculating V-2: "Something comes flapping in out of the sky: talons scabble along the top of the canopy. "What's that?" half awake and she's got the covers again, c'mon Geli..."(291).

³²⁵ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 294.

³²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 750. Weirdly, the connection between Tyrone Slothrop's erections, ejaculations, and the many V-2 explosions are also echoed in Slothrop's expulsion of vomit in the novel: "Slothrop joins at the rail a miserable lot of musicians and girls. They instruct him in fine points such as not vomiting into the wind, or timing it for when the ship rolls toward the sea...'Ööööö,' goes Slothrop over the side" (500). The link between Slothrop's bodily expulsion and Rocket 00000 is difficult to ignore.

³²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 750-751.

cyborg and sex; in particular, the female sex. However, despite the obvious sexual interplay between the V-2's feminine interior and the Schwarzgerät's rigidity and performative masculinity, we must always remember that the Rocket as a whole cannot be classified as a feminine. The missile's overall structure as a stiff, penetrating, forever-coming phallus supersedes all other contradictory physical characteristics inherent to the womb-like weapon. Bear in mind, the V-2 is a penis filled with semen. One driven not only by a desire to explode or ejaculate, but also by the need to re-enact all previous sexual encounters performed by its double.³²⁸ Furthermore, if the Rocket's femininity is not negated by its overt masculinity, then they are certainly resignified in the same manner as Ridley Scott's MU/TH/UR. After all, the body of the V-2 is not only coded by Pynchon as a vessel for paternity, and for the politics of patriarchy, but also more literally, it is represented as a carrier of "sperm."³²⁹ Consequently, the Rocket stands as a symbol for both the Name and Law of the Father, and for the decidedly phallogocentric and racialized ideologies which it maintains and supports.

Of course, in a text so overwhelmingly dominated by the intersection of orgasm and missile, the patriarchal properties inherent to Pynchon's V-2 are not simply affiliated with the morbid and decidedly dangerous sexual politics of *Dr. Strangelove*, but also with the good doctor's one true love, and apparent sexual aid; the nuclear bomb. Since the first atomic test at Los Alamos, the atom bomb has become more than just *the* image of ultimate power, but one whose mere detonation has been commonly used as a symbol for the ultimate in orgasmic release. Schwarzenegger, *Strangelove*, and their repeated echoes in the products of American culture; all cling to the dangerous amalgamation

³²⁸ On the doubled nature of Slothrop, Kittler writes: "...as always, it comes to light that the detective coincides with his double in the cockpit of the V-2." Friedrich Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," p. 105. As Pynchon writes on the naming of Slothrop: "Once Slothrop—or Rocketman as he is soon to be known—thought he might warn them about things like tulip bulbs" (359); "It occurs to Slothrop that without these horns on it, why this helmet would look just like the nose assembly of the Rocket. And if he could find a few triangular scraps of leather, figure a way to sew them on to Tchiterine's boots...yeah, a-and on the back of the cape put a big, scarlet, capital R— It is as pregnant a moment as when Tonto, after the legendary ambush, attempts to—'Raketemensch!' screams Säure...Slothrop has been imagining full Rocketman Hype, in which the people bring him food, wine and maidens..." (366); "*But somebody's got to hold on, it can't happen to all of us—no that'd be too much...Rocketman, Rocketman. You poor fucker*" (741). Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*.

³²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 750.

of orgasm and annihilation. Even at the end of *Gravity's Rainbow*, the V-2's need to explode or ejaculate is pushed beyond the scope of a normal World War II narrative, as the novel is thrust outward into the age of potential mega-death. Arching from 1945 to 1973, as the Rocket's "terrible mass" lands on an LA movie theatre in an epoch defined by the imminent production of countless 'little deaths.'³³⁰ Consequently, the atmosphere of fright and paranoia once confined to World War II London now turns planet-wide, moving beyond story, beyond fiction, as the parallel works of Werner Von Braun and J. Robert Oppenheimer fuse inexorably in the parabolic arc of the ICBM.³³¹ As Friedrich Kittler writes:

At the end of the text, while high over California a new world war is beginning, a song of consolation is sung for a "crippl'd Zone," whose referent is not only post-war Germany [but the whole planet]. Thus concluding song and novel: 'Now Everybody—''³³²

Like *Dr. Strangelove* nearly a decade earlier, Pynchon plays on the image of the atomic wargasm, on the irreversible fall toward the blissful feeling of a million 'little deaths,' and on the subsequent cyborg fantasy of endless ejaculation embodied within that atrocity. However, unlike Kubrick, who filmed Major Kong on the back of a bomb, cowboy hat flailing as he whoops his way downward to the point of impact, Pynchon places the rider *within* the bomb (Figure 22). Man moves from a position of power as possessor of the Phallus to a mere component of that image, since Gottfried is physically

³³⁰ Kittler writes: "Pynchon's Second World War is able to end with the intercontinental weapons of the next war, insofar as Blicero's *manned V-2*...lands on the last page of the novel in Hollywood, 1973, the year the novel is published. Its base delay-action fuse targets precisely the movie theatre in which Pynchon and his readers are sitting." Obviously, the V-2 was never literally blasted into the future, but its technology was transferred from Nazi Germany to the Allies, where it was used to facilitate both American Space Exploration, and the creation of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. Friedrich Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," p. 114. For more on Pynchon's passage see: Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 760.

³³¹ Kittler writes: "The rocket, therefore, occupies the focal point of a novel that reads our signs. At the far end of the horizon of the novel or the theatre of war, the parallel development of American weapons technology turns up in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One need only replace the conventional explosives of the V-2...with Uranium or Plutonium as the rocket payload in order to be concurrent with the state of affairs in 1985...Accordingly, Pynchon's subject matter is German-American friendship as technology transfer. The technology that began on the beach of Peenemünde and proceeded to production-stage in the bunkers of Nordhausen (built by IG Farben and taken over by the Reich)...finds its continuation in Huntsville and Baikonur." Friedrich Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," p. 102.

³³² *Ibid*, p.117.

inserted into the shell of a long, hard, cylindrical spear. An act which alters his subjective position from that of virile Male, to that of a lowly and humiliating glob of semen sealed inside the image of a free floating, and uncontrolled erection.³³³ Gottfried and Rocket, missile and payload, each is as an indication of the potential inherent in the unfulfilled combination of Alien and Cyborg, Phallus and Orgasm, because like the mixture of bullet and gun, each half not only provides the necessary elements for a satisfactory sexual release, but also for a kind of unending orgasm that leads only to obsolescence; the end of everything. As Robert S. McNamara writes:

In the 1950s, contrary to the advice of some senior military leaders...the Eisenhower administration had relied increasingly on nuclear weapons for the national defense. Secretary of State Jon Foster Dulles had summarized this doctrine of massive retaliation when he declared that the United States aimed to deter aggression by relying 'primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing.' The Kennedy administration worried that this reliance on nuclear weapons gave us no way to respond to a large non-nuclear attack without committing suicide. President Kennedy said we had put ourselves in a position of having to choose in a crisis between 'inglorious retreat and unlimited retaliation.'³³⁴

Despite decades of time, and numerous alterations to the National Defense policy of the United States, Eisenhower's doctrine of total retaliation is not dead or defunct, but is instead reflected absolutely in the life and (little) death of the cyborg body. The policies of totality have not only found a kind of everlasting life in the image of their star pupil, but have also been transposed onto the body of the cyborg itself, as man and machine blow out together; covering the Earth in a very old, very strange, and very deadly act of 'love' (Figure 23). Consequently, we cannot escape the legacy of the Cold War even as we try to lose ourselves in the fiction of another. Moreover, we cannot escape the politics of the cyborg even as we lie to ourselves about its potential and its properties. In truth, the vast majority of human-machine manifestations fall into the categories described above; namely, those of the hyper-masculine, the hyper-sexual, the destructive, the totalizing, and most of all, the fragmented. All of which perpetuate a sense of brokenness, which the cyborg

³³³ One could construe Pynchon's V2 as a penis-on-the loose, and thus as a literary parallel to the phallic Chestburster in Ridley Scott's *Alien*.

³³⁴ Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, pp. 24-25.

strives to mend through gross overcompensation; by means that guarantee its continued fragmentation as opposed to its eventual fulfillment.

Mutually Assured Destruction; the very acronym evokes a world which is literally out of its mind. As if the saturation of America by psychedelics and psychosis had produced a near-global state of unbridled lunacy, of which the only appropriate symbol is Pynchon's "banana." Long, slim, brown, and yellow, it reflects not just the infiltration of madness into every corner of the civilized environment, but also signifies, at least in part, the source of such a potentially terminal form of global psychosis, since the erect penis, visual parallel to Pynchon's fruit, stands out as both the real world signifier of phallogocentrism, and the cultural twin to a particularly phallic form of equatorial produce. As Pynchon writes, the "banana label" is in a sense, forever "glued on the erect cock for ready reference."³³⁵ Its marker fixed firmly to the shaft not only as an open reminder of Western patriarchy, but perhaps too of HAM the Chimponaut, sitting atop his own "steel banana."³³⁶

Even the Terminator, whom Haraway once described as a "sign of the beast on the face of postmodern culture," represents a world that will not only go "bananas", but indeed, one which has already embraced the politics of absurdity rather than reason.³³⁷ The mere existence of Arnold's hard body, as well as its consistent return, continues to signify the inexorable end of all things, as ICBMs—not MR-2s—rise and fall again and again in a hail of fruit shaped mega-death. From Schwarzgerät to Schwarzenegger, the parallel images of the hardened penis, and a stiff cylindrical piece of fruit, reflect worlds that are not only threatened by the effects of fear, paranoia, and political brinksmanship, but also by the distinctly patriarchal dangers of cybernetics, and the true nature of human-machine integration. To recall the words of Tyrone Slothrop: "The Schwarzgerät is no grail, Ace, that's not what the G in Imipolex G stands for."³³⁸ Instead, with no trace of the Grail, this uppercase G could easily stand for the "spot" which triggers the male orgasm, and thus for the long, hard, and volatile phallus, as the V2 can only reinforce

³³⁵ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 678.

³³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 8.

³³⁷ Donna J. Haraway, "Cyborgs and Symbionts," p. xv.

³³⁸ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 364.

the symbolic presence of the Grail's enemy, counterpart, and partner. As Jesse Weston writes:

Lance and Cup (or Vase) were...connected together in a symbolic relation long ages before the institution of Christianity, or the birth of the Celtic tradition. They are sex symbols of immemorial antiquity and world-wide diffusion, the Lance or Spear, representing the Male, the Cup or Vase, the Female, reproductive energy.³³⁹

After all, the Schwarzgerät is trapped inside the V-2. Its soft body is snapped securely into the heart of a Nazi Rocket, which in itself, is a long spear-like weapon designed to penetrate and kill.³⁴⁰ Subsequently, the German black box cannot be called a Grail, since it is not a symbol of feminine "energy" or power, but rather the inverse, as its affinities lie with the Phallus and not the Vagina.

Haraway has argued the cyborg has the potential to shed these properties, and that within its phallic form sits the promise of subversion, since according to her manifesto, cyborgs "are suspicious of the reproductive matrix of most birthing", and thus of sexuality itself, whether male or female.³⁴¹ Within such a scenario cyborgs would perpetuate the possibility for our "reconstruction" within "a monstrous world without gender"; one which would erase antagonistic dualisms and unreasonable hierarchies, and therefore subvert all pre-existing gender roles.³⁴² Certainly, "there are several consequences to taking seriously the imagery of cyborgs as other than 'our' enemies"—the enemies of women—because in becoming genderless or

³³⁹ Jesse L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 75.

³⁴⁰ The Rocket's link with the phallus is highlighted indirectly much later in the novel, when Slothrop watches a rainbow arc through the sky: "...and now, in the Zone, later in the day he became a crossroad, after a heavy rain he doesn't recall, Slothrop sees a very thick rainbow here, a stout rainbow cock driven down out of pubic clouds into Earth, green wet valleyed Earth, and his chest fills and he stands crying, not a thing in his head, just feeling natural..." Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 626.

³⁴¹ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 181.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 181. Haraway likens the cyborg to salamander in order to veer the image away from "the resources of reproductive sex." She writes, "I would suggest that cyborgs have more to do with regeneration and are suspicious of the reproductive matrix of most birthing. For salamanders, regeneration after injury, such as the loss of a limb, involves regrowth of structure and restoration of function with the constant possibility of twinning or other odd topographical productions at the site of former injury. The regrown limb can be monstrous, duplicated, potent. We have all been injured, profoundly. We require regeneration, not rebirth, and the possibilities for our reconstruction include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender."

asexual, cyborgs would forsake their power as Rapists.³⁴³ Yet, such an idea, however progressive, is not without a great deal of danger, because in looking towards what is possible, one must never forget what *is*.³⁴⁴ We must always remember where the cyborg was produced, and how that image behaves, because the creature is and always has been gendered male, even if its amalgamated body does not fit every piece of anatomical criteria required for the constitution of that specific gender. Even if a cyborg body is represented as female, its status as an empowered being is not assured. Like most gender representations found within most patriarchal cultures, female cyborgs are defined in terms of the Phallus; or more precisely, by their own lack thereof. Accordingly, Haraway's alternate route toward "having less at stake in masculine autonomy, a route that does not pass through Woman, Primitive, Zero, the Mirror Stage and its Imaginary", ultimately comes to the same dead end as the destination it supposedly avoids, because if human-machine integration really does represent "our ontology" then logically the cyborg also supplies the politics of the present-day, whether we know it or not.³⁴⁵ As Jonathan Crary writes, "[a] society is defined by its amalgamations, not by its tools...tools exist only in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible."³⁴⁶

For instance, as an amalgamation, the cyborg body is not only defined by the socio-political circumstances in which it was produced, but is also one of *the* defining factors of reality itself. The world is reflected in the surface of the cyborg, just as the cyborg is reflected in our image of the world, causing the body to not only double any existing social, cultural, and/or political problems, but to also reinforce those problems through its own behaviour, rather than aid in their deconstruction or subsequent diffusion.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 180.

³⁴⁴ William James writes: "We have to live to-day by what truth we can get to-day, and be ready to-morrow to call it falsehood." William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," p. 150.

³⁴⁵ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 177.

³⁴⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 8.

³⁴⁷ To paraphrase—and slightly dislocate—the words of Norman Mailer when describing U.S. Presidential Candidate, John F. Kennedy, in November 1960: "America's politics would now also be America's favourite movie, first soap opera, America's best-seller", and perhaps by extension, America's first cyborg; which incidentally, was also produced in that very same year. Interestingly, this quote was also written in 1960, the same year Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline published their paper, "Cyborgs and Space." Obviously, Mailer's idea suggests

3.8 Reflections

Nevertheless, despite the many issues complicating Haraway's optimism, her "Cyborg Manifesto" is not devoid of worth. On the contrary, Haraway's theories hold a great deal of value for both men and women alike, since they offer Western society the opportunity to not only grow, but to also understand itself without resorting to the old hierarchies of class, race, and gender as well as other similar notions based on the totalizing fallacies of incorporation and supremacy. Unfortunately, such revolutionary realizations are not forthcoming. Moreover, they will not be immediate once the time for change finally does arrive, as such a significant transformation to our overall subjectivity "means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories."³⁴⁸ In other words, such a massive resignification requires not only massive alterations, but perhaps even a massive revolution before the idea of cyborg-as-ally can ever become viable on a massive scale.

So far this chapter has not only strived to illustrate how cyborgs are represented throughout Western popular culture, but also to examine the ways in which the image manifests itself within the larger cultural unconscious. Through these examples, we have seen the ways in which current models of the cyborg model stand in direct opposition to Haraway's manifesto, and how each representation is intimately connected to the very properties and politics which Haraway strives to subvert. In fact, despite her assertions to the contrary, this chapter has provided sufficient evidence to show that there is a "drive in cyborgs to produce total theory."³⁴⁹ Or to more precise, a drive to produce a totalizing theory very similar in consequence to the ideas put forward by writers like Catherine McKinnon, since both theoretical frameworks maintain the so-called "informatics of domination" by reproducing

a coalescing of politics and popular culture, but I would also further that argument by suggesting a very strong correlation, not just between politics and culture, but between technology, society, and the values which govern them. All of which were permanently instilled in the image of the cyborg in 1960. Norman Mailer, "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," *Esquire* (November, 1960), Accessed 30 September 2005: http://www.esquire.com/features/articles/2003/031001_mfe_mailer_1.html.

³⁴⁸ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 181.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*

bodies that not only serve to reinforce ‘our’ allegiance to images of phallogocentricity, but which by extension, also serve to emphasize “the non-existence of women, except as products of men’s desire.”³⁵⁰ Yet how could this be? Given the obvious correlation between the cyborg and the Phallus, why is there such a large gulf between Haraway’s manifesto and the reality of human-machine representation? Is it merely a case of misinterpretation on her part, or is Haraway’s misunderstanding linked to something within the cyborg body that perpetuates its continual misrecognition?

Ironically, the reasons for such a significant theoretical disconnect are alluded to inadvertently by Haraway in another essay, entitled “The Past is the Contested Zone: Human Nature and Theories of Production and Reproduction in Primate Behaviour Studies.” Because while Haraway may have written this paper in relation to the study of animals—and primates, in particular—we can safely extend her ideas into the realm of the cyborg without risk of unwanted distortion. In her paper Haraway describes human fascination with animals as such:

People like to look at animals, even to learn from them about human beings and human society. People in the twentieth century have been no exception. We find the themes of modern America reflected in detail in the bodies and lives of animals. We polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves. The biological sciences’ focus on monkeys and apes has sought to make visible both the form and the history of our personal and social bodies. Biology has been pre-eminently a science of visible form, of dissection of visible shape, and the acceptance and construction of visible order. The science of non-human primates, primatology, may be a source of insight or a source of illusion. The issues rest on our skill in the construction of mirrors.³⁵¹

If our “focus on monkeys and apes has sought to make visible both the form and the history of our personal and social bodies”, then our obsession with the cyborg has certainly prompted the same goals. Moreover, if “[b]iology has been pre-eminently a science of visible form, of dissection of visible shape, and the acceptance and construction of visible order”, then so has cyborgology. After all, if “we polish animal mirrors to look for ourselves” then we as

³⁵⁰ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 159.

³⁵¹ Donna J. Haraway, “The Past is the Contested Zone: Human Nature and Theories of Production and Reproduction in Primate Behaviour Studies,” *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 21.

Westerners certainly polish animal-human, as well as human-machine mirrors, to accomplish the very same task.³⁵² Indeed, like the scientific study of primates, issues of cyborgology also “rest on our skill in the [literal] construction of mirrors.” Producing a visual motif that not only reconciles the seeming disparity between the reality of totalizing patriarchal cyborg politics, and Haraway’s fragmented yet inclusive cyborg-bodies, but one which in turn, also offers an explanation regarding the figure’s continual misrecognition, as well as the many associations and dangers embedded in our unflinching representation of that image.

³⁵² Chris Gray and Steven Mentor write: “[our study of the cyborg] should not be prescriptive, so much as descriptive, and productive of possibilities.” However, I would extend this idea, in the sense that, like our scientific fascination with animals, cyborgs cannot tell us who we *can* or *will* become, but rather who we *are*, and why we behave in the ways that we do. Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, “The Cyborg Body Politic,” p. 463.

Part 3: Bodies of Glass

4: Refracting Culture, Reflecting Selfhood: W. Ross Ashby and the Emergent Property

“We have come to the age of double-men. We no longer need mirrors to look at ourselves.”³⁵³

4.1 Emergence

Throughout the course of this dissertation, we have investigated the foundations of cyborg studies and exposed the subject’s general treatment of the man-machine as a Schwarzgerät. Furthermore, we have attempted to see beyond previous examinations of the image by discarding the assumptions that spring from the cyborg’s status as a black device, and by uncovering the creature’s political affinities in an effort to discern a corresponding ontology. Concordantly, the following chapter will now attempt to discover a physical structure that moves beyond the simple and deceptively inclusive image of human plus machine, in order to construct a corporeal model which remains consistent with the cyborg’s previously explicated political leanings, as well as its long and checkered history.

The first step in exploring the nature of the man-machine lies in reading both the history of the image, and the etymology of the term. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to define the cyborg in terms of its past, because depending on the elasticity of one’s definition, cybernetic imagery can stretch back for decades, centuries, even millennia.³⁵⁴ However, for the purposes of this dissertation we have already begun our discussion at the point where the cyborg was metaphorically born. Or to be more precise, where it was

³⁵³ *Pierrot le Fou*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, (De Laurentis, 1965).

³⁵⁴ History is littered with cyborgs. Icarus and Deadelus are perhaps the most well known examples of human-machine integration, and perhaps one of the oldest myths to present such a creature. Moreover, there are also numerous instances of human-animal amalgamations peppered throughout classical myth such as the Minotaur, the centaur, and the satyr. Even Jewish myth contains yet another kind of cyborgic creature, the golem. A mystical protector conjured to life from a mound of molded clay that would often appear at the behest of a rabbi so that it could protect the Jewish community from persecution, physical violence, or some other outside threat. Although, the golem is not a true cyborg or even a true amalgamation in the strictest sense, it has still been adopted as a symbol for writers and theorists interested in the idea of the posthuman. Elaine L. Graham is one such writer, devoting an entire section of her book, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens, and Others in Popular Culture*, to the concept of the golem as a posthuman image. Science Fiction writer Marge Piercy is another author, whose book, *He, She, and It*, centers on the image of the golem, and what she sees as its future incarnation; the cyborg. For more see: Marge Piercy, *He, She, and It* (New York: Fawcett Books, 1993); Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens, and Others in Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

ultimately named by American scientists Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, and instilled with the politics of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*. As such, it is here in the midst of the Cold War that we have opened our black box in order to properly view the elements concealed therein.

The second step in exploring the nature of the man-machine lies at the root of all cyborg theory, in the equation: Organic + Inorganic = Cyborg. Yet, instead of simply accepting the prior relationship as truth, and then basing any subsequent theories upon that truth, we shall investigate further by examining the components of this equation, and then by exploring the ways in which those individual parts might join together and interact. First, from the structure of the image, we can surmise that a cyborg is actually more than just the product of two merging entities. Moreover, we can see from the equation itself that the image is actually more complex than a single black box, but is in fact, the product of two linked black boxes. Both the human body and the scaffold of the machine are highly complex systems, organic and inorganic arrangements that must be reduced to simplified constructions because each is so complex. The human form is a myriad of cells, organs, and chemicals both moving and static. To account for every constituent within is practically impossible. As such, it is far more convenient to create a black box by labeling that system as 'human,' and then applying that construction to whichever problem one wishes to solve. The same method also applies to 'machine', since it too exists as highly complex combination of kinetic and static parts. As W. Ross Ashby writes:

Were the engineer to treat bridge-building by a consideration of every atom he would find the task impossible by its very size. He therefore ignores the fact that his girders and blocks are really composite, made of atoms, and treats them as his units. As it happens, the nature of girders permits this simplification, and the engineer's work becomes a practical possibility. It will be seen therefore that the method of studying very large systems by studying only carefully selected aspects of them is simply what is always done in practice. Here we intend to follow the process more rigorously and consciously.³⁵⁵

Of course, conceptualizing the cyborg as the product of two dissimilar black boxes forces a subtle, yet significant change to our overall

³⁵⁵ W. Ross. Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, p. 107.

perspective, since we are no longer treating the body as the sum of two differing parts, but rather, as the product of two distinct and disparate entities working together in tandem to create something which is ultimately unexpected. Because while it remains true, that if more than one black box is given, “and each is studied in isolation until its canonical representation is established, and if they are coupled in a known pattern by known linkages, then it follows...that the behavior of the whole is determinate, and can be predicted,” we must also remember that a successful prediction can *only* occur if the Boxes themselves are either identical, or if our knowledge of each is absolute.³⁵⁶ If neither of these factors apply, and each box is both dissimilar and mysterious—as the human body and the structure of the machine ultimately are—then the behavior of the whole could prove unforeseen, if not totally surprising. Indeed, if the examiner’s knowledge is less than full:

a prediction has to be undertaken on incomplete knowledge and may prove mistaken. Sometimes all that is known of the parts is that every one has a certain characteristic. There may be no better way of predicting than to use simple extrapolation—to predict that the whole will have it. Sometimes this proves justified; thus, if a whole is of three parts, each of pure copper, then we shall be correct if we predict that the whole is of pure copper. But often the method fails, and a new property can, if we please, be said to ‘emerge’.³⁵⁷

Sadly, Ashby’s concept of the emergent property has eluded or been ignored by cyborg theory since its inception, and has led to what I can only call the

³⁵⁶ W. Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, p. 110. Ashby writes: “It will be seen that prediction of the whole’s behaviour can be based on complete or on incomplete knowledge of the parts. If the knowledge is complete, then the case is that of the Black Box whose canonical representation is known, the inputs or circumstances being all those that may be given by the other Boxes to which it is to be coupled. When the knowledge of the parts is so complete, the prediction can also be complete, and no extra properties can emerge” (111).

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111. Even a linkage between two similar substances can produce unexpected results. These surprising interactions occur continually in nature, producing materials and gases which often contain properties beyond the capabilities of their original components, since “in a large system there is no a priori necessity for the properties of the whole to be a simple copy of those of the parts.” As W. Ross Ashby writes: “(1) Ammonia is a gas, and so is hydrogen chloride. When the two gases are mixed, the result is a solid—a property not possessed by either reactant./ (2) Carbon, hydrogen and oxygen are all practically tasteless, yet the particular compound sugar has a characteristic taste possessed by none of them./ (3) The twenty (or so) amino-acids in a bacterium have none of them the property of being ‘self-reproducing’, yet the whole, with some other substances, has this property...It does in fact very commonly happen that when the system becomes large, so that the range of size from part to whole is very large, the properties of the whole are very different from those of the parts. Biological systems are thus particularly likely to show the difference. We must therefore be on guard against expecting the properties of the whole to reproduce the properties of the parts, and vice versa” (110-112).

misrecognition of the cyborg body, and its associated politics. Because if one looks closely at various manifestations of the cyborg body over the last century, one can see very clear indications that human-machine integration does indeed produce a property both totally new and unpredictable; a property which can only be called “emergent.”

For instance, we all know the term itself denotes the intermingling of flesh and non-flesh to create a living hybrid of human and machine. Yet, over time we have ignored how that intermingling is represented, eschewing the essence of the cyborg and the reality of its so-called subversive politics in favour of the obvious, and somewhat superficial mixture of bone and metal. In truth, all cyborgs share a common root, an image that links them to their forerunners as well as their successors. As such, the cyborg’s blend of skin and alloy should not be viewed as the linkage of two separate nouns, but rather as the amalgamation of two disparate parts into one cohesive unit, because just as two chemicals can combine to produce a single substance, so can the cyborg’s blend of bone and steel generate a singular image. Strip away the skin to reveal a hard metallic frame, but wipe away the blood and that frame becomes a mirror:

Organic + Inorganic = Cyborg = Glass

Robbed of its flesh, the cyborg reflects the environment that surrounds it, but when covered with skin, with a veneer of normalcy, it plays the role of the errant copy; that of the double or the doppelganger—the *living* reflection. As a result, popular representations of the cybernetic body are continually characterized as either possessing a reflective surface, or conversely, as having reflective qualities: thereby transforming their characters from mere mixtures of machine and organism, into a series of reflective surfaces holding all the properties of both the mirror and the window.³⁵⁸

Prior to 1945, cybernetic doppelgangers seem to be the dominant trend. However, like all lasting cultural myths, the echoes of a twinned cyborg

³⁵⁸ In her book, *Body of Glass*, Piercy describes the essence of Yod the cyborg-golem as such: “On her palm she balanced a memory crystal, uncertain whether to toss it or keep it, tempted to load it onto her terminal to see Yod again. Most of each cube was text, algorithms, but part of each consisted of spoken words and recorded images...These crystals are his real body.” Marge Piercy, *Body of Glass*, p. 581.

continue right to the present day. In Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* the tormented Dr. Rotwang creates of a demented double of the saintly Maria. The resulting creature is an exact duplicate or reflection of the human Maria: one that not only sets out to undermine the original's efforts to alleviate the pain of the industrial proletariat, but seemingly, also her reputation as a chaste young girl. Furthermore, a reflective and translucent material known as Imipolex G in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, serves as the cybernetic link joining German soldier to German rocket. While the aptly named, but all too human Schwarzgerät's which pack the insides of each experimental V2, have the dubious honour of reflecting Pynchon's hapless hero, Tyrone Slothrop; who coincidentally, is otherwise known as the "Rocketman."³⁵⁹

The most obvious examples explicating the link between the mirror and the cyborg are those provided by the post-war Hollywood dream factory. One of the clearest and most blatant manifestations is the 1995 action thriller *Virtuosity*, in which a computer program containing the composite personalities of over one hundred serial killers is downloaded into a cybernetic body actually *made* of glass (Figure 24). To quote one suitably awkward techno-geek on the microscopic nature of his own device: "What you're seeing are millions of nano-machines suspended in colloidal solution absorbing the glass molecules and using them to generate the [body of the creature]...The nano-cells are silicon based so they need, you know, glass to regenerate."³⁶⁰ Despite the odd image of Russell Crowe eating a collection of laboratory beakers, car windshields, and tram windows, the most exciting combination of the cybernetic and the reflective is the trilogy fronted by the Terminator. In fact, as one of the most successful cinematic trios in the history of film, each movie not only recalls the connection between cybernetics, cyborgs, and the military applications of the Cold War, but also the legacy of Trinity, and the glass produced at the instant of its detonation. After all, the conjoined icons of light, glass, and Armageddon fuse quite clearly in the image of the T-101's reflective steel frame.

In 1991 when James Cameron launched his first sequel in a moment of mega-death—or perhaps more appropriately, in the instant of a million 'little

³⁵⁹ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 359.

³⁶⁰ *Virtuosity*, dir. Brett Leonard (Paramount, 1995).

deaths’—he revealed a skull that not only reflected the surrounding devastation with the strange clarity of a convex mirror, but one which also harbours the broken pieces of a recently destroyed American nation within the boundaries of its mirrored form. Flash forward to the year 2003, almost two decades after Schwarzenegger first landed, and that hail of fire and light begins again. This time the sand is not only seared to resonate with that federally owned material otherwise known as Trinitite, but is in turn, framed by the director as just one more detail in an opening scene packed with glass. Bear in mind, Schwarzenegger’s cyborg not only enters the story in the centre of a mirrored ball, but also exists as a kind of mirror himself, because beneath all those layers of blood, and skin, and muscle, and hair lay the reflective plates of his gleaming metal frame. Indeed, it is remarkable that in a scene spanning no more than thirty seconds there are at least three links to the misshapen mirror; two of which are explicit, one of which is implicit. Intentional or not, such imagistic density speaks to something far more significant than the presence of a mere anomaly, especially when similar images seem to recur steadily within unrelated projects, as well as within different media.

Film critic David Skal once wrote that the “the real creation myth of [the 20th century] is not Darwin, not Genesis. It is *Frankenstein*.”³⁶¹ Yet, according to Donna Haraway cyborg subjectivity rejects all affiliations with origin. In her words,

Nature and culture are reworked...The relationships for forming wholes from parts, including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are at issue in the cyborg world. Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein’s monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden...³⁶²

On the other hand, even if the “cyborg [does] not recognize the Garden of Eden”, and even if it is “not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust” the image is not without myth, because whether it arrives on a bolt of lightning on the outskirts of the promise land, or develops as the product of mad science in a time of Mutually Assured Destruction, this figure has a

³⁶¹ Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad and Dangerous: The Scientist and the Cinema*, p. 47.

³⁶² Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 151.

story.³⁶³ In fact, like an individual's reflection in the looking-glass, this mirror also demands recognition.

4.2 Glass

Unfortunately, due to the cyborg's ontological structure, and thus to its subsequent ability to assume the properties inherent in all glass products, any careful investigation of the man-machine becomes very difficult and very complex very quickly, because despite the cyborg's strong connection to mirrors and glass, one must never forget that pursuant to its possible relationship with notions of subjectivity, reflectivity, and identity; the creature could easily contain qualities from other silicate structures, in addition to those already afforded to the image through its status as a reflector. These subsequent considerations become extremely important to any explication of the man-machine, since all connections between it and glass become points of profound consequence.

As a material glass is "as hard as a rock and as transparent as water".³⁶⁴ It is "the only [substance] to provide light and protection from the elements, and [is] the basis for the most potent device in building: the window."³⁶⁵ Moreover, glass also has the ability to elevate, or bestow importance upon any object it encloses, since it has the power to promote all items to the level of spectacle, whether that object is as mundane as a specimen trapped inside a beaker, or, in terms of architectural design, as extraordinary as a skyscraper or garden under glass.³⁶⁶ As turn of the century author, Paul Scheerbart writes:

The face of the earth would be much altered if brick architecture were ousted everywhere by glass architecture. It would be as if earth were adorned with sparkling jewels and enamels. Such glory is unimaginable. All over the world it would be as splendid as if the gardens of the Arabian

³⁶³ Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 151.

³⁶⁴ Michael Wigginton, *Glass in Architecture* (New York: Phaidon, 1996), p. 6.

³⁶⁵ Ibid

³⁶⁶ As Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory write: "The dream of the garden under glass became a reality...It was a dream of the entire natural environment of a tropical island enclosed in iron filigree and glass...Nature could be controlled and not just for immediately useful purposes. Here the natural environment was regarded as a work of art." Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory, *Houses of Glass: A Nineteenth Century Building Type* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986), p. 1.

Nights. We should then have a paradise on earth, and no need to watch in longing expectation for the paradise in heaven.³⁶⁷

As a metaphor, glass also stands on the borderland between states, in the place where things begin and end. It is that hard yet permeable line separating in from out, while simultaneously blurring the boundary between both. Like its most ubiquitous manifestation, the window, glass is that clear translucent object, that invisible abstract thing, dividing, and yet closely linking, spaces, states, worlds, and even ideas. Subsequently, when one considers the cyborg in relation to the mirror, that bond between reflective object and bio-mechanical body begins to develop earlier cyborgic notions of physical linkage and integration, while dramatically expanding the role of this creature to include visions of self-reflection and identity formation. If such a connection is coherent, consistent, and pervasive, not just in execution but also in presence, then as a ‘body of glass’ the cyborg not only operates symbolically as an enormous reflector—thereby allowing us to forge a new subjectivity *through* the image of the man-machine as opposed to *in* its image as some would suggest—but to also form a more accurate vision of our current state; a more precise reflection of who we are at this moment, as opposed to who we could be in the moments to come. To paraphrase writers Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, cyborg bodies are not “prescriptive” bodies. They are not what we *should* be. Rather, they are “descriptive.”³⁶⁸ They tell us what we *are*, while providing the distance and the perspective to shape what we can become.

In a way, the words of a lovesick Lou Reed sound strangely appropriate in relation to the cyborg, the mirror, and their clear connections with Western culture, since the lyric, “I’ll be your mirror/ Reflect what you are/ In case you don’t know,” seems to perfectly echo the symbolic function of human-machine amalgamation.³⁶⁹ As the joining itself seems to consistently operate as a

³⁶⁷ Paul Scheerbarth and Bruno Taut, *Glass Architecture and Alpine Architecture* (New York: Preager Publishers, 1972), p. 46.

³⁶⁸ Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, “The Cyborg Body Politic,” p. 463. Gray and Mentor write: “The sovereignty of any metaphor, including the cyborg body politic, is illusory, subject to proliferation, hybridisation. It should not be prescriptive so much as descriptive and productive of possibilities, utopian and or pragmatic.”

³⁶⁹ The Velvet Underground, “I’ll be Your Mirror,” *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (Polydor, 1967). The song continues: “I’ll be your mirror/ Reflect what you are/ In case you

symbol for the processes, consequences, and fallacies of self-reflection, self-knowledge, and self-denial, than as an icon for the possible future of human evolution. As Jean Baudrillard writes; “‘*I’ll be your mirror*’” does not signify ‘I’ll be your reflection’ but “I’ll be your deception.”³⁷⁰

Fragility, transparency, opacity, reflection; all connotations associated with mirrors and various other forms of glass push the social, cultural, and political limits of the cyborg body ever-outward, beyond the borders of Lacanian psychoanalysis, beyond mere self-reflection, and into realms which have been left relatively unexplored, at least in relation to human-machine integration. In effect, these connections push the image inexorably toward far more unexpected issues concerning light, lenses, visibility, protection, and chill, as well as toward a few more surprising connections regarding glass, cybernetics, and their ever-growing influence on, as well as use within, architectural construction. Glass is so diverse as a physical and metaphorical device, that it often has the properties of a fantastical doorway, serving as the entrance to magical realities, liminal spaces, and even death. To quote the character, Heurtebise, from Jean Cocteau’s 1949 film *Orphée*: “I am letting you into the secret of all secrets, mirrors are gates through which death comes and goes...if you see your whole life in a mirror you will see death at work as you see bees behind the glass in a hive.”³⁷¹ Within the context of the cyborg, Cocteau’s re-imagining of the Orpheus myth could easily be construed as a wonderful parallel for the role of the man-machine in contemporary culture, because just as the glass in *Orphée* stands between life and the underworld, the cyborg might also stand *in-between*; dividing, and yet closely linking, two distinct subjectivities; one human, the other posthuman.

Even writers in the realm of English Literature continue to compound the versatility of glass. In the 1980 novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, J.M. Coetzee describes “the paltry theatrical mystery of dark shields hiding healthy

don’t know. I’ll be the wind, the rain, and the sunset/ The light on your door/ To show that you’re whole.”

³⁷⁰ Jean Baudrillard, “I’ll Be Your Mirror,” *Seduction* (Montréal: New World Perspectives, 1990), p. 69.

³⁷¹ *Orphée*, dir. Jean Cocteau (Andre Paulve Film, 1949). In this scene, the poet Orphée and his supernatural guide, Heurtebise, have just descended through the mirror and into the underworld. Jacques Derrida explicates the relationship between glass and ‘entrance,’ albeit indirectly, in his book *Glas*. For more on Derrida’s treatment of glass see: Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 189.

eyes” of the dangerous Colonel Joll. A man whose political stance, obsession with truth, and weird bespectacled appearance also bear a striking resemblance to the sociopathic Dr. Strangelove.³⁷² Indeed, within each of these cases, representations of glass tend to eschew all previously cited manifestations of the material in favour of its representation as a lens. A form which in itself, tends to operate as a kind of physical and figurative shield; one which not only filters out the undesirable light of reality, but which at best, also protects its wearer from the gaze of another by showing nothing but the warped image of those who would stare. At worst, however, such impenetrable glass eyes denote a terrible sort of emptiness; a soulless and evil quality, which more often than not, tends to represent more than just a complete lack of conscience on the part of the wearer, but perhaps also a total absence of identity, subjectivity, and self.

There are innumerable points of contact between cyborgs and glass. So far I have listed and briefly explored only a handful of variations. Each of which contain, and relate in their own unique way to several different theoretical constructs; ranging from psychology and spectacle, to fragility and death, not to mention glass and the various metaphorical functions inherent to its use as a portal. However, in the interests of concision, the sections contained within the following chapter will focus on only one of those variations. Specifically, the cyborg’s connection to the mirror, its possible role in the processes of identity formation, and the many physical and psychological consequences contained therein. After all, if one is to truly understand the glassy properties of the cyborg body, then certainly one must examine the physical structure of its primarily reflective surface, as well as any apparent consequences for its role as a psychological symbol resulting from our representation of that surface.³⁷³ Thus, like each of the previous chapters,

³⁷² J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, p. 4.

³⁷³ Even if the glass-cyborg connection functions almost exclusively in the realm of the Symbolic, the actual physicality, or organization of the image, remains enormously important. Subsequently, a clear examination of the creature’s construction as a looking-glass, can not only lead to a clearer understanding of its role within Western society as a dominant cultural metaphor—representing everything from radical feminisms to damaging patriarchies. But also to a better understanding of human-machine amalgamation as a body, which not only acts as a ubiquitous reflector for each disparate ideology, but which also functions as a mirror for those individuals, who would use the cyborg to support, nurture, and/or reinforce the tenets of such divergent social, cultural, and political systems.

the following sections will continue to follow the prudent advice of Freud, since it is hard “for a psychoanalyst [and an examiner] to discover anything new that has not been known of before by some creative writer.”³⁷⁴ In this vein, I will focus my discussion of the mirrored man-machine through two tightly connected texts produced in the years 1524 and 1972. More precisely, through the lens of one painting produced by the artist Francesco Mazzola, and one ekphrastic contemplation on that painting written by the poet John Ashbery. Each of these textual doubles are both physically and metaphorically similar to the body of the cyborg itself, and therefore eminently capable of providing valuable insight into the many problems one encounters when faced with such a strange reflector. Bear in mind, when conducting an investigation of the creature’s ontological structure, one must ask not only: is the cyborg a mirror, but also what sort of mirror does the cyborg resemble, and more importantly, what kind of resemblance is reflected within?

4.3 Fragility

Colossal, independent, and utterly alien, Francesco Mazzola’s right hand leans on the edge of his self-portrait like an “allegory of the creative act.”³⁷⁵ His normally benign proportions stretched out and buckled over the curvature of a convex mirror, until his fingers hang insect-like from the end of a monstrous appendage. At the centre of the painting, surrounded by a “few leaded panes, old beams, / Fur, pleated muslin, a coral ring run together/ In a movement supporting the face”, lies the visage of the artist, angelic and untouched by the distortions that twist his surroundings.³⁷⁶ It is a face remarkably clear and unmarred, occupying the still centre of a work dominated by deformation and obscurity.

³⁷⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (London: E. Benn Ltd, 1956) p. 262.

³⁷⁵ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 226.

³⁷⁶ John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 68, Lines, 4-6. For critical readings on Ashbery and his “Self-Portrait...” see: Harold Bloom ed., *John Ashbery* (New York: Chelsea House, 1985); David Shapiro, *John Ashbery: An Introduction to the Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); David Herd, *John Ashbery and American Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); David Lehman, ed., *Beyond Amazement: New Essays on John Ashbery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Robert Crawford, *Identifying Poets: Self and Territory Across Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Charles Altieri, *Self and Sensibility in Contemporary American Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

This is Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524), a painting that, in one way, could be construed as a "testimony to the virtuosity of the painter demanding his [professional] liberty" (Figure 25).³⁷⁷ However, given the enormous warps in perception, and the extreme play on Realist painting, Parmigianino's self-portrait holds something far more subversive than a simple declaration of genius. It is also, as Sabine Melchior-Bonnet writes, a "corrosive acid" eating away at the very base of our understanding, a caustic chemical bleeding the line between sane and insane, real and unreal.³⁷⁸

The body of the artist is not well proportioned or even whole, but exists within the work as an exaggerated collection of mammalian parts dominated by an enormous hand. As such, the painter's body is reduced to a single component, presenting a kind of visual synecdoche, in which the part represents the whole. Subsequently, Mazzola's fragmented form undercuts the notion of Man as a divine creature of God, because any "ontological resemblance, fundamental to the notion of man as [the] image of God, is broken by the painter's" extreme freakishness in the surface of the mirror.³⁷⁹ Thus, any residual faith in the unifying power of consciousness, or in some essential human divinity, is shattered by the artist's brutal depiction of a monstrous and unnatural self. One, which is not only subject to the capricious nature of perception, but perhaps more immediately, to the terrible madness that can spring from within.

Today, however, in a time when religious dogma plays a substantially smaller role in art, culture, and day-to-day life, the image of a warped reflection assumes a slightly different set of meanings than it did five hundred years ago, because instead of searching the mirror primarily for a sense of divine resemblance, something which would "unite man with his creator and...link him [with the rest of] his peers".³⁸⁰ Western culture has instead come to acknowledge the fragility and emptiness of its own image. People look inward not to find that essential need or trait common to all of humanity, but to gather, collect, and understand the fragments that separate one person from another. The goal of self-examination in a contemporary context is not

³⁷⁷ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 226.

³⁷⁸ Ibid

³⁷⁹ Ibid

³⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 6.

some bright religious epiphany, but the determination and explication of deep psychological processes; to make sense of our own fragility in the surface of the mirror, and to impose a sense of order and meaning on a subject which is not only irrevocably fractured, but also essentially meaningless. To quote Melchior-Bonnet:

Little by little the exploration of the subconscious, a structuralist game, led to its own dismemberment: both the inflation of images that referred only to themselves and the dislocation of a world deprived of meaning challenged the notion of the subject itself. There are no more autobiographies or self-portraits, but instead randomness, scattered pieces, the anonymity of the impersonal “one,” a shattered or cobbled together self.³⁸¹

It is exactly these processes which sit at the very heart of the cyborg body. They inform not only the ontological structure of the cyborg, but also the mindset of those who would look toward the creature for a sense of identity.

After all, as a mirror the cyborg body is intimately linked with theories of self-reflection and identity formation. Specifically, those theories put forth by Jacques Lacan. In fact, the glass-like façade of the typical man-machine is an enormously important cultural construction, and not just because of its extreme popularity and pervasiveness within Western culture, but mainly because it performs the same action as the ‘mirror’ in Lacan’s theory of the mirror phase. Operating symbolically as a massive looking glass, in which the fears and desires of the whole Western world are reflected in the creature’s glassy surface. It is therefore an object which can “shore up” a person’s sense of self, as well as a culture’s sense of itself, while exposing the many inherent instabilities and fragmentations that can plague their particular psyches.

Typically, however, Lacan’s process of identity formation occurs within an ordinary mirror—one that is flat and free of distortion. As such, the mirror’s reflection is steady and straightforward, and “seems to promise wholeness, an integrity of the self that is available in the future”.³⁸² Yet, the complete and/or perfect reflection is also “a trap, a decoy, a false promise. Thus, from the outset, falsehood and a dependence on things from without become necessary to constitute the truth of one’s own being”, because an

³⁸¹ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 264.

³⁸² “The Mirror Phase and its Implications: The Formation of the Ego,” p. 1.

individual relies on that sense of totality presented by the reflection, and then uses that connection to trigger the development of a whole and socialized self.³⁸³ Unfortunately, a person will never be as powerful, or as complete, as he or she may think, because any identity created through the mirror is not a true representation of the self, but is considered rather, as a projection or screen known as the ego. When a child identifies with “its mirror image, [it] creates a monster [from] the scattered parts of its experiential self”. This monster is the ego: “a fabrication, a construction, a defensive armour with which the self identifies.”³⁸⁴ As Elizabeth Grosz writes, the ego

it is not an outline or projection of the real body, the body of anatomy and physiology, but of an imaginary anatomy...an internalised image of the meaning the body has for the subject, for others in its social world, and for its culture as a whole. [This imaginary anatomy] is a shared and/or individualized fantasy of the body’s form and modes of operation.³⁸⁵

As a projection—a lie—the ego signifies a schism in the psyche of the individual, because at that moment “in which the self comes into view...it [also] becomes blind to its own emergence, alienates itself from itself.”³⁸⁶ In other words, self-identification as described in the mirror phase “does not simply give rise to wholeness, rather it provides the illusion of wholeness at the very moment in which it produces the subject as divided and split.”³⁸⁷ Hence, “self-construction becomes self-defeat.”³⁸⁸

This process is known as ‘misrecognition’; a stage in which “the mirage of the ‘I’ or ideal ego (Idealich)” supersedes the truth about one’s personality, as well as one’s body.³⁸⁹ It also happens to be a vital component in the creation of the subject, and a necessary tool in the construction of a sane and socialized being. The ego sutures fragments of the experiential self into a state of imagined totality, allowing one to function as a complete individual, as opposed to a series of discombobulated bits. Sadly, this process of simulating

³⁸³ “The Mirror Phase and its Implications: The Formation of the Ego,” p. 1.

³⁸⁴ Ibid

³⁸⁵ Ibid

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁸⁷ Ibid

³⁸⁸ Edward Haworth Hoepfner, *Echoes and Moving Fields: Structure and Subjectivity in the Poetry of M.S. Merwin and John Ashbery* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), p. 156.

³⁸⁹ “The Mirror Phase and its Implications: The Formation of the Ego,” p. 2.

a complete personality simultaneously ensures that any self-knowledge a person might possess is derived *per speculum in aenigmate*, because the imagined ego denies all access to a clear view of one's own self, and reveals only a "veiled image or representation of truth."³⁹⁰ Subsequently, perceptions of our own physical bodies are so frequently skewed that any representation of the self, either by photograph, sound, or video recording, is often seen as belonging to that of a startling, almost unrecognisable Other. As John Ashbery writes in the poem, "Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror":

This otherness, this
 'Not-being-us' is all there is to look at
 In the mirror, though no one can say
 How it came to be this way.³⁹¹

On the other hand, not all mirrors are perfect mirrors. There are a number of reflective surfaces returning likenesses that are neither pleasant nor whole, but which instead echo broken parodies of the original body due to some inherent abnormalities marring their glassy surface. The cyborg is one such mirror, producing an atypical and imprecise replication that not only offers a vision of the self without wholeness, but which also denies the onlooker even the illusion of wholeness.

For instance, the fragmentation of an individual as reflected in the mirrored surface of a cyborg body is measurable and immediate, because even though the cyborg is in essence, a body made of glass; it is not a 'glassy' creature in the smooth or flat sense of the word. Rather, a cyborg is a three dimensional being replete with curves, protrusions, and indentations corresponding to the humanoid form. As such, any image reflected within its surface is subject to the same distortions that characterize both the concave and convex mirrors.³⁹² It would be a gross miscalculation to see the cyborg as

³⁹⁰ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 109.

³⁹¹ John Ashbery, "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror," p. 73, Ln. 182-185.

³⁹² Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 193. Of course, concave and convex mirrors do not always share the same symbolic associations. "In the sermons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the convex mirror that disperses the rays of the sun symbolizes fashionable men and women of society, pawns of illusion and vanity, while the concave mirror concentrates the rays and thus represents spiritual light." However, here I am invoking the distortive qualities of both the convex and concave mirrors to illustrate a point about the shape of the cyborg. I am not interested in specific spiritual or historical connotations.

anything less than a warped mirror, reflecting a likeness more easily found in a “funhouse,” than within a typical Western home.³⁹³

Naturally, this specular trickery typified by the imperfect mirror produces an explosion “of incompatible gazes” in a single prismatic surface.³⁹⁴ It “divides representation into smaller pieces”, and shatters the image of the onlooker into a pile of scattered parts; thereby unfurling a collection of dissonant images as opposed to a single cohesive likeness.³⁹⁵ The resulting distortion then breaks “the cohesion of the subject”, and sacrifices the complete reflection “to the aggregate of disparate” pieces populating the mirror’s rough surface.³⁹⁶ Man “gets a piecemeal understanding of himself, he knows only bits of his singular experience and, as a fragment or shrunken image of a shattered mosaic, he [not only] loses his central and privileged position” within the Humanist hierarchy, but also any measure of stability found within his reflection.³⁹⁷ The Lacanian “homlette” is thus reflected as it truly is, broken and without form, deprived of a template on which to sew its scattered bits, because like the Mannerist painters of Renaissance Italy, the mirrored surface of the cyborg body also produces a likeness which is unstable, inconsistent, and divisive, and “neither personality nor mood can help give shape to this singular being made from ‘patches’ or ‘snippets’.”³⁹⁸ Instead, the grossly disproportionate caricatures returned by the man-machine offer the psyche no consolation and no respite, because the processes of imaginary identification necessary for the formation of the ego are rendered impotent by the very surface designed to facilitate them. As Ashbery writes:

The whole is stable within
Instability, a globe like ours, resting

³⁹³ Interestingly, Haraway approaches the idea of the warped mirror in her interview with Constance Penley and Andrew Ross. *Constance Penley*: “What we especially like in ‘A Cyborg Manifesto’ is the use of the term ‘scary’ to describe the new informatics of domination that sponsors of advanced technology have instilled everywhere. It suggests a nightmarish quality, but it also hints at excitement and adventure, especially girl’s adventures into realms hitherto off-limits...In this respect, it seems to be different from the note of technoparanoia usually sounded in orthodox left accounts of techsurveillance and social control. There’s a fictional action-adventure cast to your version of ‘scariness.’” *Donna Haraway*: “The funhouse!” Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs at Large,” p. 21.

³⁹⁴ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 225.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*

³⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 227-228.

On a pedestal of Vacuum, a ping-pong ball
 Secure on its jet of water.
 And just as there are no words for the surface, that is,
 No words to say what it really is
 You will stay on...serene in
 Your gesture which is neither embrace nor warning
 But which holds something of both in pure
 Affirmation that doesn't affirm anything.³⁹⁹

Consider James Cameron's 1991 blockbuster, *T2: Judgement Day*. Despite being the sequel to one of Hollywood's most successful efforts, the film also explicitly details the cyborg's distortive properties throughout, and which establishes the unsettling nature of the cyborg's twisted surface, as well the uncanny image of our reflection within that surface, well before the story even starts. It is a movie filled with cyborgic amalgamations that not only double, reflect, and distort the other characters as well as their environment, but bodies which also strive to beget a logical end to the political madness of Mutually Assured Destruction. In the opening credits of *T2*, the audience is confronted with a vision of fire; presumably the city of Los Angeles directly after a thermonuclear attack. As such, the opening credits not only present the viewer with the beginnings of a nightmare future, but also with the filmic fulfilment of Pynchon's final V-2, with the End that lies beyond the end of *Gravity's Rainbow*.⁴⁰⁰ Where Pynchon leaves off, Cameron begins anew, launching his story in a moment of orgasmic Armageddon. Beginning where "Orpheus puts down [his] harp", where human flesh is blown off like so much chaff, and where humanity itself is reborn, remade, and/or refitted into a corporeal form that actually thrives in the aftermath of such a devastating form of sexual release. After all, just as burning sand produces plates of shattered glass, the act of and/or potential for, a large atomic explosion also provides the necessary conditions for the production of the man-machine's mirrored body (Figure 26).⁴⁰¹ Thus, from the very start, Schwarzenegger's T-101 is

³⁹⁹ John Ashbery, "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror," p. 70, Ln. 88-99.

⁴⁰⁰ As Pynchon writes just prior to the impact of Rocket 00000: "The sound of a siren takes you both unaware. Zhubb looks up sharply into his mirror. 'You're not holding are you?' But the sound is greater than the police. It wraps the concrete and the smog, it fills the basin and the mountains further than any mortal could ever move...could move in time...'I don't think that's a police siren.' Your guts in a spasm, you reach for the knob of the AM radio. 'I don't think—'". Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 757.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 754.

inextricably linked to a looking glass that reflects misshapen images of its immediate environment; a motif that flows throughout *T1*, *T2*, and *T3* in a number of different guises. Even the trilogy's continual rehash of the double, or doppelgänger, could be construed as one such example, since the doubled image of the cyborg body imbues the text with a series of living reflections, and thus with numerous physical reminders of the mirror itself.

For example, within the flames that mark the opening, there are swing sets and hobbyhorses burned black by the heat, the children who once played there vaporized alongside them. Yet, as the music swells to an uneasy climax the hard steel head of a skinless Terminator begins to emerge (Figure 27). Specifically: the kind played by Schwarzenegger in the 1984 film of the same name. Stripped of its flesh, the T-101's metallic skull reflects the fire with the clarity of a mirror, and as it draws closer to the camera, the warped image of the surrounding flame on its steel head becomes clearer to the viewer. Revealing not only the broken pieces of this now destroyed American city, but also how its newly burnt and shattered parts are contained firmly within the boundaries of the cyborg's mirrored form. Of course, the T-101 is not the only creature to assume the status of a reflective cyborg. The visual connections between the looking-glass and the man-machine are echoed continually throughout the franchise in the far stronger, and far more suggestive forms of the T-101's successors; in particular, within the formless and gleaming body of the shape-shifting rapist, and sworn enemy of Schwarzenegger, otherwise known as the T-1000.⁴⁰²

Within the mythology of the Terminator franchise, the T-1000 is the next technological step in the eradication of humanity. It is more powerful, more advanced, more destructive, and far more successful than its Aryan predecessor, because instead of sporting a "hyper-alloy combat chassis", the T-1000 exists as "a mimetic poly-alloy"; a kind of liquid state that allows it to

⁴⁰² The T-1000's position as cyborg rapist is emphasized continually throughout the film as he repeatedly uses "knives and stabbing weapons"—which actually form and protrude from his own body—to forcibly penetrate other humans. In a few of these instances the T-1000 shoves his own knife-like arms through the heads and mouths of his victims; thereby simulating or mimicking, forced oral rape. Moreover, the T-1000's role as rapist is cemented at the end of the film when he begins to torture Sarah Connor in a Steel Plant, as he slowly and repeatedly pushes a long pointed spike, which is also made from and attached to his body, into the shoulder and chest of Ms. Connor. He seems to take pleasure in her painful screams.

morph into almost anyone or anything.⁴⁰³ This remarkable ability not only permits the newest Terminator to double others and conceal itself, but also compels the creature to reflect the entire world over the whole of its body.

At one point in the film the T-1000 rides a motorcycle into the front of a hovering police helicopter. After punching its way through the windshield, the Terminator then morphs into its default form and begins to pour itself through the glass and onto the passenger seat. At this point, the reflected face of the copter pilot is clearly visible in the ‘head’ of the vague mirror-like mass stirring beside him (Figure 28). Transforming the officer’s normally complete reflection into a bloated and distended mess; thereby producing a fractured likeness of the original body in the cyborg’s pooling mass.

Predictably, the pilot is horrified to discover a Terminator rising alongside him, and presumably on a symbolic level, equally terrified by his own disjointed image echoed in the surface of that creature. Certainly it must be quite a shock to see your own body reflected in the face of a living mirror, and to not only witness the fragility and transparency of your own ego as it swims inside a nightmare figure, but to also realize that your own cohesive sense of self, is nothing more than a lie. Until this time, the pilot possessed “a unified, hierarchical relationship to his body...a subject over and above [his] various bodily experiences”.⁴⁰⁴ His mere presence in the film as a functioning police officer is a testament to this fact. Yet, upon seeing his twisted image in the surface of the cyborg that hierarchy momentarily collapses, destroying his ego, and fracturing his identity into an “untrammelled, objectless, formless” mess.⁴⁰⁵ *Homme* becomes *hommlette*.

With the pilot’s body now falling, both literally and symbolically into a lower state of consciousness, the cyborg functions as any warped mirror should.⁴⁰⁶ Revealing not only the gaps and seams inherent to every identity made by Lacanian means, but also that strange sense of the uncanny experienced when one is confronted by an obscured or distorted vision of the

⁴⁰³ *The Terminator*, dir. James Cameron (Helmdale Film Corporation, 1984); *T2: Judgement Day*, dir James Cameron (Carolco, 1991).

⁴⁰⁴ Elizabeth Grosz, “Psychoanalysis and the Body,” p. 268.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁰⁶ After seeing his reflection in body of the T-1000, the pilot actually jumps from the helicopter and falls to a few stories to the ground below. In a sense, his physical fall actually mimics his drop into psychological chaos.

self.⁴⁰⁷ After all, for a person who seeks “unity by the mediation of the mirror, the kaleidoscopic fragments of the broken mirror reveal a protean self, within infinite virtualities.”⁴⁰⁸ The same can also be said of the imperfect mirror since each reveal an erratic, unstable, and ever-changing identity; one capable of collapse at anytime, because it exists solely in the “world behind the mirror...[in the] prism of the imagination and the dream.”⁴⁰⁹ Thus, despite Western culture’s persistent representation of the cyborg as an indestructible monster, like the test pilots and astronauts populating Tom Wolfe’s *The Right Stuff* (1979), fragility is, and has always been, an issue, since the cyborg body not only shatters consistently, but in turn, always facilitates the fragmentation of those it doubles and reflects. As Wolfe writes:

In the front seat was all that was left of...Bud Jennings...a promising young fighter pilot was now a horrible roasted hulk—with no head. His head was completely gone, apparently torn off the spinal column like a pineapple off a stalk, except that it was nowhere to be found...Each man could see it all...The curds were Bud Jennings’ brains. The tree trunk had smashed through the cockpit canopy of the [plane] and knocked [his] head clean to pieces like a melon.⁴¹⁰

4.4 Illusion

However, even though the cyborg body is inherently fragile, and even though the land beyond the glass is confused and illusory, this inherent instability can also illustrate how to create a sense of unity from that fragmentation. Bear in mind, “man’s relationship with his reflection is [always] conflicted”, even in relation to the most ordinary situation. For as Melchior-Bonnet writes:

⁴⁰⁷ As Sabine Melchior-Bonnet writes: “The gap between man and his reflection, at first a simple crack, generates a malaise that can spread from an unpleasant and furtive experience...to...a severe schism...Man and his reflection cease to be united. Their divergence is embodied before the mirror, to the extent that the mirror image is emancipated and in the end is no longer perceived as an optical phenomenon but rather as threatening competitor.” Hence, the cyborg is split and the double is born, because just as the T-1000 assumes the mirror image of another—before that ‘other’ is either murdered or flees in fear—so does the warped mirror disconnect the individual from their reflection—from their sense of self, by in turn, shattering the image and illusion of that self. Alienating not only body and mind, but also body from body, mind from mind; producing a fracture between ego and subject that is nothing if not all encompassing. Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 255.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 246.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*, pp. 8-9.

Forced to let his image enter the [glass, man] is revealed—visible, naked, vulnerable, subject to the sight of himself as others see him. He has to control his face, adjust his behaviour, hide his secrets. Whether he embraces or rejects this image, he exposes himself to the danger of being misperceived. Furthermore, his reflection is ephemeral, and inconsistent—a mere weakening of consciousness or the cruelty of a sideways glance might cause it to lose its familiar conformity. Worse yet, by revealing an image of the body to consciousness, the mirror becomes a screen for many imaginary projections and identifications.⁴¹¹

These projections and identifications do not survive long, and must be continually reasserted so that the subject's "familiar conformity" can survive. Nevertheless, unlike the identities produced and derived from a typical glass reflector, the warped mirror denies any such formations or assertions from taking place, because it only reveals the shattered image of an individual's true psychological state.

Yet, what happens when the viewer's shattered parts are locked within the borders of a living body, when they are reflected in a corporeal creature both real and symbolic, as opposed to the relatively empty and formless plane of the rectangular mirror? Can such a small shift in our perception affect the ways in which Western Culture not only perceives and represents the cyborg, but also in how we see and think about the subject being reflected within that body?

Despite the overwhelming sense of fracture held within a reflective form like the Terminator, one must never forget that in spite of any previously mentioned schism between subject and reflection, object and representation, many of the consequences garnered from a) recognizing a fractured self in the surface of a warped mirror, and b) comprehending that same self in the warped surface of a cyborg body, differ immensely. In the first scenario, the subject remains broken; untied to any form or context that could give rise to a sense of organization for subject's shattered state. While in the second, the glass body provides the organized sense missing from the first.

In his ekphrastic poem, "Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror," John Ashbery claims that in a typical warped mirror there is nothing outside the immediate surface, nothing beyond the "shield of a greeting", because there

⁴¹¹ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, pp. 247-248.

can be no interiority, no meaning, when faced with the distortions of a fractured face.⁴¹² As Ashbery writes:

Francesco, your hand is big enough
To wreck the sphere, and too big,
One would think, to weave delicate meshes
That only argue its further detention.
[...] But your eyes proclaim
That everything is surface. The surface is what's there
And nothing can exist except what's there.⁴¹³

If Ashbery's statement is true, then the misshapen images returned by the warped mirror are merely empty gestures devoid of any real significance, because whatever meaning is held by the reflection is tethered so closely to the glass, that "the soul is a captive/ ...kept/ In suspension, unable to advance much farther/ Than your look as it intercepts the picture."⁴¹⁴ Subsequently, "There is no way/ To [re]build" Man and his resemblance "flat like a section of wall".⁴¹⁵ There is no way to make Francesco coherent and whole again, because his image cannot project meaning into the outside world, or serve as a surface on which meaning can be enforced or created. Instead, that disparate sense of self dominating his reflection can only curve back on itself, turning away from the viewer to "join the segment of a circle,/ Roving back to the body of which it seems/ So unlikely a part".⁴¹⁶ For the poet, it is impossible to see beyond the warped surface of the looking glass, and to penetrate in search of some meaningful internal core, because even if that core does exist, it refuses to interact, or to even show itself to the viewer. Rather, there is only the curved surface of the mirror surrounding what is essentially, an unknowable centre; a hard shell protecting the contents of some inscrutable black box.

Even the language of Ashbery's poem, which itself functions as a kind of funhouse mirror, cycles in and out of focus, cleverly mimicking the same instability and ambiguity that pervades all warped reflections, because it refuses to concentrate on a single specific, or to even collect and make sense of

⁴¹² John Ashbery, "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror," p. 82, Ln. 533.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 70, Ln. 72-81.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 68-69, Ln. 29-31.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, p. 69, Ln. 61-62.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p. 69, Ln. 63-65.

the many disparate parts that make up Mazzola's image. Such a task is futile, since any attempt at cohesion is a strike against whatever meaning is held by the painting.

Yet, given their clear impenetrability, how does one go about interpreting such fragile and illusive works of art? Furthermore, how does one 'read' an image reflected in the mirrored body of a creature whose physical form is also modelled on the same twisted surface? First of all, in order to compensate for the obvious incongruity between the cyborg's warped reflection and our potentially destructive analysis of that reflection, while in turn, not only making sense of both Ashbery's poem and Parmigianino's work, but also all reflections held in the surface of any warped mirror, we as readers must follow the advice of critic Edward Hoepfner, and instead form an analysis which simultaneously comprehends points akin to the following:

Parmigianino's musings before the barber's glass, his rendering of a particular image rendered by that mirror, Ashbery's assessment of and response to Parmigianino's work, and the poet's production of a self-portrait in the language of the poem[, which is itself a portrait in a convex mirror.] All these are cast upon us.⁴¹⁷

And all these disparate elements must be considered if one wishes to understand the nature of the subject in the surface of any warped mirror, since the critical processes we use to understand "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" can also serve as a template for understanding self-reflection in the misshapen surface of the cyborg body.

If a person is confronted with the broken pieces of their shattered image in a normal plate of curved glass, he or she will grasp the mirror's many facets in the same way a reader would grasp Ashbery's poetic deliberations on Parmigianino's painting; where one must consider concurrently, the motivations, desires, realities, and responses that engulf the poet's particular brand of ekphrasis. After all, when confronted with such a twisted likeness, one would have to ponder his or her desires before the mirror, his or her reflections within that mirror, his or her assessment of and response to those reflections, as well as the individual's internalisation of the images therein, and the resulting attempt at producing and/or reconciling a self in "the language" of

⁴¹⁷ Edward Haworth Hoepfner, *Echoes and Moving Fields*, p. 142.

those images. Unfortunately, the internalisation of a shattered image “sets into motion too many affects, and the [glass], instead of anticipating unity, breaks it into pieces.”⁴¹⁸ As such, the person’s attempt at reproducing a self in “the language” of their reflection ultimately proves fruitless, because whatever subjectivity exists within his or her mind is reproduced just as it is in the glass. Splintered, unknowable, and without form, it casts the body back to Lacan’s *homlette*, and to the wreckage reflected in the “gibbous/ Mirrored eye of an insect”.⁴¹⁹

However, when a subject is fractured inside the mirrored body of a dominant symbol such as the cyborg, its broken parts are contained within the physical and contextual framework of that form. The subject’s broken pieces occupy the interior of that body, and thus become tied to it, because a person’s amorphous feelings, as well as his or her experiential sense of self, are now bound to a subject that is not his or her own. This point is especially true in regards to filmic representations of the human-machine amalgamation, because more often than not the reflection of the onlooker will actually appear trapped within, or grafted onto the man-machine’s symbolic surface, as if sutured to the curves of its mirrored body. For instance, in Cameron’s *T2* the face of the copter pilot is reflected in the bulb, or head, of the T-1000; creating a visual link that immediately bonds the two individuals physically. This scene thereby complicates the psychic drama of the warped mirror by establishing a visceral connection between the two characters, since for a single moment the shifting parts of the cyborg body directly correspond to the pilot’s reflections within that body. As though the pilot himself was momentarily grafted onto the figure of the Terminator; thereby framing the man’s shattered likeness in the cyborg’s near-shapeless form. Its ill-defined edges encircling his ‘soul’ the way the land encircles the sea.

The boundaries of the T-1000 surround those disparate human elements composing the mind and body of the unfortunate pilot. They contain him and bind his broken parts by adding a background on which his fractured self can rest. As a result, the borders of that creature, however unclear, govern the reorganization and operation of the pilot’s entire being. They add context and

⁴¹⁸ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 246.

⁴¹⁹ John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” pp. 82-83, Ln. 547-548.

meaning to a ruined self: a body, which would otherwise reject the unity imposed by such ideas.⁴²⁰ Moreover, with the individual's free-floating hommllette now tied to something structural, as well as something semi-human, it becomes so much more than a smattering of empty parts, and is transformed rather, into something that resembles a cohesive whole, since each of those disparate parts now begin to fill the boundaries of a specific, and well-defined interior. Thus, the mirrored surface of the cyborg body becomes the centre around which everything is organized. It becomes the plane upon which the shattered pieces reflected therein are congealed into a meaningful collection of interrelated elements.

This is a complex scenario to be sure, because if the previous theorem is correct, then logically this formulation would also suggest that the ego of the viewer is still intact—however tentatively. And that the illusion of selfhood normally produced by the mirror phase is still maintained, even in the face of such profound fragmentation. Consequently, the warped surface of the cyborg body would have little effect on its function as an object which facilitates the formation of the ego, because all the rules inherent to Lacan's theory of identity formation are still in play. An ego-ideal is still stamped over the disparate parts of the experiential self by the body of the cyborg itself, which in turn, provides the appearance of a well-organized whole. Indeed, one could argue that the glass body of the man-machine is primarily responsible for creating this feeling of conformity and for enforcing the "armour of an alienating identity" where one should not exist. Under such a system, it is the human shape of the cyborg body, that not only holds the disparate pieces of the onlooker's persona together, but which in turn, provides the necessary pattern on which the normal processes of ego formation can occur.

⁴²⁰ Similarly, in *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003), Arnold Schwarzenegger enters the story inside a ball of energy: one that reflects misshapen images of its immediate environment over the whole of its spherical surface. With Schwarzenegger delivered to earth in the centre of a warped mirror, the audience can watch a literal interpretation of the pilot scene from *T2*, since for a moment, Arnold's flesh is actually fixed inside the belly of a mirror, representing not only an upturned version of the Terminator itself—wherein now, the mirror surrounds the flesh—but also echoing the fate of the broken subject in the surface of the cyborg. After all, a mirrored shell is surrounding Schwarzenegger's human flesh, and trapping it within the borders of its circular arc. Thereby complementing the sentiments of the previous film, in which the pilot's shattered sense of selfhood is inextricably bound within the mirrored surface of a cyborg body.

Subsequently, the man-machine is not, as Haraway contends, predicated upon notions of fracture, but is instead a body in perpetual search of unity. This, of course, creates a rather strange opposition at the very core of the cyborg, because even though the physical borders of that figure provide the creature with a loose sense of wholeness and conformity, the glass form of the hybrid's body also holds an enormous amount of fracture. In fact, even though the bodily boundaries of the cyborg manage to bond the shattered parts of the onlooker's psyche, the reflections held within that figure are invariably warped just as they are in Mazzola's mirror. Thus, the image of a glass cyborg filled with the shattered pieces of a person's identity quickly becomes a perfect analog for the subject formed as a result of Jacques Lacan's mirror phase, because within the physical limits of the man-machine there is nothing but a collection of fragmentary parts held together by a fragile unity facilitated by the physical form of the cyborg itself.

Of course, given these extremely strong Lacanian connections, the cyborg as dominant cultural metaphor, would also invariably function as a dominant cultural mirror, and would therefore act as a vessel not only for general reflections of Western culture, but also for the varied psychologies produced therein. The man-machine would in turn, carry all of our inadequacies, instabilities, insecurities, and fractured parts tightly within its mirrored frame, while simultaneously providing its onlookers with a fragile sense of totality garnered from that frame. Despite the cyborg's tentative unity, there would remain an unavoidable sense of the uncanny, as well as a massive and very visible feeling of inadequacy connected to the broken images contained within the warped surface of that body. Allowing the fractured pieces enclosed inside to manifest themselves both literally and symbolically, since that sense of disunity and lack found within the physical body of the man-machine would reflect the usual feelings of disintegration and inadequacy, which the ego strives to mask. Producing psychological dis-ease that not only creates a very visible impression of failure, insufficiency, and anxiety, but which ultimately carries over to complement the nature of "cyborg politics," as well as the disposition and behaviour of cyborg representations.

5: Body of *Glas*: Cyborgs, Subjectivity, and the Fallacy of the Posthuman

“The motif of the limit, of the frontier, of the parting line will furrow the whole sequence. From one mother to the other.”⁴²¹

5.1 Boundary

Beyond the psychological qualities and connections inherent to the cyborg’s representation as a mirror, there is also the potential to examine cultural representations of human-machine amalgamations outside the framework provided by Lacan. Because while the previous readings certainly support the argument that ‘we’ as a culture are looking toward the cyborg for a new sense of identity, that sense of separation necessary for the formation of the subject is also almost absent. In other words, we as Westerners have apparently failed to distance ourselves from that which came before, so that a new sense of self, as well as a new sense of selfhood, can be produced in the face of the glass. Instead, Western culture still clings to the figure of its humanist ‘mother’ even as it whispers weakly for a body of its own. In fact, even if such a profound psychological change is eventually granted, and even if we do in the end, choose to alter our underlying nature and break away from the past in order to create something we “must helplessly call [posthuman]”, one is left to wonder whether such a transformation could ever be a success, or if the act would simply become a matter of exchange.⁴²² As Neil Badmington writes:

Posthumanism...needs theory, needs theorizing, needs above all to reconsider the untimely celebration of the absolute end of ‘Man.’ What Jacques Derrida calls the ‘apocalyptic tone’ should be toned down a little, for, as Nietzsche once pointed out, it is remarkably difficult to cut off the human(ist) head through which we (continue to) ‘behold all things.’⁴²³

⁴²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 189.

⁴²² Ihab Hassan, “Prometheus Performer: Towards a Posthuman Culture?,” *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, edited by Michael Bennamou and Charles Caramella (Madison, WI: Coda Press, 1977), p. 212.

⁴²³ Neil Badmington, “Theorizing Posthumanism,” *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003), p. 10. Badmington continues: “While I am not for one moment interested in preserving humanism, keeping its head firmly on its shoulders, I do think that it is worth remembering the tale of the Lernaean hydra (the mythical beast that, of course, re-members itself). ‘The hydra throve on its wounds,’ Ovid recalls, ‘and none of its hundred heads could be cut off with impunity, without being replaced by two new ones which made its neck stronger than ever’...Apocalyptic accounts of the end of ‘Man,’ it seems to me, ignore humanism’s capacity for regeneration and, quite literally, recapitulation. In the approach to posthumanism on which

Badmington's point is well taken, and by a work once removed, so is Derrida's, since "thought always takes place within a certain tradition".⁴²⁴ Subsequently, thought itself is bound to bear some trace of that tradition. Like the Cold War politics of the cyborg body, "[n]o one can think...entirely" outside the boundaries of time and space, or in trying, escape the politics and behavior which have influenced one's perspective, because by

'affirming an absolute break and absolute difference' from established anthropocentric thought [from humanism to posthumanism]. Such 'transgressions,' Derrida points out, can all too easily become 'false exits,' as the 'force and the efficiency' of tradition effect a stricter and more naive reinstatement of 'the new terrain on the oldest ground'.⁴²⁵

5.2 Transition

As a basic hybrid of human and machine, the cyborg is consistently seen as *the* boundary separating one ethos from another; dividing specifically, those thoughts and ideals which were spawned by the Enlightenment, and those which were born from the subsequent destruction of that particular liberal humanist philosophy. Indeed, today, conventional wisdom states that the foundations of humanism are being torn away by the invasive nature of modern technology, and by its ability to penetrate and merge with the body

I want to insist, the glorious moment of Herculean victory cannot yet come, for humanism continues to raise its head(s)."

⁴²⁴ Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," p. 13.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, p. 14. For more on the paper quoted by Badmington see: Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Hemel Hempstead, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), pp. 109-36. In "The Ends of Man," Derrida refers to 'an absolute break and absolute difference' from established anthropocentric thought as 'an apocalyptic tone', and thus as something which denotes a final but false end. Neil Badmington uses Derrida's terminology throughout the course of his argument as theoretical lens by which to approach the Posthuman body, stating: "I think that Derrida's reluctance to be seduced by the 'apocalyptic tone' bears repeating today, as posthumanism begins to find its feet within the academy. It seems to me that many are a little too quick to affirm an absolute break with humanism, and a little too reluctant to attend to what remains of humanism in the posthumanist landscape. From one perspective, this is perfectly understandable: posthumans are far more exciting, far sexier than humans. To misquote Haraway, I, for one, would rather go to bed with a cyborg than a 'Man' of reason. But someone has to do the dirty work: humanism requires attention...The familiar, easy announcements of a complete change of terrain, a pure outside, need to be complemented by work that speaks to humanism's ghost, to the reappearance of the inside within the outside. Both halves of the signifier in question demand attention: posthumanism, as I have argued elsewhere, is as much *posthumanist* as it is *posthumanist*." Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," p. 15. For more on Badmington and humanism see: "Pod Almighty! or Humanism, Posthumanism, and the Strange *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*," *Textual Practice* 15.1 (2001), pp. 5-22.

itself. Certainly, the ever increasing relevance of such a troubling, claustrophobic, and fragmented sense of self is in direct opposition to the free, whole, holy, impenetrable, white, and ultimately unsullied organic body at the centre of the Enlightenment; producing an opposition that, if feasible or even existent, could conceivably trigger a radical posthuman transformation within contemporary Western society. Superficially, the validity of this prior, and very popular formulation seems stable enough, since as Jonathan Crary writes; “what determines vision at any given historical moment is not some deep structure, economic base, or world view, but rather the functioning of a collective assemblage of disparate parts on a single social surface.”⁴²⁶

Today, the body is that surface, and the cyborg is nothing if not a relatively new way to conceive of and represent that form. Thus, if our bodies are the battleground for conflicting socio-political, cultural, and aesthetic philosophies—for new ways to *see*—and if they do indeed operate as the site of evolution and change, then naturally such a radical reconsideration of the human form, especially one which would designate it as something other than simply human, would cause the entire world to adjust in turn.⁴²⁷ To quote Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz:

We experience the world through our bodies and these experiences are modified by the body’s shape and age and decoration and form. Bodies provide the canvas on which we paint ourselves to share with the world, and they can help or hinder our social functioning on so many levels.⁴²⁸

Yet, given the gendered nature of the cyborg body, as well as the racialized, patriarchal, and extremely damaging political affinities contained therein, does it really matter if the white male bodies saturating the Western imagination are slightly less ‘solid’ than their white male predecessors? Do such small changes to our self-image hold any real significance when faced with the

⁴²⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 6.

⁴²⁷ As Jennifer Gonzalez writes in her essay, “Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research”: human-machine representations “take over when normal organic bodies fail...[When] the current ontological model of ‘human being’ does not fit a new paradigm, a hybrid model of existence is required to encompass a new, complex and contradictory lived experience” Jennifer Gonzalez, “Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research,” *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 270.

⁴²⁸ Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz, *Why Arnold Matters: The Rise of a Cultural Icon*, p. 126.

continued inequalities inherent in our ideological make-up? And considering the obvious similarities between humanist, and allegedly posthumanist representations, is the latter different enough from the former to be considered a separate opposing ideology?

If the posthuman body is in actuality, a cyborg body, or if it is indeed best symbolized by the image of the cyborg, as Chris Gray and N. Katherine Hayles contend, then the politics of the posthuman are synonymous with the previously explicated politics of the man-machine.⁴²⁹ The two should be one and the same, since both are porous, fragmented, unstable, inadequate, and corrupted. On the other hand, if the cyborg does not symbolize an irrevocable “change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge” then what does the image represent?⁴³⁰ After all, even though the man-machine both embodies and enacts the very worst aspects of liberal humanism, the cyborg itself is still fundamentally different from all previous articulations of the human form as expressed under the philosophies of the Enlightenment. Subsequently, the real question is this: if the mirrored surface of the cyborg body does not provide us with a blueprint for a new sense of self, a new way to be human, and a new way to think, then what are the alternatives? What does it do instead?⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Chris Hables Gray, “Manfred Clynes and the Cyborg,” Accessed 10 July 2004: <http://www.routledge-ny.com/ref/cyborgcitizen/cycitpgs/clynes.html>. As Gray writes: “...the twentieth century human body can be conceived of through any number of...metaphors. In important ways, it is a disciplined body, a textualized body, a gendered body, and a resisting body. But more and more it seems that one of the most fruitful metaphors is to conceptualize the human body as a rhetorical and material construction, a creature that combines informatics, mechanics, and organics. In other words, a cyborg.” Similar sentiments are expressed by N. Katherine Hayles in her essay, “The Life-cycle of Cyborgs: Writing the Posthuman.” As Hayles writes: “the age of the human has given way to the posthuman. Not that humans have died out, but that human as a concept has been succeeded by its evolutionary heir. Humans are not the end of the line. Beyond them looms the cyborg.” N. Katherine Hayles, “The Life Cycle of Cyborgs: Writing the Posthuman,” p. 321.

⁴³⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 387. Foucault continues: “...among all the mutations that have affected the knowledge of things and their order, the knowledge of identities, differences, characters, equivalences, words...only one, that which began a century and a half ago and is now perhaps drawing to a close, has made it possible for the figure of man to appear. And that appearance was not the liberation of an old anxiety, the transition into luminous consciousness, of an age-old concern, the entry into objectivity of something that had long remained trapped within beliefs and philosophies: it was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge. As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of a recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.”

⁴³¹ Neil Badmington asks a similar question in his essay “Theorizing Posthumanism”: Badmington writes: “What remains...is the *possibility* that humanism will haunt or taint posthumanism, and it is precisely this problem that...[concerns] me here—a problem of what remains, a problem of remains. If [N. Katherine] Hayles’s project [*How we Became Posthuman*] is to imagine a posthumanism that does not fall into the kind of trap that ensnares

5.3 Anxiety

So far, we have seen how man-machine imagery merely reinforces the goals and ideals of an already pre-existing political system. More specifically, of the time period in which the cyborg itself was named, defined, and finally transformed into a closed black box. It was during the Cold War that the cyborg finally became a ‘cyborg,’ and was thus confirmed as a real and relevant entity with an embedded political agenda. Yet, concurrent to this articulation, and the cyborg’s many connections to the shattered and fragmented mirror, there remains another way to both interpret and investigate the strange glass bodies which spring from the amalgamation of organic and inorganic, while still remaining true to many of the cyborg’s previously explicated political leanings, and related ontology.

One of the most productive concepts by which to examine the nature and function of the cyborg body is found in the work of former paediatrician turned psychoanalyst, D.W. Winnicott.⁴³² In particular, within Winnicott’s celebrated theory of the ‘transitional object’: a term which refers specifically to a special childhood item, the “first not-me possession”, and indeed, “the first possession.” In other words: that thing which is “neither wholly other, nor simply part of the self.”⁴³³ As analyst Michael Eigen writes, the transitional object “is not a hallucination, but an actual object filled with meaning...it is my own with bits of me and my mother and itself blended in a way that does not fit any single category.”⁴³⁴ It is a “temporary construction which aids the infant in the early stages of developing a sense of reality and [in] establishing

Hans Moravec [in his book *Mind Children*], mine is slightly different (though not unrelated), involving instead an attention to what of humanism itself persists, insists, and ultimately *desists*. I want, in short, to ask an apparently straightforward question, with deliberately Leninist overtones: if traces of humanism find their way into even the most apocalyptic accounts of the posthumanist condition, *what is to be done?*” Neil Badmington, “Theorizing Posthumanism,” p. 12.

⁴³² For more on Winnicott’s life and work see: D.W. Winnicott, *The Child, The Family, and the Outside World* (Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Publishing, 1987); *Holding and Interpretation: Fragment of an Analysis* (New York: Grove Press, 1989); Peter Rudnytsky, *Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces: Literary Uses of D.W. Winnicott* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); F. Robert. Rodman, *Winnicott: Life and Work* (Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Publishing, 2003).

⁴³³ Michael Eigen, “Winnicott’s Area of Freedom: The Uncompromisable,” *Liminality and Transitional Phenomena*, ed. Nathan Schwartz-Salant and Murray Stein (Wilmette, Illinois: The Chiron Press, 1991), pp. 68-69.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 69.

his [or her] own individual identity.”⁴³⁵ As such, it is an object “of positive value in monitoring growth and expansion”, and is later “dispensed with when...no longer needed.”⁴³⁶

Film critic Fred Glass employs Winnicott’s theory to great effect, and proposes that transitional objects can not only be used as a means by which to examine and understand the child’s production of “an individual identity”, specifically one which supersedes “the merged fluid baby/mother relationship of infancy”, but more importantly, one which can also be employed as “a model for understanding broader cultural issues.”⁴³⁷ In fact, Glass labels the man-machine as a transitional object throughout his argument, drawing on Winnicott’s own tentative formulation that there could be a “parallel between individual psychological development...and the collective metamorphoses of groups within a society faced with change.”⁴³⁸ Glass writes:

Characters in situations in theater, paintings, storytelling, or films might reveal something of the collective psychological processes that occurs when an audience engages with [what can only be called a] ‘cultural transitional object,’ [in this case the cyborg,] especially in periods of social conflict [and/or] structural transformation of a culture. [In fact, it was Winnicott’s] hope that cultural theorists might take up the idea and apply it to their work in ways that, as a non-specialist, he could only intuit.⁴³⁹

In discussing the cybernetic bodies of Paul Verhoeven’s *Robocop* and *Total Recall*, as well as the futuristic built environments which surround and reflect those bodies, Fred Glass begins his argument with a brief exploration of a very specific—and very Winnicottian—Sci-Fi sub-genre, he calls “The New Bad Future” (NBF).

In general terms, NBF is a prevalent subsection of Science Fiction filmmaking which specializes in telling “stories about a future in the grip of feverish social decay.”⁴⁴⁰ According to Glass:

⁴³⁵ Phyllis Greenacre, “The Fetish and the Transitional Object,” *Emotional Growth: Psychoanalytic Studies of the Gifted and a Great Variety of Other Individuals, Vol. 1* (New York, International Universities Press, 1971), p. 334.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*

⁴³⁷ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” *Film Quarterly* 44.1 (1990), pp. 2-3.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

The NBF scenario typically embraces urban expansion on a monstrous scale, where real estate capital has realized its fondest dream of cancerous growth. Amnesia-stricken characters and advanced gadgetry tangle against the backdrop of a ruined natural environment, while drug gangs compete with private security forces to provide the most plentiful opportunities for employment...many NBF films tilt toward an intelligent, leftish politics, leavened with a sense of (black) humor. Human/machine interfaces figure prominently, often through androids or cyborgs didactically presented as more human than human characters. Indeed, central to the concept of the NBF is the question of what *is* human, with moral, political, and philosophical discourses spinning round that axis.⁴⁴¹

Glass goes on to state, that in addition to creating a fictionalized and dystopic future based on the social, political, and economic conditions of the present, NBF films such as *Robocop*, *Alien*, and *Blade Runner* also play a role in providing

viewers with an unconscious vehicle for dealing with the collective issues raised by the transition, under capitalist control, from a relatively stable national, mechanical/industrial society to a new and uncertain transnational information technology order. The social anxiety of job dislocation through the wanton destruction of the old industrial base of the American economy is compounded by the felt experience of millions of workers who have to retool themselves to survive.⁴⁴²

This statement, of course, boasts a number of parallels with Donna Haraway's descriptions in "A Cyborg Manifesto," and in particular with her articulation of a relatively new economic change already well underway by the mid-1980s. Specifically: one responsible for transforming the fields of telecommunications and biotechnology into the new Godheads of the 21st century. Each these areas has not only redefined who we are individually, as well as what we are collectively, but also what we have *access* to as both separate people and discrete social groupings. As Haraway writes:

The 'New Industrial Revolution' is producing a new world-wide working class, as well as new sexualities and ethnicities. The extreme mobility of capital and the emerging international division of labour are intertwined with the emergence of new collectivities, and the weakening of familiar

⁴⁴¹ Fred Glass, "Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future," p. 2

⁴⁴² Ibid, p. 3. Glass continues: "Other similar relationships rooted in rapid economic and technological transformation can only be hinted at here—for instance, older people who rely on high-tech medicine to cheat death for a few more years, or young people obsessively playing video games. Women characters are often anxious objects, too, representing the fears of both women and men at their evolving role in the workforce and culture."

groupings. These developments are neither gender—nor race neutral. White men in advanced industrial societies have become newly vulnerable to permanent job loss, and women are not disappearing from the job roles at the same rates as men. It is not simply that women in the Third World countries are the preferred labour force for the science-based multinationals in the export-processing sectors, particularly in electronics. The picture is more systematic and involves reproduction, sexuality, culture, consumption, and production.⁴⁴³

In both instances the world's recent socio-political and economic shift from a nationalist, mechanical-industrial, commodity based capitalist system to one founded primarily on the acquisition, trade, and production of information-content is producing—or *has produced*—changes both positive and negative, which have not only transformed the nature of commerce, but also redefined the terms for an individual's fiscal and physical survival. For both Haraway and Glass, the cyborg as “part human part computer, struggling to achieve a meaningful identity, in this context becomes a character with which a sizable fraction of the population can identify, albeit mostly at an unconscious level.”⁴⁴⁴ Thus, the cyborg not only becomes an object through which a multiplicity of social fears are channeled, but also one through which these collective psychological anxieties can be excised, organized, understood, and expressed.⁴⁴⁵ In other words, like Winnicott's object, the cyborg in Fred Glass's *New Bad Future*, as well as within Donna Haraway's seemingly ‘*New Bad Present*,’ becomes a “vehicle to aid expression and orientation” on a

⁴⁴³ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 166.

⁴⁴⁴ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the *New Bad Future*,” p. 3. In turn, Donna Haraway provides the following example: “These cyborgs are the people who refuse to disappear on cue, no matter how many times a ‘Western’ commentator remarks on the sad passing of another primitive, another organic group done in by ‘Western’ technology, by writing. These real-life cyborgs (for example, the Southeast Asian village women workers in Japanese and US electronics firms described by Aihwa Ong) are actively rewriting the texts of their bodies and societies. Survival is the stakes in the play of readings.” Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 177. For more on the work of Aihwa Ong see: *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Workers in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

⁴⁴⁵ Sue Short employs the arguments of Fred Glass, writing: “...SF cinema ‘exhibits a genuine propensity for progressive politics in the midst of its recognition that the old ideology of progress, and/or the inevitability of socialism, is neatly tucked into the dustbin of history’. Glass goes on to argue that ‘without a shared vision of something alternative and better’ the *New Bad Future* projected in cyborg films serves to legitimate itself as the only possible way forward. This is [Frederic] Jameson's ‘atrophy of the utopian imagination’ given its perceived political consequences, and its entrenchment of negative fatalism...the postmodern (and its alleged products) appear merely to reiterate present social conditions by offering no options.” Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, pp. 179-180. For more on similar ideas proposed by Frederic Jameson see: “Progress vs. Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future?,” *Science Fiction Studies* 9.2 (1982).

massive scale.⁴⁴⁶ Serving as the “bridge between that which is comfortably familiar and whatever is disturbingly unfamiliar [until] it facilitates the acceptance of the latter.”⁴⁴⁷

After all, there is “a necessity existing in every culture that leads it to produce a perfect, all inclusive metaphor for itself.”⁴⁴⁸ Music journalist, Greil Marcus maintains that Elvis Presley was one such metaphor in the 1950s and 60s, and even past his death in 1977, “because he provided numerous ways to talk about authority, sex, repression, and guilt in an era that had just begun to develop widespread outlets for [those discussions].”⁴⁴⁹ Most recently, Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz have argued that Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Terminator now fills a similar role, and that his spell as the cybernetic assassin, is now an example of what “anthropologists call a dominant symbol: [a sign appearing] in many contexts and guises, [performing] many cultural tasks, [condensing] many meanings into one image, and [providing] a window onto the rest of the culture.”⁴⁵⁰ On the other hand, while Blitz and Krasniewicz are absolutely correct in relation to certain contexts, like that of the 2003 gubernatorial recall election in California, the locus is misplaced when discussing the Terminator in a larger cultural context. Instead, it is more accurate to label the more inclusive image of ‘cyborg’ as the dominant symbol, rather than one specific incarnation of that concept. The Terminator functions as a leading cultural metaphor mainly because it is a cyborg; a brutal, yet seemingly liminal figure, that consistently straddles the line between apocalypse and utopia, “the future and the past, reality and fantasy, reality and film, beginnings and ends”, organic and inorganic.⁴⁵¹

However, whether one labels the Terminator as the dominant symbol, or the larger concept of human-machine amalgamation as both a dominant symbol *and* a cultural transitional object, is largely irrelevant. The fact

⁴⁴⁶ Michael Eigen, “Winnicott’s Area of Freedom: The Uncompromisable,” p. 67.

⁴⁴⁷ Phyllis Greenacre, “The Fetish and the Transitional Object,” p. 316.

⁴⁴⁸ Greil Marcus, *Dead Elvis: A Chronicle of Cultural Obsession* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 3. Marcus also wrote an in-depth reading of Presley while the man was still living. For more see: “Elvis: Presliad,” *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock n’ Roll Music*, 5th Revised Edition (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), pp. 132-195.

⁴⁴⁹ Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz, *Why Arnold Matters: The Rise of a Cultural Icon*, p. 92.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid

⁴⁵¹ Ibid

remains that the body of the cyborg, no matter what its appearance, always represents either a form of social reflection, modification, or outright evolution, because even if one discards the obvious mix of skin and steel inherent to most manifestations of organic and inorganic, the image of glass—or of glass-like characteristics—consistently remains the same. Indeed, even when one considers the nature of Winnicott’s theory in direct relation to the cyborg, the qualities of the transitional object also share a number of similarities with the mythical and symbolic properties of the mirror, and thus with the glassy properties of most human-machine representations, because like the symbolic surface of the looking-glass, Winnicott’s object also stands in as a kind of door. As an image which not only marks a liminal space between two ostensibly different spheres, but one which also facilitates a one-way passage between each realm.

5.4 Penetration

Jean Cocteau’s 1949 film, *Orphée*, is a model for the mythical and symbolic properties of the looking-glass. In fact, within Cocteau’s text, the mirror is not the only the image which separates life and death, but also the watery door connecting both (Figure 29). It is a solid surface capable of transformation, transition, and passage, allowing Cocteau’s protagonist to journey back and forth through the plane of the mirror-pool into a surreal and chaotic underworld; a place where motion, time, direction, and distance are confused, illusory, and entirely unstructured. Beyond the glass, reality is imprecise and incoherent. It is a world where fragmentation and disorder govern science, action, and subjectivity, where logic is non-existent, and where wholeness is not just an illusion, but also a known falsehood, since traversing the plane of the mirror leads only “to the incommunicable—to confusion and void.” As Melchior-Bonnet writes:

The world loses its intelligibility and, in this chaos, the self perceives its own fragmentation. The unity and independence of the subject are only a momentary and relative illusion. Indifference and decomposition replace the humanist aim of ‘Know Thyself.’⁴⁵²

⁴⁵² Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 269.

The same, of course, can also be said of the cyborg, because if one breaches the surface of that warped and mirrored plane, the transgressor can also find him or herself faced with the same sense of inadequacy, fragmentation, and inscrutability, which the combination of organic and inorganic strives to mask and contain. Within the context of the man-machine, Cocteau's re-imagining of the Orpheus myth not only expounds upon the mythical properties of the mirror, but in a weirdly prescient way, also parallels the role of the cyborg in contemporary culture with a remarkable amount of accuracy. After all, just as the mirrors of *Orphée* stood between life and the underworld, the cyborg might also stand *in-between*: dividing and yet closely linking, two distinct subjectivities. Its body sitting atop a kind of "no man's land", a place where humanity's past memories and beliefs are not only probed and exposed, but also destroyed and discarded. Like Winnicott's theory of the transitional object, it too could represent a kind of chaotic limbo, where old ideas are rendered immaterial, and where we as a culture are broken, and forced to begin anew:

Orphée: Where are we?

Heurtebise: Life is a long death...This is no man's land...Here are men's memories and the ruins of their beliefs.

Orphée: Does every mirror in the world lead here?

Heurtebise: I suppose so. But I'd not like to be in your gloves...⁴⁵³

In one respect, this act of fracture facilitated by the mirrored surface of the cyborg body could prove to be a positive point, because all previous subjectivities produced under the gaze of humanism would now be fractured to the point of irrelevance, and would therefore become ripe for remoulding. Bear in mind, since the cyborg itself is primarily a symbol of what Bruce Grenville calls, "our own anxiety and desire to give meaning to the technological ethos," the persistent and consistent penetration of that image in all areas of cultural production could therefore function as a metaphor for change.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ *Orphée*, dir. Jean Cocteau (Andre Paulve Film, 1949).

⁴⁵⁴ Bruce Grenville, "The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture," p. 13.

In *Glas* by Jacques Derrida, borders, both material and ideal, are played with and explored.⁴⁵⁵ Even the design of each page is geared toward the investigation of limits both literal and linguistic, as two different essays in two distinct columns, stand side by side on each leaf of Derrida's book. With one on G.W.F. Hegel, and the other on Jean Genet, the interplay of words and ideas not only reflects the incongruities and similarities within each respective column, but more importantly, each seemingly discrete discourse slides into, colludes with, and speaks to its partner, as the textual boundaries which define the columns are continually eroded by their proximity, as well as by the inevitable, desired, and *required* wandering of the reader's eye from one article to the other. As such, the value of *Glas* is not derived from each individual pillar, but is instead found within the tension derived from their subsequent interaction; from the space that lies between them. As Gayatri Spivak writes in her 1977 review of Derrida's text: "As the father's phallus works in the mother's hymen, between two legs, so *Glas* works at origins, between two columns, between Hegel and Genet."⁴⁵⁶

Reading such a text is difficult in itself, but unpacking such a densely layered work is completely impractical and ultimately unnecessary for the purposes of the following chapter. Yet, having said that, it is very important that we note not only Derrida's methodology, but also his parallel explications of what it means to cross a border, to penetrate a boundary; whether real or illusory. Not to mention the kinds of thoughts and feelings which make the experience both unique and necessary in exposing the constructed-ness of philosophy, thought, and writing, as well as the value gained from the process of deconstruction, and from recognition. For under such a system, all acts of penetration become acts of recognition, acknowledgments of an image or

⁴⁵⁵ 'Glas' is a French term meaning 'knell': as in the 'knell' or 'toll' of a church bell. However, other connotations such as 'glass' and 'mirror' are difficult to ignore, especially since those secondary meanings actually complement the nature of the book's design.

⁴⁵⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Glas-Piece: A Compte-Rendu," *Diacritics* 7.3 (Autumn, 1977), p. 23. Spivak continues: "Each page is folded sisymmetrically down the middle, for Hegel and Genet can never be identical. The equation is never balanced, reading and writing never coincide, and the page is never quite folded *up*. In the middle is the *entre/antre* (between/cave), the *brisure* (hinge), the angle or crack of the hymen. The two columns of *Glas* must of course be read as two hollow phalloi perpetrating disseminatory texts, two phallic columns tattooed so as to become habitations. I am suggesting that the layout can also be read as a discharge dissemination in the (n)ever-ravished fold of the hymen...Each page would be the blink of an insatiable cunt: 'The hymen always opens a book of writing, it implies the pen [...] Dissemination in the fold of the page'" (26).

symbol without which the penetration of a boundary is impossible. As Derrida writes: “From the moment it suspends and traverses, penetration is never of anything but an image”.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, if one accepts Derrida’s idea as truth, or conversely, as something which approaches the idea of truth, then images are at the core of every border. They stand on the front lines, on the thresholds dividing nations, desires, theories, and philosophies. If one decides to penetrate their surface, that person must believe in the power of the image and the idea it represents. Without this belief one cannot pass, because to dismiss a boundary whether personal, political, or cultural is to invite refusal.

Derrida plays with the idea of passage, movement, and transition within a few brief paragraphs detailing the parallel but respective travels of both himself and Genet between Poland and the former Czechoslovakia. In this scene, the thoughts of each man are saturated with a myriad of problems and meanings inherent to such an event, such an act of “penetration,” because even though he asks the following question only once, the entire section seems to pulsate with the problem: “What is it to pass from Czechoslovakia into Poland?”⁴⁵⁸ What does it mean to move from one state to the next? Derrida writes:

Penetration is crossing a limit, that is, (with) a *march* separating two opposed places. And which, however naturally continue, like Czechoslovakia and Poland, resemble each other, regard each other, separated nonetheless by a frontier all the more mysterious, concealed in the crossing, because it is abstract, legal, ideal...⁴⁵⁹

For both, the border is an obvious abstraction, a construction, and in many ways, almost a quaint irrelevancy separating two areas which can never be divided, because each is part of the same “naturally continuous element”.⁴⁶⁰ Conversely however, the line that divides these “two lands...separated by a name or a law” is in turn absolutely real, since passing through such a boundary is not only fraught with corporeal consequences, but as a matter of course, requires a great deal of psychic and social conditioning on the part of the transgressor. As the enigmatic chauffeur of Jean Cocteau’s *Orphée*

⁴⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 191.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 189.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 190.

remarks quite plainly to the film's namesake in the moment immediately prior to their passing through the looking-glass: "It is not necessary to understand. It is necessary to believe."⁴⁶¹

The act of passage is not only real, in the sense that such an event both occurs and produces consequences within the material world of reality, but is also totally imaginary in the sense that one never steps over an existing boundary or line, but rather over the illusion of that line; an image carried in our collective heads. Like a plate of glass, the border may be literal and existent, but it is also invisible, and as such, only recognizable by a few specialised signs which indicate one's entrance or one's departure. To miss these signs, or to pass without ever seeing or recognizing such symbols, is to miss both the border, and the idea of the border. Without recognition passage becomes impossible, because either one is not allowed to cross, or because one is not aware of crossing.⁴⁶² In other words, without something to insist on the border's permanence, that line does not exist.

Then again, most borders, especially those demarking incorporeal limits, like those of an ideology or philosophy, are not so easy to penetrate, because instead of recognizing a direct image, such as "military apparel [*appareil*]" or a physical wall, the penetration of a theoretical limit requires the recognition of image patterns within the culture that generates them.⁴⁶³ To put it simply, within the popular culture of any given society, especially one on the verge of transformation, specific motifs will recur again and again within its artistic, scientific, literary, and intellectual products. If a society wishes to change, and therefore discard an obsolete subjectivity for a system promising a new mode of thinking, then the recognition and understanding of these cultural motifs is absolutely essential to its transformation. Otherwise, the point of embarkation becomes unclear, and the direction of progress increasingly uncertain.

The incredible power and astonishing ubiquity of the cybernetic body in contemporary Western culture has obviously branded the man-machine as one of West's dominant motifs. Forever labelling the image as a theoretical

⁴⁶¹ *Orphée*, dir. Jean Cocteau (Andre Paulve Film, 1949).

⁴⁶² Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 189.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 191.

limit, and thus as a point of departure for that which comes after humanism. Consequently, many cyborg theorists have come to believe that as members of a society on the verge of transition, we have in a sense, already begun to walk with Derrida. Feeling the “affect of...passage: [of that] singular emotion born from penetration”, and that like him we too are marching over the brink, through an invisible border “separating two opposed places” bound by one “naturally continuous element.”⁴⁶⁴ Writers like Moravec, Graham, and Hayles certainly believe that the ethos shaped under the sign of the ‘human’ is quickly transforming into that of its ‘post,’ because like the mirrors of *Orphée*, cyborgs also seem to operate as a halfway point, or dividing line, where elements of each ethos meet.

On the surface, such a formulation makes absolute sense, since the problems which come from traversing through the mirror seem very similar to the qualities inhabiting our current lived experience. Namely: those produced by the broken, unstable, punctured, and supposedly posthuman subjectivity, which again, parallels the same shattered sense of identity enveloping the whole of Western culture, while mimicking, as well as compensating for, the same illusory sense of cohesion and wholeness that is so central to humanist discourse. Then again, theories which frame the cyborg as a transitional object that gently weans us away from the old, while replacing it with something new, are also the absolute ideal. Representing at best, not only an unstable state of being, but perhaps also a kind of psychical scrambled self with enough potential and pliability to be moulded into something more appropriate for current age. Like the child searching for identity and self-definition in the surface of the mirror, Western culture could also be construed as a society “working through” the process of producing a new subjectivity through identification with its own reflection in the mirrored surface of a dominant symbol.⁴⁶⁵ Perhaps, the West is redefining itself through the dual process of *looking* and being *looked at* by its reflection; an introspective face-to-face encounter that “is not only the passive perception of an appearance, but a projection, a circling from desire to reflection and from reflection to desire.” As Melchior-Bonnet writes: “To observe oneself, to measure oneself, to dream

⁴⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 189.

⁴⁶⁵ Neil Badmington, “Theorizing Posthumanism,” p. 20.

oneself, and to transform oneself: these are the diverse functions brought into play by an encounter with the mirror.”⁴⁶⁶ This act of identification, and self-definition in the face of the cyborg, belies an “over investment [in] the mirror image [that] goes hand in hand with [the] devaluation of the subject,” as well as with “a growing and renewed demand for identity.”⁴⁶⁷ Specifically: one which ultimately speaks volumes for our desire to penetrate an ideological frontier and to emerge on a “new soil, [under] a new power, a new law”.⁴⁶⁸ Because just as the child looks to the mirror to split itself from its mother, we could also be looking toward the cyborg as a way to separate ourselves from an obsolete state of being, and to erect a new subjectivity, a new feeling of unity and order, upon the ruins of the past.

Yet at worst, the mirrored image of the cyborg body can also completely elide the psycho-transitional properties of the looking-glass, as well as the transformative properties of both Winnicott and Glass’s cultural transitional object, in favour of something which is not only far more menacing, but also far more plausible given the violent sexual tendencies inherent to such a dangerously patriarchal image with such rigid right wing politics. According to Michael Eigen, even though transitional phenomena “may be soothing, insofar as they stand [in] for the breast or mother”, and even though they may “expand” into areas of “art, science, religion, and culture”, they can in turn, “contract” into the voracious, insatiable, and sometimes brutal nature of “addictions and fetishes.”⁴⁶⁹ Thus, transitional objects such as the cyborg can not only “emphasize separation”, but as a consequence, also “stand [in] for an endless gap they forever try to fill”, because while these objects “may carry forward the richness of experience” the man-machine can also function as “a place marker for an experience never had.”⁴⁷⁰ Or conversely,

⁴⁶⁶ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 157.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 273.

⁴⁶⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 190.

⁴⁶⁹ Michael Eigen, “Winnicott’s Area of Freedom: The Uncompromisable,” p. 69.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 68. Similarly, in Sigmund Freud’s essay on fetishism, the source of the fetish is described as such: “[the fetish] is a substitute for...a particular and special penis that had been extremely important in early childhood but had later been lost. That is to say, it should normally have been given up, but the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from extinction. To put it more plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the woman’s (the mother’s) penis that the little boy once believed in and—for some reason’s familiar to us—does not want to give up.” Of course, while Freud’s general statement that the fetish is derived from something one never had, or wishes to preserve, his specific comments about the “woman’s (mother’s) penis” are

for an experience one wishes to endlessly recreate; often through the most violent methods imaginable.

5.5 Fetish

Obviously, the connection between the fetish and the transitional object is not a new one in the field of psychoanalysis. Contemporary literary critics like Carl Eby, as well as more established members of the American psychoanalytic community like Phyllis Greenacre, have been drawing links between these two concepts since the mid-20th Century.⁴⁷¹ Indeed, two of Greenacre's more significant scholarly works directly compare the similarities and differences found between these two ideas. Specifically, her 1969 paper "The Fetish and the Transitional Object," as well as her essay of the following year, "The Transitional Object and the Fetish: With Special Reference to the Role of Illusion." In both compositions Greenacre explicates the overlap between Winnicott's theory and the fetish very clearly, stating: "The transitional object and the fetish resemble each other in certain formal aspects: both [reference] inanimate objects adopted and utilized by the individual to aid in maintaining a psychophysical balance under conditions of more or less strain."⁴⁷²

Both the fetish and the transitional object are rooted in real existent items or phenomena, which placate the child while providing a sense of satisfaction and security. Moreover, and most importantly, each item plays a mirror-like part in the subsequent construction of identity, either by producing the initial conditions on which to build a sense of selfhood, or by striving to fill the holes left after the production of that person's individual subjectivity. Despite these similarities, however, there are a few marked differences which distinguish the two concepts with regards to their individual origins and roles.

open to interpretation, and criticism (152). For example, as Freud explains rather problematically at the end of his paper: "In conclusion, we may say that the normal prototype of man's fetishes is a man's penis, just as the normal prototype for inferior organs is the woman's real small penis, the clitoris" (157). Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 21*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1961).

⁴⁷¹ For more on Carl Eby see: "Loss, Fetishism, and the Fate of the Transitional Object," *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 119-154.

⁴⁷² Phyllis Greenacre, "The Fetish and the Transitional Object," p. 315.

The transitional object “appears in and belongs to infancy, and is generally relinquished when infancy merges into childhood”, whereas the fetish is “commonly adopted as a necessary prop or adjunct to insure adequate sexual performance in adult life.”⁴⁷³ On the other hand, while the fetish certainly manifests itself “under the demands of adulthood,” we must always remember that like its transitional counterpart, it too has “roots in disturbances in infancy.”⁴⁷⁴ According to Greenacre, there are times when the transitional object itself is transformed or perverted in the eyes of the infant, because he or she has been deprived of the necessary emotional support normally garnered from his or her family. Indeed, “as Winnicott (1953, 1957, 1965a, 1965b) has repeatedly emphasized” throughout the course of his career, “the transitional object develops in its most typical form where there is a good or at least a ‘good-enough’ mother.”⁴⁷⁵ Thus, in order for the transitional object to become manifest and perform its primary function, the infant’s supply of parental love and guidance must be great enough, as well as *good enough*, to meet that particular child’s needs. If he or she “has suffered unusually severe deprivation or mistreatment...the hostile elements in [the child’s] aggression appear in mounting tension from frustration, and the energy cannot be sufficiently used in the forward movement of growth.”⁴⁷⁶ As Greenacre writes:

It then finds discharges in rages, or it may become body-bound, gradually causing premature sadomasochistic eroticization associated sometimes with precocious genitalization under strain...[Nevertheless] even under favourable conditions...some degree of frustration is inevitable in the process of separation from the mother. Such autoerotic activities as may develop in situations of severe deprivation and frustration are more constricted and less plastic in form than is true in the case of the uncomplicated transitional object. They betray more focal defensive function in expressing tension and assume more or less automatized patterns. [Thus, even] when an object outside the body has been selected,

⁴⁷³ Phyllis Greenacre, “The Fetish and the Transitional Object,” p. 315.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid

⁴⁷⁵ Phyllis Greenacre, “The Transitional Object and the Fetish: With Special Reference to the Role of Illusion,” p. 336. For more on Winnicott’s previous work on the nature of the transitional object and the concept of the ‘good-enough mother,’ see: “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953), pp. 89-97; *Mother and Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1957); *The Family and Individual Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1965).

⁴⁷⁶ Phyllis Greenacre, “The Transitional Object and the Fetish: With Special Reference to the Role of Illusion,” p. 336.

its form and use are more concretized and may take on the character of an *infantile fetish*.⁴⁷⁷

Initially, all this talk of the infantile and the fetishtic might seem like a very long way from the figure of the cyborg body, since representations of human-machine amalgamation are always distanced from images of infancy.⁴⁷⁸ In fact, the nature of the cybernetic body itself would seem to make all issues related to parental love, or the lack thereof, appear all the more alien in relation to the apparently parentless man-machine, since the production and subsequent interpretation of that image is in every way different from the acts of procreation and child-rearing described by Greenacre. However, when the general concept of the fetish is accepted as a serious possibility, the cyborg's subsequent affiliation with many of Greenacre's theories quickly becomes apparent, because suddenly the man-machine's overwhelming need to compensate for some ineffable sense of inadequacy and lack through either violent domination and/or endless ejaculation, seems all the more reasonable. Moreover, the connection becomes perfectly logical, since it even provides the basis for a far more accurate model by which to examine and understand the nature and function of the cyborg body than, say, any of the constructions mentioned previously, because even though D.W. Winnicott's idea is extremely useful in broadening our understanding of human-machine amalgamation, it is still not entirely accurate in explicating most representations of that image. Instead, the theories of

⁴⁷⁷ Phyllis Greenacre, "The Transitional Object and the Fetish: With Special Reference to the Role of Illusion," p. 336. Greenacre continues: "It may be significant, too, that even in those cases in which the contrast between the fetish and the transitional object is clear, the fetish leading to perversion has become manifest at just those age periods when the transitional object is ordinarily losing functional importance. This would suggest a possible reciprocal or even overlapping relationship between the two phenomena which might increase in condition s of severe infantile stress, such as is not true in the bulk of cases with Winnicott's 'good-enough' mothers" (337).

⁴⁷⁸ Usually, the cyborg is characterized physically as a mature adult, or is represented mentally as non-childlike, even though it may appear childlike in form. *Ghost in the Shell* is a prime example of a cyborg which is child-like in appearance, but adult in both physical bearing and emotional maturity. For example, at the end of the film, two mortal enemies willingly combine their separate personalities/consciousnesses to form one entity held within the cyborg body of a 5 year-old girl. The symbolic implications of this very young body are obvious, of course, since their merger signals the beginning of a new race/species/state of being, but the actual entity within that body holds none of the emotional or mental qualities associated with its new form. *Ghost in the Shell*, dir. Mamoru Oshii, VHS (Manga Video, 1996).

Winnicott do not account for some very strong, and very visible contradictions, in the way cyborgs are often produced, represented, and politicized.

After all, if the mirrored surface of the man-machine is in truth a positive point, in the sense that all previous subjectivities produced under the gaze of humanism are now fractured by the mirrored plane of its glass body, and therefore subject to major renovation under the guidance of an allegedly posthuman ethos. How does one explain popular representations of the cyborg body over the last century? Representations that more often than not, purport a hyper-masculine body-type and/or attitude, whether they are male or female, and which are constantly striving to exert and assert such a violent brand of patriarchal privilege at every opportunity. How does one explain not only the cyborg's decidedly humanist slant, but also that body's forcible assertion, and subsequent perpetuation of, some of the most dangerous and destructive socio-political repercussions to spring from and be supported by that particular philosophy? Namely: the politics of racism, patriarchy, and exclusion, as well as the hierarchical constructs which continue to guarantee the power of those terrible social, cultural, and political ills.

One answer could be found within "Totally Recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future," in which author Fred Glass refines all previous theories regarding the nature and function of the cultural transitional object, in order to account for a number of contradictory elements left unexplained by his appropriation of Winnicott's work. Specifically, the surprising lack of social acceptance, and real psychological change, garnered from a number of so-called cultural transitional objects found within films such as Paul Verhoeven's NBF blockbuster, *Total Recall*. As a representative of the New Bad Future, *Total Recall* and the gaggle of human, mutant and machine-made characters contained therein, should function as a collection of Winnicottian objects; as transitional phenomena which allow their viewers to watch, absorb, understand, and manage many of the existing socio-economic shifts ripping through their own lives at the end of the 1980s. As Glass writes, the movie should share the same "social-psychological project [inherent to all NBF films]: helping to ease their audience's entry from shattered past expectations of the future (personal and social) into what the future is turning

out to be.”⁴⁷⁹ Yet, such a formulation is clearly incorrect, because instead of easing any existing psycho-social tension, *Total Recall* is a text in which the massive physique of Arnold Schwarzenegger actually eclipses—and/or engulfs—almost every aspect of Verhoeven’s film, including the purportedly positive social-psychological functions inherent to Glass’s NBF genre. In fact, the film exploits the overwhelming size and strength of Arnold’s masculine, cybernetic, and decidedly Aryan form to such a degree that his muscles actually render the meaning and purpose behind Winnicott’s potentially valuable transitional object perpetually invalid. Negating not only every constructive, transformative, and/or reconciliatory property inherent to such a politicized subgenre, but also dominating them totally through Arnold’s own personal project to perpetually recreate the fascist politics lacing both Leni Riefenstahl’s glossy black bodies, and early Olympic ideals.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, the highly racialized, not to mention highly sexualized, nature of Schwarzenegger’s massive Aryan muscles efface more than just the New Bad Future’s previously explicated cultural transitional qualities, but in point of fact, supplant them entirely with a far more menacing “twin to Winnicott’s suggestive category”. Namely: “one with less benevolent implications for understanding the social psychology of audiences” who ultimately buy into this mode of mass entertainment.⁴⁸¹

Even though Schwarzenegger’s machine-made form can “act as a temporary palliative for social fears”, it does so only as a “patch”, because within the viewer’s attempt to “alleviate anxiety” through identification with Schwarzenegger’s pumped-up physique, reality is not acknowledged and

⁴⁷⁹ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” p. 2.

⁴⁸⁰ Even if one puts Arnold Schwarzenegger’s familial link to Nazism aside, there remains a strong connection to fascism in relation to Schwarzenegger’s muscled body. Arnold represents the fascist physical ideal; tall, strong, pure, superior, Aryan, attractive, and charismatic. As Jonathan Goldberg writes when describing one of Schwarzenegger’s early bodybuilding photos; “Totalitarianism recalled, as the image of Arnold in another desert might suggest: posed as a statue, a Greek victory, with three black African boys clinging to his legs. Shades of Leni Riefenstahl.” Jonathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities: The Mirrored Stages of Arnold Schwarzenegger,” p. 237. See also; *Pumping Iron: 25th Anniversary Special Edition*, dir. George Butler, DVD (HBO Video, 2003). For more on the work of filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl see: *Olympia: Parts 1 and 2*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl, VHS (Homevision, 2000); *Triumph of the Will*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl, DVD (Synapse Video, 1934); *Africa* (London: Taschen, 2005). For more on the connection between the State of California and German intellectualism see: Laurence Rickels, *The Case of California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁴⁸¹ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” p. 6.

explored, but rather “disavowed and distorted”. His muscled-plated body merely reinforces pre-existing “patterns of behaviour that can lead fears of social disempowerment (castration anxieties) to their realization in social decay”. As Glass writes, the “persistent (if cartoonish) violence and hormonal responses of the viewer to the action continuously threaten to wash away [Total Recall’s] progressive political themes.”⁴⁸² Thus, the politics and the “action-adventure format of” this and other similar

NBF films war internally with each other, a meta-narrative battle that for most viewers (since most are teenaged, with relatively unsophisticated politics) ends with a victory for the wrong side. Schwarzenegger’s wish-fulfillment heroics, rather than an appreciation of the worldview of the NBF, attracts these viewers, and remains the focus of their attention. If a political message *is* absorbed, it keeps closely to the shadows of their unconscious, where the fears and hopes on which political manipulation thrives tend to stay in our depoliticized culture.⁴⁸³

Clearly, a theoretical model such as Winnicott’s cultural transitional object does not apply under such circumstances, since the consequences of such an idea are nowhere in sight. Nothing about this or other similar texts, and their subsequent effects on the psychology of the audience, is in any way transforming, transitional, and/or reconciliatory, either on a personal level, or in a larger socio-political sense, because instead of lifting “an individual through his/her fear of social conflicts to an alleviation of the internal anxiety corresponding to the threatening social entity,” NBF films like *Total Recall* “may in the long run act more as *cultural fetish objects*” than as instances of Winnicott’s own cultural transitional object (Figure 30).⁴⁸⁴

Glass’s refinement of Winnicott’s original theory, and its subsequent appropriation of Greenacre’s work, is of course useful, as well as smart, considering popular representations of the cyborg body are often in direct conflict with the nature of the transitional object. Indeed, the notion of a cultural fetish object not only explains quite a lot about cyborg behaviour, as well as the fractured nature of our image with that surface, but in turn provides a complementary facet to glassy images of human-machine integration everywhere, since the fetish itself can also be seen as both a reflection and a

⁴⁸² Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” p. 6.

⁴⁸³ Ibid

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid

mirror. For example, a fetish echoes individual desire, while simultaneously exposing the profound sense of inadequacy and lack which can often fuel one's desire. Unfortunately, under such a system one does not pass through the mirrored surface of the man-machine, but is instead bounced off of, or reflected by it in the same manner that a mirror returns a likeness. As such, there are no psycho-social changes because there is no penetration, no transition, and certainly no transformation, but only reflection and the perpetual reinforcement of that which is already there. Thus, there is only a body soothed by the everlasting lies of Jacques Lacan's mirror phase, and a broken subjectivity disguised beneath the illusion of misrecognition.⁴⁸⁵

The fetish not only reflects what is existent within the 'body' of the audience in relation to sexual longing, female objectification, physical violation, and patriarchal privilege, but also what that audience might wish were there; namely, power, purity, order, and superiority. All of which are then melded together to produce both an overriding sense of bodily unity and subjective control, as well as the subsequent illusions of transition, penetration, and passage as explained by Winnicott, Derrida, and Genet. More importantly, one must always remember that in terms of the fetish, an overriding sense of unity and control does not exist, but must instead be achieved through the act of fetish fulfillment, which the fetish not only longs to create, but also to endlessly recreate. To do otherwise, is to allow the lack that lies within to become even stronger, and to force the emptiness therein to feel all the more poignant and all the more terrible, as it spills out to efface whatever fragments remain.

Needless to say, such a dim view of human-machine integration does not reflect well on Haraway's previous assertions that organic-inorganic amalgamations not only embrace fragmentation and liminality, but also ally themselves with the female and the feminine. Because if the cyborg is indeed a cultural fetish object *and* a glass body, then the political and ontological consequences derived from such a devastating series of equations not only

⁴⁸⁵ The transitional object shares a number of similarities with the mirror phase, since both Winnicott and Lacan based their ideas upon the same underlying principles. In fact, the glass face of Lacan's mirror could be construed as prior articulation of Winnicott's transitional object, or, Winnicott's theory could be seen as yet another—if slightly inaccurate—way of explaining the Lacan's theory of individual identity formation.

places the man-machine within very dangerous territory, but also within a very unstable subjective state. Specifically: one, which could conceivably force the cyborg to perpetually reassert and/or reform a sense of subjective and bodily unity through the violent expression of its own overt and threatening masculinity.

There are innumerable filmic, aesthetic, and textual examples stretching from Epstein to Arnold, from Ashby to Ash, which demonstrate that no matter how different each instance is in relation to their individual origin and form, all cyborgs still hold fast to the same three fundamental points explicated throughout the course of the four previous chapters. Points that, in my opinion, actually further define these characters as cyborgs, since each aforementioned component not only plays a significant role in the consistent representation of the man-machine and its politics, but in turn, also perpetuates those conditions, and further cements all future manifestations of that image. As Sue Short writes:

popular mass art responds to audience and the concerns of the period in which it is made, and although this contention makes a great deal of sense, some necessary reservations have to be made because popular cinema may not simply reflect prevailing concerns and attitudes, but have some contribution in their construction also.⁴⁸⁶

Allusions to glass, a sense of lack, and the destructive nature of the forever-coming phallus are constantly connected to popular representations of bio-mechanical integration. The connection is so powerful and so pervasive that one would be hard pressed to find a cyborg which exists outside the confines of this particular trinity. Either because it is; a) represented directly as a body of glass; or b) because it represents the idea of glass—of reflection and doubling.

The consequences derived from such an important ontological point are never absent from most cyborg texts, but instead play a major role in both shaping cyborg behaviour, and in moulding the relationship which exists between the fetish object and the observer. Any person, social grouping, or culture which looks toward that warped and glassy creature for a sense of identity and purpose, and thus for a confirmation of self, will be completely

⁴⁸⁶ Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, p. 9.

affected by the physical and symbolic properties of that body, and see nothing but the disturbingly meaningless scramble of the Lacanian hommlette. Moreover, even if one were to reframe or conceptualize the shattered subjectivity contained within the body of the man-machine as the building blocks for a new mode of being, that person would still be confronted with the potentially devastating consequences inherent to the penetration of any reflective surface. Bear in mind, according to Melchior-Bonnet, the “mirror, ‘matrix of the symbolic,’ accompanies the human quest for identity.”⁴⁸⁷ It reflects a seemingly whole and complete self, while our gaze in the mirror ideally “confirms [our] integrity in the face of concerns about mutilation and dismemberment.”⁴⁸⁸ However, once we pass through that image, our basis for self-reflection and self-identification becomes unclear. We begin to lose our integrity, and as such, our normally organized subjective state becomes fractured and unstable, thereby reinforcing the very problem we seek to solve. As such, any succeeding sense of inadequacy or lack must be now masked, effaced, and/or counteracted for the sake one’s own sanity. A task most frequently accomplished through massive overcompensation, or to be more specific, through endless ejaculation, everlasting orgasm, and perpetual fetish fulfillment. All of which are designed to satiate the decidedly masculine form of the cyborg body.

5.6 Opposition

At best, these fragments, these pieces of us which are lodged in the centre of the cyborg, “engender the hope of being reborn again on the other side, in the world of dream and imagination that is also of art.”⁴⁸⁹ They represent a search for stability; a fractured and distorted figure in need of a new identity, a new way to be human. They are, after all, broken segments of a larger body which has ultimately been denied the illusion of cohesion, and are therefore, perhaps representative of a culture in search of itself, of a society in the midst of a massive identity crisis played out in the mirrored surface of the man-machine. To quote Sue Short: “The cyborg’s greatest value may thus be to shed light

⁴⁸⁷ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁴⁸⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, “Psychoanalysis and the Body,” p. 269.

upon the difficulty we have in making sense of contemporary identity, particularly given the analytical tools at our disposal.”⁴⁹⁰ At worst, however, the cyborg becomes something far more menacing than a simple transitional object, and/or a facilitator for identity formation. Instead, it becomes the means by which everything dangerous and existent is once again reaffirmed, while in turn, not only presenting the viewer with the illusion of change, but also with the impression of progress, improvement, and evolution.

Unfortunately, the latter option is consistently the most applicable given the connections between the cyborg body, the politics of the present-day, and the time period in which the man-machine was initially named, defined, and tossed into the world as a real existent being with a clear political agenda. To be blunt, the “expectation has far exceeded the level of progress,” because over the decades there has been an unmistakable dearth of social and subjective advancement, even as the merger between technology and the body has gained greater visibility, ubiquity, and acceptance from both men and women alike.⁴⁹¹ After all, despite Michel Foucault’s assertions that, it “may be comforting to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear...as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form.”⁴⁹² It is also equally unnerving to realize that despite nearly fifty years of supposed improvement, we have “progressed without advancing ourselves, without breaking through, to the surface of an image...sewn...into the general web of the [cultural] text.”⁴⁹³ And that as a civilization, Western society has failed to recognize the symbol at the base of its alleged transformation, and that as a people, the West has not developed or improved, but only dragged the culture’s previous attitudes and ideas with it; remaking each new space into a refurbished version of the old.

In a global sense, one overarching Cold War has been replaced by varied and numerous ‘Hot Wars,’ all of which are now huddled together under a single ideological struggle against Terror; not Communism. Old metaphors of containment, protection, and isolation such as Ronald Reagan’s Star Wars

⁴⁹⁰ Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, p. 188.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, p. 207.

⁴⁹² Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, p. xxiii.

⁴⁹³ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 191.

program have been resurrected under the Bush administration as the obsolete, and highly impractical Missile Defence Shield.⁴⁹⁴ Furthermore, Clynes and Kline's dream of an independent, imperialist, and biologically superior male hybrid continues to persist, because even though a "radically modified variant of the [human] species" has not become a reality, fictional images of similar creatures continue to endure in almost every sphere of Western culture.⁴⁹⁵ While at the same time, an existing version of the same body is perpetually echoed on the battlefields of the Middle East and Central Asia, as American soldiers become increasingly reliant on high-tech communications and military weapons technologies to essentially keep them alive. Moreover and most importantly, however, even if one places the current crisis in international relations aside, the lack of social progress in both a global and a domestic sense is still very striking, because even though working women have gained greater social and political protection over the years, as well as greater flexibility in the job markets of Europe, North America, and Asia, they are still subject to many of the old lies perpetrated upon them mere decades before. Nowhere is this point more evident than in the countless Hollywood starlets and reality TV clones selling disturbing dreams of a better body through medical technology.⁴⁹⁶ Their smiling hosts hocking breast implants, stomach staples, and facial reconstruction to unhappy women, and insecure teens robbed of a healthy self-image from the very beginning.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ For more on Bush's Defense Shield see: F. Melese and J. Palmore, "Ballistic Missile Defence: Protection or Placebo?," *Defence Analysis* (April 2000), pp. 89-93; Lawrence Freedman, "Prevention, not Preemption," *The Washington Quarterly* 26.2 (2003), pp. 105-114; François Heisbourg, "A Work in Progress: The Bush Doctrine and its Consequences," *The Washington Quarterly* 22.2 (2006), pp. 75-88.

⁴⁹⁵ Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, p. 199. Note: as male scientists formulating their ideas in the mid-twentieth century Clynes and Kline refers only to *mankind*, and thus to men in general. Their vision of the cyborg is therefore male-centered as women are never mentioned anywhere within his papers, but are instead, perhaps implicated as mere facilitators in the cyborg's allegedly unsullied ability to reproduce and propagate a non-monstrous version of the human species. Clynes and Kline write: "Starting as of now, it will be possible to achieve [the cyborg] to some degree without alteration of heredity by suitable biochemical, physiological, and electronic modifications of man's existing *modus vivendi*." Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," p. 29.

⁴⁹⁶ The following is a brief list of the aforementioned programs: *Extreme Makeover* (ABC), *The Swan* (FOX), *10 Years Younger* (TLC), *I Want a Famous Face* (MTV), and *Skin Deep* (The Life Network).

⁴⁹⁷ Writer Anne Balsamo devotes a chapter to cosmetic surgery in her book *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*; "On the Cutting Edge: Cosmetic Surgery and New Imaging Technologies," *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, p. 58-79. Interesting, Sue Short provides a different perspective on cosmetic surgery from that of

Strangely, Donna Haraway maintains that only women of color pushed to the margins of society by their special combination of gender and race constitute “real-life cyborgs”, because these are the female bodies in the midst of quiet resistance through their production, and subsequent adoption of “oppositional consciousness.” These are the ones struggling against the totalizing impressions of a perfect language pushed on them by the Western logos of Phallogocentrism.⁴⁹⁸ And these are the liminal figures

actively rewriting the texts of their bodies and societies [as they] refuse the ideological resources of victimization so as to have a real life. These cyborgs are the people who refuse to disappear on cue, no matter how many times a ‘Western’ commentator remarks on the sad passing of another primitive, another organic group done in by ‘Western’ technology, by writing.⁴⁹⁹

Yet, while such a formulation is certainly not incorrect, and while any comparable model for a new feminist subjectivity could prove invaluable in granting greater power, privilege, and autonomy to a much wider range of women, while remaining open to new philosophies, new methodologies, and new technologies, there is also a far more disturbing truth underpinning Donna Haraway’s bright idealism. Are not the thousands of women who have willingly subjected themselves to the sharp cut of a scalpel, valid participants in this movement toward cyborg subjectivity, and cyborg politics? Are not their claims to the man-machine’s subjective and political stance just as convincing as those made by Haraway’s sweatshop workers?

Whether or not one chooses to accept or deny the following truth, the fact remains that even at the most basic level these women constitute real-life cyborgs. Moreover, they hold even greater claim to that specific title than any

Balsamo, stating: “many women claim to feel emancipated by their ability to alter their image, exemplifying the fact that, as consumers of technology, women’s motivations are becoming increasingly complicated. Going under the knife would seem to be a drastic means of empowerment, one that reiterates the extent to which female (self) worth is mediated through the body, yet what these examples prove is that, in cyborging themselves to achieve greater levels of physical perfection, actual females have begun to parallel synthetic females on screen in ever more alarming ways” (Short, 98). On the other hand, these synthetic screen females almost always represent the fulfillment of a male fantasy, and thus of a man’s idea of what feminine beauty and female sexuality is, or should be. As American comedian Stephen Colbert once said: “We’ve conceived them [women] that breast implants are a gift a woman gives to herself.” *The Colbert Report*, Comedy Central, Aired 28 April 2006.

⁴⁹⁸ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 177.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid

of their contemporaries, since each woman is not only melding her body with what is more often than not, several unnecessary prosthetics, but in many cases each is also embracing the dangerous trinity attached to so many manifestations of human-machine amalgamation: glass, lack, and the phallus.

For instance, even though the women who undergo such procedures are not represented in film, art, and literature as possessing a body of glass per se, they are still subject to the power of the male gaze, and thus to the overwhelming image of their seemingly inadequate bodies in the face of the mirror. This is a glass forced upon them by a society that not only worships the phallus, but one which also craves the constant gratification of that phallus. In the case of cosmetic surgery, the image of the mirror finds its fullest articulation in the eye of the plastic surgeon, because just as scholar Caroline Spitzack points out in her essay, “The Confession Mirror: Plastic Images for Surgery,” the physician’s eye operates as a kind of “disciplinary gaze situated within apparatuses of power and knowledge that construct the female figure as pathological, excessively unruly, and potentially threatening of the dominant order.” As Anne Balsamo writes, the doctor’s eye “then disciplines the unruly female body by first *fragmenting* it into isolated parts, and then redefines those parts as inherently flawed or pathological.”⁵⁰⁰ Foucault defined the basis for such an argument in his book, *The Birth of the Clinic*, stating:

For us, the human body defines, by natural right, the space of origin and of distribution of disease; a space whose lines, volumes, surfaces, and routes are laid down in accordance with a now familiar geometry, by the anatomical atlas. But this order of the solid, visible body is only one way—in all likelihood neither the first, nor the most fundamental—in which one spatializes disease. There have been, and will be, other distributions of illness.⁵⁰¹

One of these distributors is the “anatomical atlas” of the man-machine, because like Foucault’s clinic, the cyborg too is “about space, about language, and about death; it is about the act of seeing, the gaze.”⁵⁰²

For many women, the easiest way to manage the mirror is to surrender oneself to the expectations presented by both the image and the idea of one’s

⁵⁰⁰ Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, p. 56.

⁵⁰¹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of the Medical Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 1.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. ix.

own reflection, and as such, to accept one's reconstruction into what contemporary culture considers a whole and palatable being by means of a three-fold process involving inscription, surveillance, and confession. After all, in "the scenario" which unfolds in "the cosmetic surgeon's office, the transformation from illness to health is inscribed on the body of the patient" by the gaze of the doctor. As Spitzack writes:

The female patient is promised beauty and re-form in exchange for confession, which is predicated on an admission of a diseased appearance that points to a diseased (powerless) character. A failure to confess, in the clinical setting, is equated with a refusal of health; a preference for disease [a preference for fragmentation].⁵⁰³

Such a formulation is devastating to any possible feminist reworking of the clinic, as well as to any and all potential theories which strive to grant greater power and autonomy to the female cyborgs who enjoy and employ those clinics, because if "women are often the intended and preferred subjects of such discourse and men are often the agents performing the surgery", a medical procedure like plastic surgery "is not simply a discursive site for the 'construction of images of women,'" but according to Balsamo, it is "a material site at which the physical female body is surgically dissected, stretched, carved, and reconstructed according to cultural and eminently ideological standards of physical appearance."⁵⁰⁴ In other words, the female cyborg is once again restored to a state of "organic wholeness" by means of her own deconstruction, since she has now been rendered attractive, and therefore worthy of a culture which simultaneously negates her prior self, while producing the lie of a seemingly younger, slimmer, tighter, and more sexually appealing new body.

Sadly, the lips and mammories of the contemporary porn star seem to constitute the true face of Haraway's manifesto. Their surgically enhanced bodies revealing the unhappy truth harboured by an image that allegedly seeks "a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and

⁵⁰³ Caroline Spitzack, "The Confession Mirror: Plastic Images for Surgery," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 12.1-2 (1988), p. 39.

⁵⁰⁴ Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, p. 58.

our tools [pun intended] to ourselves.”⁵⁰⁵ With such a sexualized and objectified woman representing the politics of the cyborg, as well as the likeness of a huge “swollen penis throbbing its way through the receptive material” of most man-machine narratives, manifestations of bio-mechanical integration are rarely seditious.⁵⁰⁶ They do nothing to broaden, distinguish, or “define different political possibilities and limits from those [already] proposed by the mundane fiction of Man and Woman.”⁵⁰⁷ Instead, the many fetishized faces of the cyborg body only personify the problematic power issues held within those stories. Their amalgamated forms offering mere versions on a single narrative which has been told and retold; a story that not only undermines and discredits feminist politics and female resistance, but one which also perpetuates the patriarchal fantasy of “peace, justice, and blue skies” through the spectacle of the atom bomb, the male orgasm, and the subsequent coupling of an exploding cyborg, and the expulsion of that figure’s internal contents all over the bodies of its victims.⁵⁰⁸

Some theorists, like Anne Balsamo, have expressed concerns over Haraway’s ideas, arguing that an actual female cyborg “merely exacerbates the need to be extra cautious about the uses to which technology is put”, stressing:⁵⁰⁹

The challenge is how to harness the power of technological knowledge to a feminist agenda while struggling against an increasing industrial imperialism that eagerly assimilates new techno-workers to labour in the interests of private enterprise. The question is how to empower

⁵⁰⁵ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 181. Of course, Linda Williams argues that pornography can also act as a mode of resistance against a reigning hegemony. As Williams writes: “...we can say with Foucault, and with most anti-censorship feminists, that there are important differences to be noted in the uses of pleasure from one society to another and one technology to another. Indeed, the particular interpenetration of power and pleasure can be extremely important in the local attempt to resist or counter the oppressive affects of each. Just as power exists as a multiplicity of force relations rather than a single force, state, or individual, so resistance to power is a ‘multiplicity of points of resistance.’” *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 56. For more on Foucault’s view on pleasure and power see: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 95.

⁵⁰⁶ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” p. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 180.

⁵⁰⁸ Fred Glass, “Totally recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future,” p. 11.

⁵⁰⁹ Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, p. 7.

technological agents so that they work on behalf of the right kind of social change.⁵¹⁰

Furthermore, Monica J. Casper challenges the very foundations of Haraway's manifesto in her essay, "Fetal Cyborgs and Technomoms on the Reproductive Frontier," writing:

If we are all cyborgs then the analytical value of this concept in differentiating *cyborg* from other identities and subject positions becomes diminished. Further, despite a proliferation of cyborgs, there are many ways in which contemporary social actors both accept and resist the cyborg image. By suggesting that we are all cyborgs, there is a danger in losing sight of these resistances, as well as of possible differences among cyborgs.⁵¹¹

Even Haraway herself, in subsequent interviews about her work, has expressed a certain degree of caution in relation to her articulation of the cyborg and its applicable political implications, declaring:

It is entirely possible, even likely, that people who want to make cyborg social realities and images to be more contested places—where people have different kinds of say about the shape of their lives—will lose, and are losing all over the world. One would be a fool, I think, to ignore that.⁵¹²

Clearly, one cannot discount such a devastating point. Especially if one considers the extent to which most people are losing the struggle to resist any and all appropriation of even the most subversive technologies to the interests of capitalism.⁵¹³ Thus, Haraway's "informatics of domination" not only continues to exert their influence over all aspects of 'Western' society, but in

⁵¹⁰ Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, p. 156.

⁵¹¹ Monica J. Casper, "Fetal Cyborgs and Technomoms on the Reproductive Frontier," *The Cyborg Handbook.*, Ed. Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 185.

⁵¹² Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large," p. 13.

⁵¹³ Hip-Hop, the black American sub-culture, which began as a mode of resistance has now become the most valuable cultural currency in world. And not because it sparks debate by challenging the existing hegemony or by highlighting the economic and social problems which exist as a result of that hegemony, but because it has sparked a multi-billion dollar business that sells the same stories of sex, death, and violence perpetrated by the most gauche Hollywood action films. In addition, a kind of cyborg feminist movement driven by women known as 'riot grrrls,' and spurred on by female rock n' roll groups like Bikini Kill and Sleater-Kinney has also fallen victim to the methods of corporate appropriation. As singer Carrie Brownstein screams in the Sleater-Kinney song "#1 Must Have": "Bearer of the flag from the beginning/ Now who would have believed this riot grrrl's a cynic/ But they took our ideas to the marketing stars/ And now I spend all my days at girlpower.com/ Trying to buy back a little piece of me." Sleater-Kinney, "#1 Must Have," *All Hands on the Bad One* (Kill Rock Stars, 2000).

many ways also manages to maintain their control, due in large part to both the politics of the cyborg body, and the patriarchal-humanist social structures which surround and support that image.⁵¹⁴

However, despite this rather bleak outlook, all is not lost, because while proponents of Sandoval's "oppositional consciousness" and Haraway's cyborg feminism continue to lose on a large scale, and while their struggle to allow for multiple readings and meanings even within an image as rigid and entrenched as the man-machine is still met with resistance from all corners of our culture; their struggle is never futile. Rather the reverse. As Haraway states:

that doesn't mean we have to give away the game, cash in our chips, and go home. I think those are the places where we need to keep contesting. It's like refusing to give away the notion of democracy to the right wing in the United States. It's like refusing to leave in the hands of hostile social formations tools that we need for reinventing our own lives. So, I'm not in fact, all that sanguine...I know that there's a lot going on in technoscience discourses and practices that's not about the devil...that promises interesting kinds of human relationships, not just contestatory, not always oppositional, but something often more creative and playful and positive than that.⁵¹⁵

Yet, if Haraway's suggestion is correct, and if "technoscience worlds" are indeed "full of resources for contesting inequality and arbitrary authority", and if those who resist and adopt such worlds continue to lose terribly; then logically, it is not because Haraway's dream of the cyborg feminist is irrevocably flawed, but because there has not been enough effort on the part of feminism to wean the image away from its atomic, space-based, imperialist, colonial, fascist, patriarchal, oppressive, and generally destructive roots.⁵¹⁶ Part of the issue, as we have already seen throughout each of the prior chapters, has been a total and consistent misrecognition of the image. As every cyborg body since the publication of "Cyborgs and Space"—indeed, from the initial construction of Epstein's *Rock Drill*—has been treated

⁵¹⁴ The subsequent misrecognition or misreading of the so-called Posthuman ethos, of which the cyborg is a representative, could also be construed as a possible agent in the propagation of Haraway's "informatics of domination." As Neil Badmington writes: "...there is nothing more terrifying than a posthumanism that claims to be terminating 'Man' while actually extending 'his' term in office." Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," p. 16.

⁵¹⁵ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs at Large," p. 13.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid

ontologically as something akin to a sacred cow, an inviolate construction; a black box. Producing a perspective, which has led inexorably to a long series of acute misreadings, allowing the social, cultural, and political constructs which surround and support the cyborg to remain both immovable and immutable.

In other words, the cyborg is not the wrong image or metaphor by which to start a revolution, form affinities, and resist tyranny, but it is an extremely problematic one, and perhaps far more difficult to control than even Haraway's most vehement critics are prepared to admit.⁵¹⁷ After all, any theory that successfully incorporates Chela Sandoval's oppositional consciousness remains an invaluable resource for all those who would wish to resist hegemony while continuing to perpetuate and maintain their own distinct value system without compromising those of other people, other races, or other social groupings. As Sandoval writes:

A scholarly and feminist consciousness of science, then, of objectivity...means, according to Haraway the development of a different kind of human relation to perception, objection, understanding, and production...akin to Hayden White's and Jacques Derrida's use of the 'middle voice', for it will demand the scholars situatedness 'in an ungraspable middle space'—where everything is seen with both a 'generous and suspicious' eye.⁵¹⁸

Despite my somewhat damning investigation of the man-machine, the notion of 'cyborg feminism' can accomplish such a task, simply because the term itself is self-negating. Indeed, elements of self-cancellation are central to Haraway's point, because in adopting such a radical form of consciousness one must be both "generous and suspicious" not only in regards to how one views other political perspectives and agendas, but also to how one navigates such markers as well. One must remain open but guarded; accepting, but at the

⁵¹⁷ Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes: "Just as the biopolitical body of the West cannot simply be given back to its natural life in the *oikos* [home], so it cannot be overcome in a passage to a new body—a technical body or a wholly political or glorious body—in which a different economy of pleasures and vital functions would once and for all resolve the interlacement of *zoē* [bare life: the simple fact of living] and *bios* [the way of living proper to an individual or group] that seems to define the political destiny of the West." Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 188. Definitions of both "zoē" and "bios" can be found on the first page of Agamben's Introduction.

⁵¹⁸ Chela Sandoval, "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed," p. 418.

same time forever vigilant, as he or she examines and incorporates differing ideas and perspectives into his or her own subjectivity, no matter how offensive or contradictory each one may appear.⁵¹⁹ The “metaphor ‘cyborg’ [can represent] profound possibilities for the twenty-first century”: possibilities which, according to Sandoval, could conceivably “bring the politics of the alienated white male subject into alliance with the subaltern politics of U.S. third world feminism.”⁵²⁰ Unfortunately, Haraway’s attempt to create a new myth, and to thereby escape the oedipal “power[s] of a truly totalizing dogma that can include all stories”, has sabotaged the power and applicability of her own ideas.⁵²¹ Because while adopting the cyborg as the metaphor for her own decidedly techno-version of Sandoval’s oppositional consciousness is not fundamentally incorrect, Haraway has failed in her attempt to fully connect that consciousness to the image of human-machine integration. Instead, her attempts to explicate the qualities which define the cyborg as a ‘cyborg’ are far too narrow for any such application, because even though her efforts to “come up with a creature that [isn’t] about Oedipal subjectivity” is both understandable and necessary, Haraway’s unrelenting idealism ultimately undermines the most valuable aspects of her work.⁵²²

For example, despite her assertions that an image such as the cyborg rejects “bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the parts into a higher unity”, it is patently obvious to anyone who examines the evidence, that a body like the man-machine does not exist outside the psychological constructs of “Freud, Levis-Strauss, and Lacan”, but is instead

⁵¹⁹ Cornel West articulates a similar sentiment in his paper, “A Matter of Life and Death,” writing how the older universalist projects of the Left have been shattered. “So there must be strategies and tactics that cut across identity politics, cut across region, and gender, race and class. Class is still around, even though it has been unable to constitute an identity that has the saliency and potency of other identities. And we must attempt to think about how we create and sustain organizations that acknowledge this. Because we are in the bind we are in partly because we have been unable to generate the transgendered, transracial, transsexual orientation of social motion, social momentum, social movement.” Cornel West, “A Matter of Life and Death,” *The Identity in Question* 61, (Summer 1992), pp 23.

⁵²⁰ Chela Sandoval, “New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed,” p. 409.

⁵²¹ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs at Large,” p. 14.

⁵²² Ibid

deeply entrenched within those stories.⁵²³ Moreover, while it is not incorrect to state that the cyborg is composed of two differing parts, it is absolutely inaccurate to assume that such a body not only resists wholeness, but *embraces* fragmentation. The fact is, it does not. Furthermore, even though the cyborg was not born in a garden, it does not exist outside “salvation history”, or the patriarchal and problematic constructs of psychoanalysis.⁵²⁴ As we have already seen, such an assumption is not simply false, but more importantly, it is also extremely destructive since the goal of cyborg feminism, and thus of oppositional consciousness, is not to impose qualities upon any one person, group, or construct, but rather to accept any existing differences, and then to embrace the reality presented while remaining simultaneously critical of their origins and effects.

In this sense, the cyborg is the perfect metaphor for both Haraway and Sandoval, because it forces all feminists to not only locate themselves within “the belly of the monster”, and thus to accept their place in “techno-strategic discourse” composed of “heavily militarized technolog[ies]”, but to also acknowledge the “bankruptcy” of placing oneself outside those constructs. After all, embracing “the idea of nature as resistant” is a patriarchal construct in itself.⁵²⁵ It is a theoretical dead end in which one can only criticize from a position outside the intended target, because individuals must make their stand in a space that patriarchal capitalism readily rapes and destroys anyway. On the other hand, while Haraway may have begun her manifesto by “adopting” an “illegitimate and frightening sign”, one which is “perhaps more able to remain attuned to specific historical and political positionings and permanent partialities without abandoning the search for potent connections”; she has also ignored other less savoury aspects of the cyborg’s many associations, and as

⁵²³ Donna J. Haraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto,” p. 150; Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs at Large,” p. 17.

⁵²⁴ Scott Bukatman writes: “The [human] fusion with machines represents something other than a postmodern celebration of dissolving borders and boundaries, because they are often as much attempts to reseat the human (male) in a position of virile power and control.” For more on Scott Bukatman see: “Terminal Resistance/Cyborg Acceptance,” *Cyber_Reader*, ed. Neil Spiller (London: Phaidon, 2002), p. 200; *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁵²⁵ Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, and Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs at Large,” pp. 11-12.

such uprooted the very subjectivity she was striving to nurture.⁵²⁶ In fact, in one devastating move, she has extricated herself from the monster's "belly" by denying both the internal reality of that monstrosity, and by situating herself in what Neil Badmington calls, "the pure outside"; or, that unreal place beyond the constraints of time, space, and the reach of one's own culture.⁵²⁷

Such a position is extremely damaging to Haraway's ideas, because by removing herself from the centre she has not only chosen to disregard the non-existence of Badmington's "outside," but also decided not to "lodg[e] [herself] within [Derrida's] traditional conceptuality in order to destroy it."⁵²⁸ Subsequently, she has chosen not "to reveal the internal instabilities, [and] fatal contradictions that expose how humanism is forever rewriting itself as posthumanism."⁵²⁹ Instead, Haraway has dislodged herself and her politics from the reality of the world in what amounts to an inadvertent attempt to preserve it. There is nothing oppositional about a consciousness that disregards all things contradictory in favour of ideas which are less problematic and more palatable to one's goals. Such a perspective borders on totalizing, and upon the very things Haraway's manifesto is striving to avoid.

The cyborg is not an especially liberating image, but is instead a very dangerous, destructive, and deeply patriarchal body, because in spite of Haraway's inclusive dream, there is a "drive in cyborgs to produce total theory".⁵³⁰ As such, any attempt at oppositional consciousness in the name and body of the man-machine must accept and recognize this fact, because only by accepting its faults can one truly understand the nature of human-machine amalgamation, and therefore formulate not only a possible mode of resistance, but perhaps also an alternative feminist subjectivity bearing genuinely subversive political values. Thus, while Haraway's assumptions about the cyborg's alleged embrace of ego fragmentation, and about its so-called distaste for notions of organic wholeness due to the combinatory nature of its own unique form are very appealing, the truth is all potential

⁵²⁶ Donna J. Haraway, "Introduction," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 1.

⁵²⁷ Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," p. 15.

⁵²⁸ Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 111.

⁵²⁹ Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," pp. 15-16.

⁵³⁰ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 181.

combinations of human and machine also carry the building blocks for one single overarching image: glass. Producing a surface with absolutely indestructible links to wholeness, the ego, and more importantly, to the production of a subjectivity directly contrary to articulations of a resistant and fragmentary self. To ignore that, is to ignore the essence of the image, as well as any potential social, cultural, or political value inherent to that creature, because by accepting these less utopian realities, one can in turn, not only recognize the cyborg for what it truly is, but also better understand the nature of that image, while reconciling with, as well as attempting to, more vigorously redefine the subjective and political value of the body itself. In doing so, perhaps we as both individuals, and a socio-political collective, can begin to correctly process a way out of the “maze of dualisms” so toxic to any potential change. Indeed, perhaps in recognizing the mirror, we can then begin to shatter the glass, penetrate an ideological frontier, and truly emerge on a “new soil, [under] a new power, a new law”.⁵³¹

⁵³¹ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, p. 190. Of course, the opposite and the unthinkable may also be true, because as Derrida notes in an essay from 1984: “For the moment, today, one may say that a non-localizable nuclear war has not occurred; it has existence only through what is said of it, only where it is talked about. Some might call it a fable then, a pure invention: in the sense in which it is said that a myth, an image, a fiction, a utopia, a rhetorical figure, a phantasm, [a cyborg,] are inventions. It may also be called a speculation, even a fabulous specularization. The breaking of the mirror would be, finally, through an act of language, the very occurrence of nuclear war. Who can swear that our unconscious is not expecting this? dreaming of it, desiring it?” Jacques Derrida, “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missives, Seven Missiles),” *Diacritics* 14.2, (Summer 1984), p. 23.

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Figure 1: The Trinity Marker

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Figure 2: Skin eruptions and irradiated eyes, *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959)

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Figure 3: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); monument marking the hypocenter of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, Japan

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Figure 4: Archival photo pictured in *Nuit et brouillard* (1955)

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Figure 5: Melted Coca-Cola bottles, *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959); Andy Warhol, *Green Coca-Cola Bottles* (1962), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

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Figure 6: Andy Warhol, *Brillo* (1964)
London, Tate Collection

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Figure 7: Khrushchev and Nixon, "The Kitchen Debate" (1959)

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Figure 8: Schwarzenegger's entrance, *T3: Rise of the Machines* (2003)

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Figure 9: Abstraction through C3I, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

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Figure 10: "Angel of Death," *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

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Figure 11: Black Hands, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *Metropolis* (1926)

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Figure 12: Moloch, *Metropolis* (1926)

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Figure 13: Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* prefigured, *Metropolis* (1926)

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Figure 14: General Jack D. Ripper, shot from below, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

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Figure 15: General Buck Turgidson; potent male and mistress, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

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Figure 17: Ash rapes Ripley, *Alien* (1979)

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Figure 18: Ripley in the closet, *Alien* (1979)

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Figure 19: Kane's "homosexual oral rape," *Alien* (1979)

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Figure 20: Amy Taubin's "little-dick-with-teeth," *Alien* (1979)

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Figure 21: Ash, *Alien* (1979)

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Figure 22: Major Kong's prelude to 'wargasm,' *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

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Figure 23: R.F. Babcock, *Join the Navy* (1917)
American WWI Poster

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Figure 24: Russell Crowe as the glass eating cyborg, Sid 6.7
Virtuosity (1995)

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Figure 25: Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524),
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

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Figure 26: Photograph of the Trinity Test taken 0.025 seconds after detonation. Could this be the beginning of our self-portrait in an atomic mirror?

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Figure 27: The Terminator emerges from the atomic blast
T2: Judgment Day (1991)

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Figure 28: Terminator as mirror, *T2: Judgment Day* (1991)

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Figure 29: Orpheus entering the mirror-pool, *Orphée* (1949)

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Figure 30: Fetishtic eruptions, *Total Recall* (1990)

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