

ROSEMARIE TROCKEL: THE PROBLEM OF BECOMING

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2013

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SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES, AND CULTURES

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Word Count: 72,990

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ABSTRACT

Rosemarie Trockel: The Problem of Becoming is a theoretical investigation of the artwork of contemporary German artist Rosemarie Trockel (b. 1952). Although Trockel is best known for her knit canvas works made throughout the 1980s, she has a remarkably large oeuvre which utilizes almost every artistic medium possible – from video and film work, to public monuments, painting, earthworks, sculpture, drawing, installation art, book-making, photography, and even robotics. Trockel's artwork is constantly changing stylistically and thematically, which makes her work difficult to write about but is also what makes her work unique. By opening up a multiplicity of readings that refuse a fixed symbolic order, her art represents a continuous state of becoming other. Ultimately this project claims that Rosemarie Trockel's artwork exemplifies a 'virgolian' subjectivity and an aesthetics of becoming.

This project reads Trockel's art through the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as well important feminist and queer theorists such as Griselda Pollock, Teresa de Lauretis, Marguerite Duras, Simone de Beauvoir, and Monique Wittig. It also uses the theoretical construct of the virgule as an alternative to common art historical methods such as gender, culture, biography, historicity, or intentionality. The virgule is a theoretical construct (representing both an aesthetic mode or style and a form of subjectivity), which is, ultimately, a new way of reading works of art and literature.

Each chapter of this thesis demonstrates different ways in which the virgule operates within Rosemarie Trockel's artwork. Chapter one, 'BB/BB', centres on Trockel's vitrine work 'The Bardot Box' (1993), in which Trockel combines Brigitte Bardot and Bertolt Brecht. These two figures are used to explore concepts of myth, fandom, the rhizome, and adolescence. Chapter two, 'Mermaid/Angel', looks at Trockel's sculpture *Pennsylvania Station* (1987), which is usually read as relating to the Holocaust. Here, instead, the work will be looked at in relation to fairy tales and mythological creatures. It will also demonstrate Trockel's fascination with the history of art and how women's bodies are constructed throughout that history. Chapter three, 'Domestic/Violence', discusses how Trockel's work can relate to historical German events (namely, the activities of terrorist Group the Red Army Faction). It also demonstrates her interest in uncovering forgotten histories and people. Chapter four, 'Body/Machine', explains how Trockel's sculptural machine *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* bridges the divide between mechanical production and the handmade. This chapter also discusses the very different ways in which Trockel's work portrays bodies (visceral versus clinical). The concluding chapter of *Rosemarie Trockel: The Problem of Becoming*, 'Across the/Continental Divide' places Trockel's video work 'Continental Divide' (1994) in dialogue with Monique Wittig's novel *Across the Acheron*, to show how the virgule operates as a subject position, and to demonstrate the limits of a virgolian subjectivity.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have an ineffable amount of thanks and admiration for my advisor, Carol Mavor. Without her guidance and support I could not have written this thesis. I will be forever grateful for her belief in me, the knowledge she has equipped me with, and the inspiration she has instilled in me. I would also like to thank the members of my thesis panel, Mark Crinson and Margaret Littler, both of whom have played a massive role in the development of this thesis as well as my own personal and intellectual development.

I would also like to thank the following colleagues, friends, and teachers for their support and inspiration over the years: Barbara Peine, Michael Yonan, Dick Langston, Elin o'Hara Slavick, Constance Hunt, Gregory Williams, Friederike Schuler, Wendy Ligon Smith, Jeff McDevitt, and Michelle Parrinello-Cason. A big thanks to my brothers, Patrick, Daniel, and Benton Guinness for being the most brilliant, brave, and funny people I know.

To my parents, Sarah Hunt and Robert Guinness, thank you for everything you have given me over the years (and you have given me everything). Your unconditional love, support, and creativity mean the world to me. (And thanks for telling me about *White Orchid*, Dad).

And finally, I would like to thank Grant Bollmer. You are amazing, you are my favourite. Without your love, time, attention, understanding, and constant positive reinforcement, this thesis would not have happened.

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of Donald Hunt and Maxine Hunt.

INTRODUCTION

SCHIZOPULLOVER

The sweater is black. It is made of simple, black wool. To see it hanging limply from an unassuming hanger in a gallery setting is to be amused, but confused (Figure 0.1). Is this sweater a remnant of a more important work? Where is the rest then? Perhaps it was worn by someone of note – a commentary on the cult of the object. Who knows? It is easy to move on. If you do not move on, however, you begin to notice more: the sweater, with its dull colour and unsurprising weave has two armholes (normal) and two head-holes (not normal). Is this a humorous take on the mistake of a new knitter (not dissimilar to the common first timer's problem of very long sleeves or no head hole at all)? A metaphor for failed artistic production? (A quiet, silly monument to failure?) Is it something more? Is it purposeful? How does one use this sweater? What can it mean?

These continuous questions, this path of discovery are the power of contemporary German artist Rosemarie Trockel's work. It is often plain and unassuming, but it is also beautifully complex, richly complicated, cosy but not comforting. The sweater, Trockel's *Schizopullover*, is shown to its fullest when actually put to use, when bodies occupy it, as it is in Trockel's untitled (1988) series of photographs. In these photos Trockel and a female friend wear the sweater together, arms akimbo, faces gazing (grumpily, in Trockel's case) off into the distance (Figure 0.2). *Schizopullover* covers and engulfs a body, like any piece of clothing can, but also possesses the power to combine a body with another body. The two armholes and two head-holes contain the bodies in a limited space and seemingly combine them when viewed from outside the sweater. Of course, under the sweater the bodies are not truly

combined, and so one is drawn to its unseen eroticism: the space inside the sweater where the sides of the two bodies can touch, covered to the outside world but naked to one another's flesh.

In spite of this enticing imagined pairing, the *Schizopullover* denies the uniting of two into one; schizo is to split, to break down a body, an identity. Thus, *Schizopullover* is exemplary of Trockel's love for turning pairs into single beings and single beings into split pairs. This garment is a dividing/uniting, cutting/sewing, binding pleasure/confining reality, other/lover/unknown self. It is a process of becoming (combined) that revels in the fact that it cannot (truly) synthesize. The two bodies touch and appear as one, but their point of separation is the work's theoretical apex.

The bodies are combined to an extent. The two wearers are physically close and each must move and live with great consideration of the other. The eroticism and comfort from being combined with an 'other' will soon be replaced with repulsion and regret. To feel otherwise would be madness. How could any two people happily live forever together in this garment? The beauty of the *Schizopullover* is swept aside by considerations of this eternally bound and trapped existence. The work is made of binaries and combinations of those binaries, the undoing of those binaries, and the reaffirmation of those binaries, but ultimately the creation of a space in which the binaries do not matter, have no sway. The sweater combines and separates at the same time; it pulls two disparate entities closer, closer, and closer together (always threatening and promising to conjoin them) but ultimately always denies them synthesis – space but no space, visibly invisible separations, emphasizing their distance by having them rub together forever. These binaries denied synthesis might be called *virgules*. A virgule is a theoretical construct (representing both an aesthetic mode or style and a

form of subjectivity) that this thesis will define and use in order to better read and understand the artwork of Rosemarie Trockel. It will also be used to show how she develops concepts of identity and creation within her work. The virgule is a new way of reading works of art and literature, an alternative to traditional art historical methods such as gender, culture, historicity, and intentionality. By using the virgule, other ways of understanding identity, subjectivity, and artwork are opened up (as is the case with Trockel and her work in this project). The *Schizopullover* is a virgule. There is no metaphor here; it is a literal virgule made of black wool. The sweater is a discourse, materiality combining real bodies, but existing outside of language.

Rosemarie Trockel was born in 1952 in Schwerte, Germany, and has lived and worked in Germany her entire life. She originally studied anthropology, sociology, theology, and mathematics in the hopes of becoming a teacher, but later studied painting under Werner Schriefers at the Werkschulen in Cologne from 1974 to 1978. As an artist, she has worked with painting, sculpture, video, installation art, drawing, architecture, and even horticulture. Trockel's oeuvre is as physically complex as it is theoretically complex: by 2001 she had generated roughly a thousand drawings, more than fifty videos, dozens of sculptures and paintings, produced designs for books, magazines, clothing, and household furnishings, written several books of her own (including a children's book), and had even experimented with earthworks and publicly commissioned memorials. She is best known, however, for her knit canvasses produced throughout the 1980s. These works consist of large (usually ranging from three feet by three feet up to fifteen feet by fifteen feet) sections of knit wool patterned with various icons, logos, and abstract designs (the hammer and sickle, the playboy bunny, the wool mark logo, etc.) made by industrial machines and stretched over canvas (Figure 0.3-0.5).

Despite being lauded as one of the most important figures in the contemporary German art movement and having her work frequently exhibited around the world, extremely little has been written about Trockel.¹ The bulk of the writings that do exist focus on her knit canvasses and approach her work with an essentialist feminist reading, arguing that the overwhelming majority of her work is about female artistic production, issues of equality and difference between male and female artists, and raising the stereotypically 'low' art of women's craftwork to 'high art'. For example, art critic Michael Kimmelman questions a 1991 exhibition of her work, writing, 'are they laments about mass production? Are they supposed to imply a discord between knitting as woman's work and painting as a man's occupation? Either way, they are unrevealing and simplistic'.² An exhibition review written a decade later (long after Trockel had set aside the knit canvasses for other, less obviously read works) has more positive things to say about Trockel's art, but still mirrors Kimmelman's remarks:

Challenging painting as high art dominated by men, she turned out 'canvases' made of yard-goods wool, a woman's material, patterned with stereotypical logos like swastikas and Playboy bunnies. A knitter of quirky clothes, like sweaters to be worn by two people at once and cap masks similar to Green Party gear, she also made stove works, forged from enamelled steel and hot plates, that converted female symbols from the kitchen into Minimalist objects.³

The reviews and essays on Trockel's work extend in this manner over three decades, rarely changing their tune despite Trockel constantly changing hers.⁴ While these

¹ Trockel has had over 150 solo exhibitions all over the world, including at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, even the City Gallery in Wellington, New Zealand. She has shown at Art Basel in Miami, and was chosen to represent the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1999, as well as winning numerous grants and awards.

² Michael Kimmelman, 'Art View; Politics, Laced with a Dollop of Strangeness', *New York Times*, April 28 (1991).

³ Grace Glueck, 'Art Review; Drawings as Enigmas Wrapped in Metaphors', *New York Times*, March 23 (2001).

⁴ Other examples include: 'The subjects here are diverse, but there runs through many of them a thread of sly, sardonic feminism, a concern for the role of women in art and in

readings are not inherently wrong, they fail to give Trockel's complex and often difficult work a second (or sometimes necessary third) look and examine the work itself on its own terms.⁵

Beyond these exhibition reviews, the majority of writing on Trockel's artwork consists of essays written for exhibition catalogues. The same small group of scholars and curators consisting of Elisabeth Sussman,⁶ Wilfried Dickhoff,⁷ Brigid Doherty,⁸ Sidra Stich,⁹ Lynne Cooke,¹⁰ Christoph Schreier,¹¹ Birte Frenssen,¹² and Gregory

the world at large that is their most distinguishing characteristic and that is, once you think about it, what connects all of Miss Trockel's varied production'. Roberta Smith, 'Review/Art; Sly, Sardonic Feminism From a West German', *New York Times*, March 11 (1988). Even Trockel's entry in the Grove Art Online Dictionary remains unchanged since her early 80s work:

In 1985 Trockel produced her first 'knitting pictures', consisting of lengths of machine-knitted woollen material stretched on to frames. The material is patterned with computer-generated geometrical motifs or recognizable logos, for example the hammer-and-sickle motif of the Soviet Union ironically superimposed on a background of red-and-white stripes that recall the US flag ... The knitted works are ironic comments on the traditionally feminine occupation of knitting placed in a context of mass production. Other works by Trockel also have a feminist theme. 'Rosemarie Trockel', Grove Art Online, accessed on January 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com>.

⁵ Interestingly, reviews of Trockel's work generally fall into one of two camps: that her knit canvasses are excellent examples of important feminist art, or (in shows where the knit canvasses do not make an appearance) that her work is confusingly uneven, in need of editing, and inaccessible. ('Where are the knit canvasses?' these reviews seem to cry.)

⁶ Essays by Elisabeth Sussman include: 'The Body's Inventory – the Exotic and Mundane in Rosemarie Trockel's Art', in *Rosemarie Trockel*, Sidra Stich, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 27.

⁷ Essays by Wilfried Dickhoff include: 'Plate Commentaries', in *Rosemarie Trockel*, Sidra Stich, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 27. 'An Oblique Encounter with Ovulation', in *Rosemarie Trockel. Bodies of Work 1986-1999*, Rosemarie Trockel, ed. (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 33.

⁸ Essays by Brigid Doherty include: 'On Iceberg and Water. Or, Painting and the 'Mark of Genre' in Rosemarie Trockel's Wool-Pictures', *MLN*, Vol 121, No. 3 (2006): 720-739. 'Rosemarie Trockel's Monsters', in *Rosemarie Trockel. Drawings, Collages, and Book Drafts*, Anita Haldemann and Christoph Schreier, ed. (Ostfildern: Hatje Kanz Verlag, 2010), 'Plate Commentaries', in *Rosemarie Trockel*, Sidra Stich, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 70.

⁹ Essays by Sidra Stich include: 'The Affirmation of Difference in the Art of Rosemarie Trockel', in *Rosemarie Trockel*, Sidra Stich, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 11.

Williams¹³ generally write these essays. While the majority of the essays are quite good, addressing Trockel's artwork in a more complex manner and discussing more of her oeuvre, they are rarely longer than the reviews (two to ten pages). At that short length, one simply cannot delve into the more difficult and theoretical aspects of Trockel's work. They are also limited to (unsurprisingly, as they are *exhibition* catalogues) the work that is being shown in the particular exhibition they are discussing.

In addition to these writings, Trockel has been the subject of several academic journal articles and used as part of larger arguments in a few books. Arthur Danto, in his book *After the End of Art*, begins to discuss Trockel's work in terms of a new, non-gendered subjectivity, but does not go beyond listing her name among other artists. Danto claims that artists such as Trockel (along with Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Bruce Nauman, and Sherrie Levine) exist 'at the end of art' and are 'free to be what they want to be – are free to be anything or even to be everything'. These artists, for Danto, are unbound by the limitations of genre.¹⁴

Christine Ross briefly mentions Trockel's video piece *Eye* in *The Aesthetics of Disengagement*, a book about how contemporary art performs an aesthetics of depression and exemplifies a depressive subjectivity. She uses the video work to

¹⁰ Essays by Lynne Cooke include: 'Modeling a Cosmos', in *Rosemarie Trockel, A Cosmos*, Lynne Cooke, ed. (New York: The Moncaelli Press, 2012).

¹¹ Essays by Christoph Schreier include: 'Questioning the Middle: People, Animals, and Mutants in Rosemarie Trockel's Works on Paper', in *Rosemarie Trockel. Drawings, Collages, and Book Drafts*, Anita Haldemann and Christoph Schreier, ed. (Ostfildern: Hatje Kanz Verlag, 2010), 39.

¹² Essays by Birte Frenssen include: 'The Fluid Element', in *Rosemarie Trockel. Bodies of Work 1986-1999*, Rosemarie Trockel, ed. (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 112.

¹³ Essays by Gregory Williams include: 'The Art of Indecision: Rosemarie Trockel's Book Drafts', in *Rosemarie Trockel. Drawings, Collages, and Book Drafts*, Anita Haldemann and Christoph Schreier, ed. (Ostfildern: Hatje Kanz Verlag, 2010), 9, 'Split Nature, Laughter and Malice in Rosemarie Trockel's Houses for Animals', in *Rosemarie Trockel: Post Menopause* (Cologne: Walter Konig, 2006), 64.

¹⁴ Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 45.

discuss how visual perception plays an important (if not the most important) role in current identity debates within art and how Trockel's work embodies a depressive affect. While Ross's assertion that Trockel's work refuses set identities and exemplifies the move away from Freudian or Lacanian subjectivity and psychoanalysis is an important one (a primary assertion of this thesis), she does not then link that move to Deleuze and Guattari's theory of schizoanalysis. (As this thesis will do.)

Art historian Anne M. Wagner has written several essays on Trockel, as well as lecturing on her work. She has written about Trockel's *Painting Machine* work, stating, 'For it, gendered performance is clearly a thing of the past'.¹⁵ Her essay on this work is effective in discussing how Trockel questions mechanical reproduction and painting, but ignores one of the work's most interesting aspects (that Trockel broke it). In chapter 4 (Body/Machine) of this thesis, I discuss Trockel's destruction of the work, and how that destruction adds to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of machines. Wagner has also done work on Trockel in which she compares her to Lewis Carroll.¹⁶ While I agree that Trockel's work lends itself to interdisciplinary readings and many interesting connections, I feel that Carroll is not an exemplary match.

Art historian Gregory Williams has, in June of 2012, published a book entitled *Permission to Laugh: Humour and Politics in Contemporary German Art* in which Trockel is one of six West German artists working during the 1970s and 1980s discussed. Williams smartly focuses on the frequent (and so often overlooked) aspect of humour within Trockel's work. He pairs her with Martin Kippenberger as an artist who defies categorization and, 'challenged [Williams'] ability to place them within

¹⁵ Anne M. Wagner, 'Mechanics of Meaning, or the Painting Machine', *Afterall*, Autumn/Winter (2003).

¹⁶ Anne M. Wagner, 'Trockel's Wonderland', in *Rosemarie Trockel, A Cosmos*, Lynne Cooke, ed. (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2012), 21.

familiar categorizations of post-war German art'.¹⁷ Although he admits the challenge of placing Trockel within typical categories of style, location, or time period, Williams comes closest to pinning down the zeitgeist of her work. Through her work's humour, he connects her to other artists in 1980s West Germany working in the shadow of Beuys and Polke.¹⁸ He says this group 'prioritized wit, wordplay, and joking as effective strategies for artists working in the wake of modernism' and shared a 'widespread loss of faith in the avant-garde link between art and politics'.¹⁹

Finally, Rosemarie Trockel herself has co-authored several books, including *A House for Pigs and People*, with Carsten Holler (focusing on their work of the same name that appeared in Documenta X).²⁰ The book is primarily concerned with animal rights and animals' relation to humans. In it Trockel asks questions such as: 'Ought Scottish sheep, to which human genes have been transferred, be killed?', 'Doesn't animal consciousness have to be something quite different, something we cannot imagine?', and 'Did Kaspar Hauser know who he was? Do we know? What does an animal know?'²¹ She has also written a theoretical book on Marguerite Duras with Marcus Steinweig, entitled *Duras*.²²

Many of those writing on Trockel speak to their feelings of frustration, irritation, and uncertainty when attempting to discuss her work. There are at least a dozen or so

¹⁷ Gregory H. Williams, *Permission to Laugh, Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), vii.

¹⁸ The others include: Werner Büttner, Isa Genzken, Georg Herold, Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen.

¹⁹ Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 1.

²⁰ This work consisted of a small hut where visitors could lie down on blankets. The main wall of the structure was covered with a two-way mirror, and on the other side was an outdoor area full of pigs. The people in the hut could see the pigs, but the pigs could only see themselves.

²¹ Carsten Holler and Rosemarie Trockel, *A House for Pigs and People* (Koln: Walter König, 1997), 8-9.

²² It is worth noting that Trockel and Steinweg frequently cite Deleuze and Guattari throughout the book.

quotes attesting to this, but Jean Christophe Ammann's is more than representative of them. He writes:

When you come to write about Rosemarie Trockel's work, you literally feel the ground cut away from beneath your feet. Even the simplest statements do not seem to work since, when taken together, they act upon complete uncertainty. It is easier to write about this or that work, or collection of works, although, in so doing, you soon get an uneasy feeling that you might be arguing from the particular to the general. This approach itself runs against the grain of her work. Or, perhaps, not, for it is impossible to grasp the sense of that work as a whole. I think, in fact, that one of Rosemarie Trockel's main challenges to the viewer is that she makes it impossible even to think in terms of a possible whole, that is, she prevents you from discussing her work on the basis of seeing it as a whole. The question then arises whether Rosemarie Trockel is aiming to elude any interpretation of her work, whether, in fact, she is being deliberately ambiguous.²³

A large part of this frustration comes from trying to read Trockel's work through her biography and intentionality. Her severe agoraphobia made it difficult to learn about or interact with her and there is extremely little in the way of personal biography written on her or interviews given by her.²⁴ Since her words and biography are rather sparse, her work is what must be dealt with, almost exclusively on its own terms.

This can be challenging for those that want to read the work through the conception of a 'biographical subject'. Griselda Pollock explains how this type of reading can be problematic, specifically focusing on the rape of artist Artemisia Gentileschi. In readings that emphasise the personal biography of the artist, argues Pollock, 'Life would be mirrored in art and art would confirm the biographical subject – a woman wronged. Gentileschi's art would speak only of that event – indexing directly to experience and offering no problems for interpretation'.²⁵ Reading the work through

²³ Jean-Christophe Ammann, *Rosemarie Trockel* (Kunstahalle Basel & ICA London, 1998), 6.

²⁴ Recently Trockel's agoraphobia has lessened, allowing her to teach and curate several international exhibitions. For more on Trockel's agoraphobia see Gregory Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 64.

²⁵ Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 97.

the biographical subject limits it to a specific, fixed representation of a unique individualised experience. Any possible politics of the work is removed as it is captured as little more than the experience of an individual, unable to speak to broader socio-cultural constructions of gender, sexuality, and difference. Fortunately for my project, instead of subjecting Trockel to a reading based on her personal biography, I wish to ‘make the work itself vivid by decoding the dynamic process of how meaning is produced and exploring what kinds of reading its signs make possible’.²⁶ Or, more specifically, I wish to investigate how the form and process of Trockel’s work opens up the possibilities for representation, transforming the possibilities encoded by the term ‘woman’ or ‘woman’s art’.

The Virgule

Traditional ways of reading artwork do not mesh well with Trockel’s art, as it is explicitly about sabotaging these usual methods for dealing with symbolic orders by constantly changing (mediums, styles, subject matter, etc.) Her most current exhibition, ‘Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos’ (2012), states that she ‘deflects any identifiable stylistic signature’. This thesis will stake out a space for Trockel that shows her work can and should be read beyond a gendered (or essentialist) analysis, and that this ‘unstylistic style’ is expressive of virgolian subjectivity. The virgule will be the primary tool of this reading, acting as an alternative to traditional art historical methods.

Trockel’s artwork could easily be positioned within art history as one among many important Conceptual artists. Alexander Alberro, in his essay ‘Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977’, writes that ‘In its broadest possible definition, the conceptual in art means an expanded critique of the cohesiveness and materiality of the

²⁶ Ibid.

art object, a growing wariness toward definitions of artistic practice as purely visual, a fusion of the work with its site and context of display, and an increased emphasis on the possibilities of publicness and distribution.²⁷ While critiquing Trockel's work as being concerned with any (and all) of the above subjects would be a valid and valuable way of approaching her work, these topics are not my project's primary concern. Traditional art historical frameworks, while helpful in interpreting artwork, are through their very nature (as a frame) limiting. In no way do I want to limit or confine Trockel's vast oeuvre and its potential for opening up new readings and understandings of art, theory, and subjectivity. This opening up of new ways to understand both her work and the larger concepts her work address is, in fact, the primary goal of this thesis. Thus, my project will not utilise art historical frameworks, but will instead be an analytical prism through which to explore key works of art – not a formal art historical reading, but rather a philosophical inquiry into the art of Rosemarie Trockel.

At its most basic level, the virgule refers to the symbol /. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a virgule is 'a thin sloping or upright line (/, |) occurring in mediæval MSS as a mark for the cæsura or as a punctuation-mark...see slash'.²⁸ The virgule is, however, more than just a grammatical symbol. It is a new construct with which to read artwork – the theoretical construct that this thesis will use in order to better read and understand the artwork of Rosemarie Trockel and how she positions concepts of identity and creation within that work.

The virgule is symbolic, but not linguistic. To borrow from Roland Barthes' masterful study of theoretical constructs such as this, 'I am not trying to define a word; I

²⁷ Alberro, Alexander, 'Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977', in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), xvii.

²⁸ 'Virgule', Oxford English Dictionary Online, accessed September 17, 2011, <http://www.oed.com>.

am trying to name a thing....'²⁹ The name of the virgule will ultimately fail me because the figure of the slash (one of these figures being, for example, Trockel's schizo sweater) is outside of language. It is excess. The virgule is always centred and present, and yet it continuously slips away into the distance. It is 'more' but can never actually be 'more'.

The Oxford English Dictionary goes on to explain that the virgule is 'the technical name of the short slanting stroke between *and* and *or*'. It is this 'and/or' that distinguishes the virgule as its own concept, as something different than simply a combination of and and or. If the virgule merely meant '*and* and *or*' (as it is most commonly thought to) there would be no need for it to appear as an additional symbol between the two words. 'And/or' cannot be equated with the virgule (/) because the virgule is still present within and/or. The virgule cannot stand in for (is not the same as) 'and' or 'or' because it is separate from them, a distinct part of the equation 'and/or'.

The virgule is also referred to as an oblique, a stroke, a separatix, or a slash. The word slash is especially fitting, as the virgule literally and figuratively cuts through two words or concepts. It divides them, but also combines them. To place a virgule between two things is to say that they are similar enough to be linked in a way, but too different to be one. In the case of the schizopullover, the two people are combined but separate; both of these things are happening at the same time, in the same space. They are never separate but never combined, and yet they are always combined and always separate. The virgule is that space of combination without synthesis; it is all the intensities and cracks and connections that come from the rubbing of the two subjects. A virgule takes two separate entities and bridges them, creating a space in which binary constraints do

²⁹ Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Courses at the College de France (1977-1978)*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 6.

not exist and there is a constant flux of becoming. In this becoming each entity maintains its singularity, but moves towards becoming the thing they are combined with, becoming a combined entity, but true synthesis never occurs. As Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘becoming produces nothing other than itself... what is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes.’³⁰ Thus, the virgule between the two is a block of becoming, producing only the action of becoming.³¹

The virgule can also be explained as a simultaneous neither/nor³² and everything/all. If the schizopullover is a virgule, and the two bodies housed within it are the objects on either side of that virgule, then within the space of the virgule itself every aspect of each person is present; the virgule is everything from one person and all the things from the other. However, since the virgule is a combination of the two things, it is no longer either one of them. It is neither merely that one person, nor the other person.

There are many types of virgules, and many ways in which the virgule can operate. The schizopullover itself could be read as body/body, separate/combined, beauty/grotesque, two bodies/one body, etc. The space of the virgule is not static; it is

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 238.

³¹ For more on the Deleuzo-Guattarian process of becoming, see Deleuze and Guattari, ‘1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible’ in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 232-310.

³² While this is a term very much associated with Roland Barthes and his writings on ‘Neither Nor Criticism’, and ‘The Ni-Ni’ (see Roland Barthes, ‘Neither Nor Criticism’ in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 1993), 81-83 and Barthes, *The Neutral*, 79), I am in no way referring to a ‘petit - bourgeoisie feature’ of criticism (Barthes, *The Neutral*, 79) or a ‘bourgeois mythology’ (Barthes, *Mythologies*, 81). My use of neither/nor is purely to denote that the subject in question is simply no longer wholly either of the subjects divided by the virgule. The simultaneous combination with an everything/all further differentiates it from Barthes’ terms.

very much linked to the process of becoming.³³ These combinations that never combine produce the new or original spaces of becoming. The two people wearing the sweater are in a constant state of becoming combined, of becoming one; the virgule here is separate/combined. Each body is wholly separate, but completely in the process of combining. They are successfully being combined, always moving towards it, but this combination never happens. It is not a failure because the final combination is never *not* reached. The combination only fails if the sweater (the virgule) is removed. As long as the sweater remains they are becoming combined. Each person is still themselves, but also a combination of themselves and the other person. Whereas becoming is a process, the virgule is a state of being, it is stable unto itself; you wear the sweater, you live in the sweater, you go on within the virgule, always changing, never actually changed.³⁴

The virgule is not the endpoint of Trockel's work, but a building block or node within her oeuvre. Each virgule she creates is placed into a larger context and reused, reissued, reborn. For example, the schizopullover has been displayed by itself both hung on a wall and hung from a hanger. It was also displayed in her 1988 series of photographs depicting several different women (including Trockel) wearing the sweater, as well as photos of Cologne art dealer and friend of Trockel's, Esther Schipper, wearing both halves of the sweater combined to look like she is wearing it with herself (the pinnacle of 'schizo' styling) (Figure 0.6). These photographs appear throughout artist books Trockel has created (which, in turn, appear in other photographic and

³³ Here, I am using Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari explain becomings, or transitions, as 'pure intensities' derived from 'repulsion and attraction, and from the opposition of these two forces'. *Anti-Oedipus*, 19. Becoming is the space between two forces in which change can occur (although if it ever really does is debatable and often contradicted in their work). Becoming is a process, it is different from Being.

³⁴ Here the term 'virtual' is useful (articulating a real but not actualized state).

sculptural works). She also photographed two children wearing the sweater, which is displayed alone as well as appearing on the cover of another artist book which reads ‘WHOLE DAYS’. The sweater has even been worn in some of Trockel’s video works. This reuse is not limited to *Schizopullover*, a large number of Trockel’s artworks are repurposed, redisplayed in new contexts, and combined with other works. As one can see, Trockel’s oeuvre cannot be categorized in a linear or stylistic way.

The schizopullover is a virgule, and by showing it in numerous ways at numerous times Trockel begins to weave a web of artwork. These connections are not just a bridge between one or two concepts or works, but a never-ending, ever-expanding web of relationships. (Think of the schizopullover as a node, and each time it reappears in her work another node appears, connect them and then connect the hundreds and hundreds of other single-virgule works she has made and redisplayed, an enormous web indeed.) And so a work of Trockel’s is neither completely one thing nor another, but always somewhere in between two things, one informing and changing the other as the other does the same. This is the case with *Schizopullover*, it is about uniting and dividing. The dividing denies the uniting and vice versa, but neither cease to be, nor exist fully on their own. The virgule points out and breaks apart connections and building blocks that appear again and again in Trockel’s artwork. Thus, her work is not a totalized or whole body, but a series of these endless slashes. In this sense, through her connection making, Trockel’s work is also schizophrenic in nature. To use Deleuzo-Guattarian phrasing, her ‘codes of delirium’ are scrambled and fluid – impossible to fully pin down. Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘The code of delirium or of desire proves to have an extraordinary fluidity. It might be said that the schizophrenic

passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately *scrambles all the codes*, by quickly shifting from one to another'.³⁵

Subjectivity and Schizoanalysis

The virgule is not just an aesthetic mode, it is also a form of subjectivity. This subjectivity is close, but not identical to, a decentred subjectivity (a multiple, fragmented, centre-less identity or a position for identity).³⁶ A virgolian subject must be split (by the virgule itself), and that split causes the decentred attributes of multiplicities and fragmentation, but the virgule is always between the two sides of the split.³⁷ This is not to say it is split in a Lacanian sense; the virgolian subject is not characterized by an absence or a void, nor is it necessarily unstable. (Neither is it necessarily structured or split by language.) The very nature of the virgule itself is to be centred literally between two things, otherwise it would not be a virgule. The virgule, as a concept and action is both centred and decentred, living forever within the constant shifting and reinvention of a subject. The virgule is the centre of two things, but those two things must be decentred by the virgule in order for the virgule to exist. The virgolian subject is one within the contradictions and splits that nonetheless constitute a whole.

While the virgule is the basis of this project, the 'schizo' of the schizopullover is significant. My virguli-analysis is built upon Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis.³⁸

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 15.

³⁶ Deleuze writes, 'I make, remake, and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentered centre, from an always displaced periphery...' *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xxi.

³⁷ This applies to both similar and dissimilar things that are placed together. The virgule is just as much a joining as it is a splitting.

³⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 'Introduction to Schizoanalysis', Gregory Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy: Powers of the False* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), and Eugene W. Holland, *Deleuze*

The two theorists most prominently undertook the move from privileging neuroses or paranoia to instead privileging schizophrenia in subjectivity.³⁹ They argued against the shortcomings they saw within psychoanalytic practice, namely the privileged authority of the analyst, and the Oedipus complex as a starting point for analysis. Their alternative was schizoanalysis, in which the subject does not need to be de-sexualised or sublimated; instead, they explore the assemblages with which the subject's desire is connected.⁴⁰

The subjectivity that shows through Trockel's work could easily be read as a schizophrenic one. She exemplifies the move from a politics of neuroses to a politics of schizophrenia through the multiple and split nature of her work. Arthur C. Danto writes that, 'A show of Trockel's looks like a group show'.⁴¹ In fact, Trockel's 1998 retrospective was entitled 'Group Work'. One reason for this group aesthetic is how Trockel deals with identity and authorship within her work; they are not absent from the work, but they are displaced (but not infinitely).⁴² Her artistic practice, and its group-aesthetics are the pinnacle of schizophrenic subjectivity. It is as if her two-person/one-person sweater dweller(s) composed it.

and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1999).

³⁹ As Eugene W. Holland explains, 'Schizophrenia – arising from the moment of deterritorialization and decoding – designates free-form desire in the psyche and the potential for universal history under capitalism, while paranoia – corresponding to reterritorialization and artificial recoding – designates the obstacles to realizing this potential that are imposed by private capital accumulation'. *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, 93.

⁴⁰ Guattari described schizoanalysis, stating, 'rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications which simplify the complex [schizoanalysis] will work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity.' *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 61.

⁴¹ Danto, *After the End of Art*, 171.

⁴² Even though authorship is displaced, it is not infinitely displaced – the work is always work by Trockel. She is many and one simultaneously.

Although Deleuze and Guattari's concept of schizophrenic subjectivity informs my concept of the virgule, the two are not interchangeable. For one, I do not want to use the language of mental illness to describe aesthetics. The virgule is both an aesthetic mode and a form of subjectivity, but is not an analysis of Trockel (or any person) herself. Unlike a schizophrenic subjectivity which, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, revolves around 'and, and, ands', the virgule gives equal importance to the separation between these linkages. In fact, the virgule emphasizes separations; it shows the spaces in between (ultimately is the spaces in between), not just the connectivity. The virgule embraces differentiation, and revels in the tensions between almost-connections that are ultimately impossible to synthesize.

As can be seen through her virgulian-web oeuvre and use of connections, the desire⁴³ of Trockel's work is not the neurotic (psychoanalytic) search for a phantasmatic wholeness, but is instead a schizophrenic desire, a desire to only make connections and see connections everywhere (combination, not fixation). These connections are schizophrenic, and Deleuze and Guattari discuss this subjectivity saying that, 'Whereas the "either/or" claims to mark decisive choices between immutable terms (the alternative: either this or that, the schizophrenic "either Or ... or...." refers to the system of possible permutations between differences that always amount to the same as they shift and slide about'.⁴⁴ Trockel's work is truly about these 'or...or...or's (or and...and...ands) – these connection that never end. The virgule is a machine for

⁴³ Desire is a foundational term within Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, and I am using it in a similar manner. Here specifically in the sense of desiring-production, which, as opposed to a psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious, is a productive, material and real force, not an imaginary one based on lack.

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 12.

making these connections.⁴⁵

Methodologically, the virgule also creates connections between theorists, writers, and artists. The connections between these figures will create an open space of tension where they do not synthesize. As is the case with the touching flesh of those in the schizopullover, these spaces will be the most active and interesting. This method is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's work with authors such as Marcel Proust and Franz Kafka in which they attempt to identify the flows of desire in their 'regime of signs'.⁴⁶ This method, which will be employed in reading Trockel's work, is desirable to me as it does not focus on the biography of the person or a chronology of the work itself. Instead, it allows me to compare and read texts and artwork outside of their creation or initial context (although context will not be ignored altogether). Deleuze and Guattari are also useful to my work because of their theory of deterritorialization (a crossing of boundaries without concern for vertical distinctions around which they are organized). My methodology will also treat artists and authors as theorists, theorists as artists, etc. This method is not only how my thesis will be orchestrated, but is how Trockel's work dictates it be orchestrated because she does the same, by putting Picasso on the same level as Brigitte Bardot and Nabokov, mermaids with victims of the Holocaust, Joan of Arc with Bertolt Brecht, swastikas with Hugh Hefner, Salvador Dali with Sleeping Beauty, and on and on.

Readings of Gender and Sexuality

Although her work is often read as feminist in nature, Trockel herself is known to

⁴⁵ I'm using 'machine' in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, in so much that it speaks to the creation and movement of flows of desire. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 'The Desiring-Machines', 1-42.

⁴⁶ Regime of signs refers to, 'any specific formalization of expression' that 'constitutes a semiotic system'. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 123.

‘have a distaste for the terms in which her art has sometimes been claimed to be feminist’.⁴⁷ As Gregory Williams explains, ‘Critics writing about Trockel have frequently attempted to describe a feminist impulse at the heart of her project, though Trockel herself has typically maintained a distance from defining her own practice as feminist in nature’.⁴⁸ This is not to say that Trockel’s work is anti-feminist. While her work avoids an essentialising feminism centred in celebrating the body or female difference, as well as the ‘male structures of success’⁴⁹ that Trockel felt New York female artists of the 1980s (such as Cindy Sherman and Barbara Krueger) participated in, it is still very much about the place of women within art and the world. Wilfried Dickhoff (a close friend of Trockel’s) puts it best: ‘Trockel sought new paths of feminism while simultaneously avoiding feminism’s “ism”’.⁵⁰

Through her work Trockel articulates a vision of gender in which it and sexuality continuously recede phantasmagorically into the distance. Thus, my reading of her work will be located largely outside of her bodily identity; gender and sexuality will not limit or define my reading. To be a fully virgular subject (as Trockel is) and to ultimately express one’s individuality and the liberation of desire, gender categories must be abolished. Trockel’s work must be understood from a radically anti-essentialist perspective on gender and sexuality. Deleuze and Guattari lead in this direction when they argue for a fundamentally multiple theorization of sexuality.⁵¹ They ‘seek to overthrow what they call the “anthropomorphic representation of sex”... and contradict

⁴⁷ Anne M. Wagner, ‘How Feminist are Rosemarie Trockel’s Objects?’, *Parkett* 33 (September 1992): 61.

⁴⁸ Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 64.

⁴⁹ Trockel, as quoted in Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 65.

⁵⁰ Wilfried Dickhoff, *After Nihilism: Essays on Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 195.

⁵¹ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, ‘The Second Positive Task’, 340-382, and Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 22-23, 67-80.

the global, “molar” order of phallic representation’.⁵² A multiple theorization of sexuality disrupts binary gender constructs, places a virgule between male and female.

The work of French author Monique Wittig will further illustrate this vision of gender within Trockel’s work. Whereas Anne M. Wagner advocates Lewis Carroll as Trockel’s literary match, writing,

If writers could be included in this wondrous assembly, I nominate Carroll to take a place among them. And why not? Like him, Trockel has studied nature’s representations and specimens in a whole range of versions and forms. Like him, she brings animals and humans together, in situations where the differences between them begin to fray. Like him, she makes utterly intentional use of the powers of nonsense.⁵³

I say that Wittig, for all of the reasons that Wagner gives and more, is Trockel’s textual twin. Both women’s use of humour is more calculated and threatening than Carroll’s ‘powers of nonsense’, and they entangle the arenas of myth, popular culture, literature, film, and history in a strikingly similar manner. Both create virgulian texts and subjects.

Although Wittig’s writing is often understood as advocating a radical lesbian separatist movement and real-life paradise islands full of Amazonian students of Sappho,⁵⁴ her work actually demonizes (sometimes literally)⁵⁵ the concept of ‘woman’. Her work resists the constraints of the ‘female body’, ultimately denying a difference of sex, and doing away with gender.⁵⁶ Wittig herself never uses the term ‘Amazon’, and the women in her novels labelled as such by critics (most likely because of their strength and isolation from men) most closely resemble Page duBois’ conception of

⁵² Shavero, *The Cinematic Body*, 22.

⁵³ Anne M. Wagner, ‘Trockel’s Wonderland,’ 21.

⁵⁴ An obituary written for Wittig by playwright Carolyn Gage in ‘Off our Backs’ stated that Wittig ‘was writing about ancient matriarchal cultures that, paradoxically, were contemporaneous with ours. She was reclaiming goddesses’. ‘Monique Wittig –In Memoriam,’ *Off Our Backs* xxxiv (2003).

⁵⁵ This is especially the case in her novel *Across the Acheron*, in which women ‘consume like carrion birds’, ‘have ruptured organs, sliced carotids, bullet-holes’, and are mainly referred to by Wittig as ‘wretched creatures’.

⁵⁶ Wittig writes, ‘...we must destroy the sexes as a sociological reality if we want to start to exist’. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 8.

them. She writes that the figure of the Amazon represented ‘a stage in the evolution of the individual human being before sexual differentiations’, and were a ‘female/male being’.⁵⁷ The way in which duBois describes the Amazon (as the virgule between man and woman) (Figure 0.7) positions them, like the women in Wittig’s books, as virgulian subjects. This is far more radical than helping ladies find their inner goddesses (a concept today that Wittig would, no doubt, scoff at). She did, after all, write that ‘Matriarchy is no less heterosexual or problematic than patriarchy: it is only the sex of the oppressor that changes’.⁵⁸

Monique Wittig’s work, like Trockel’s, consists of virgulian subjects, and is essential to both my writing on identity and the virgule. Her novel *The Lesbian Body* actually uses the virgule to illustrate split identities and virgulian subjectivity by writing out the French word for ‘I’ (*Je*) as J/e. She explains that this use of the virgule (J/e) is: ‘the symbol of the lived, rending experience which is m/y writing, of this cutting in two which throughout literature is the exercise of a language which does not constitute m/e as a subject’.⁵⁹

As will be seen, Wittig considers herself (as well as her position as a woman, lesbian, and writer) a virgulian subject – a subject that is not accurately represented through language. Trockel, through her artwork, constantly displaces and refracts her own identity to avoid becoming a discernable, stable subject. Wittig, through her writing (especially her splitting of ‘I’ (j/e)), achieves a similar goal. Although it will be discussed more fully in the conclusion of this thesis, by inhabiting these spaces of non-identity both Trockel and Wittig are able to open up a space of creation that is feminist,

⁵⁷ Page duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 69.

⁵⁸ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 10.

⁵⁹ Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), 10-11.

but not contained by feminism. They are women, but not othered (not captured within a binary gender system of male/female). If they do not let themselves be wholly defined, they cannot be limited by those definitions. Wittig explains this space and her desire to split her own 'I' into j/e, writing:

For when one becomes a locator, when one says 'I' and, in so doing, reappropriates language as a whole, proceeding from oneself alone, with the tremendous power to use all language, it is then and there, according to linguists and philosophers, that the supreme act of subjectivity, the advent of subjectivity into consciousness, occurs. It is when starting to speak that one becomes 'I.' This act – the becoming of *the* subject through the exercise of language and through locution – in order to be real, implies that the locator be an absolute subject. For a relative subject is inconceivable, a relative subject could not speak at all. I mean that in spite of the harsh law of gender and its enforcement upon women, no woman can say I: without being for herself a total subject – that is, ungendered, universal, whole.⁶⁰

To identify oneself as a whole, non-virgalian subject is to be immediately trapped by language, society, and the universality of the signifier 'woman'. A virgalian subject, however, is in a constant state of change and becoming, and cannot be identified fully enough to be defined by language.

Beyond this virgalian ethos, Wittig's writing on violence, desire, and how she uses (and just as importantly ignores) the body will be compared to Trockel's strikingly similar process. In terms of feminist critique and gender studies, Wittig (like Trockel) moves from the work of theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Julia Kristeva to a line of thinking which treats the 'the feminine' as an apparatus of capture and the concept of 'woman' as minoritarian and othering.⁶¹ Just as Trockel feels art inherently about 'woman' and 'woman's work' is boring,⁶² Wittig is opposed to any notions of an inherently feminine writing. She states it outright: 'That there is no "feminine writing" must be said at the outset, and one makes a mistake in using and giving currency to this

⁶⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁶¹ See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 424-473.

⁶² Koether, 'Interview with Rosemarie Trockel', 42.

expression'.⁶³ Although her opposition to ideas of difference do at times place her in line with de Beauvoir, Wittig takes the famous 'one is not born a woman'⁶⁴ and pushes it to extremes, dispensing altogether with the concepts of man and woman. 'For there is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses it'.⁶⁵ She dislikes these categories because she feels they represent an 'oppositional ideology' in which women are placed in the position of the dominated other. She writes, 'Woman within patriarchal society is a creature intermediate between man and eunuch',⁶⁶ and is '...not a fully but only partially sexed being, because she is not a phallic creature'.⁶⁷ In this sense, a woman cannot be a fully formed, independent subject, because she only exists in relation to man.

In response to these oppositions, Wittig supports a neutral writing that uses the masculine as its base. She claims that to even discuss gender is inherently biased, because: 'gender is the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes.... There is only one [gender]: the feminine, the "masculine" not being a gender. For the masculine is not the masculine but the general...'.⁶⁸ By eliminating the constructs of gender from her novels, Wittig conceives of a female identity beyond the standard oppositions, and reshapes the way readers perceive human interaction and identity in language.

⁶³ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 59.

⁶⁴ Wittig writes, '...not only is there no natural group "woman" (we lesbians are living proof of it), but as individuals as well we question "woman" which for us, as for Simone de Beauvoir, is only a myth. She said: "one is not born, but becomes a woman". No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine'. *The Straight Mind*, 10.

⁶⁵ Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 2.

⁶⁶ Jo-Ann Fuchs, 'Female Eroticism in *The Second Sex*', *Feminist Studies* 6 (1980), 249.

⁶⁷ Fuchs, *Female Eroticism*, 306.

⁶⁸ Leah D. Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightropes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 134.

Through her genderless writing (which she achieves more often than not by disregarding the existence of men, or at least pushing them to the outskirts) Wittig creates a new kind of identity: not woman, not man, but a virgule. She labels this construct the lesbian, explaining, ‘Lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man), because the designated subject (lesbian) is *not* a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically’.⁶⁹ The lesbian exists beyond these categories of sex, and creates a new conceptual space — the space of the virgule. To be beyond these categories, to be not one thing or the other, is to be a virgule.

More often than not Wittig’s construct of the lesbian is used interchangeably with other theories of lesbianism, but the lesbians within her work are virgulian subjects. Wittig tells us that a lesbian is not a woman,⁷⁰ but neither is the lesbian a lesbian (necessarily). Teresa de Lauretis discusses this misunderstanding, writing:

Similarly, her [Wittig’s] critics did not understand that Wittig’s ‘lesbian society’ did not refer to some collectivity of gay women, but was the term for a conceptual and experiential space carved out of the social field, a space of contradictions, in the here and now, that need to be affirmed and not resolved.⁷¹

Wittig’s books are not literal accounts of utopic⁷² Amazonian societies, but are about carving out new, alternative spaces of becoming other. To quote de Lauretis again: ‘the statement “lesbians are not women” had the power to open the mind and to make visible and thinkable a *conceptual* space that until then had been rendered unthinkable’.⁷³ To

⁶⁹ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 20.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁷¹ Teresa de Lauretis, ‘When Lesbians Were Not Women,’ in *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, Political, and Literary Essays*, ed. Namascar Shaktini (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 55.

⁷² When questioned on her writings and their relation to a utopic imagining, Wittig responded, ‘Is this mere utopia? Then I will stay with Socrates’ view and also Glaucon’s: If ultimately we are denied a new social order, which therefore can exist only in words, I will find it in myself’. *The Straight Mind*, 45.

⁷³ de Lauretis, ‘When Lesbians Were Not Women’, 51-52.

understand the space carved out by Wittig is to get at the heart of her virgolian nature. The lesbian is a virgule, and just as is the case with being unable to read Trockel's work when coding it against its nature, one cannot fully understand Wittig's theories without finding footing on her own virgolian terms. Otherwise, she is generally placed in the category of essentialist feminist or humanist.⁷⁴

To understand Wittig's work in this way is to also understand her as very much entrenched in Deleuzo-Guattarian thought. Although Deleuze and Guattari are rarely thought of as feminist theorists,⁷⁵ they are vital to my reading and, as I interpret their work, are very much on the same page as Wittig and Trockel when it comes to identity politics. They even share similar views on the problems of psychoanalysis. Wittig writes that, 'The official discourse on sexuality is today only the discourse of psychoanalysis that builds on the a priori and idealist concept of sexual difference, a concept that historically participates in the general discourse of domination'.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ For example, Carolyn Gage and Rosi Braidotti. Teresa de Lauretis, however, writes that, 'in effect, Wittig mobilized both the discourse of historical materialism and that of liberal feminism in an interesting strategy, one against the other and each against itself, proving them both inadequate to conceiving the subject in feminist materialist terms'. 'When Lesbians Were Not Women,' 54.

⁷⁵ Of course, Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti are prominent and well-written exceptions to this. Grosz is more amenable to my particular reading. She writes that Their [Deleuze and Guattari] notion of the body as a discontinuous, nontotalizable series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations, may be of great value to feminists attempting to reconceive bodies outside the binary oppositions imposed on the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object and interior/exterior oppositions. They provide an altogether different way of understanding the body in its connections with other bodies, both human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate, linking organs and biological processes to material objects and social practices, while refusing to substitute the body to a unity of homogeneity of the kind provided by the body's subordination to biological organization or consciousness.

Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 165.

⁷⁶ Monique Wittig, 'Paradigm', in *Homosexualities and French Literature, Cultural Context: Critical Texts*, George Stambolian and Elaine Marks, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 119.

To place Wittig alongside Deleuze and Guattari, however, is not unproblematic; they produced work from very different personal and public places, within different critical and cultural schools, for very different purposes. While Deleuze and Guattari were French philosophers (and Guattari a former psychotherapist) critiquing both psychoanalysis and Marxist theory, Wittig was an adamant Marxist and materialist Feminist fighting for the liberation of women and the position of lesbians. Their work illustrates two different modes of using the virgule. Deleuze and Guattari, through their concepts of becoming, virtuality, and the rhizome, illustrate different ways in which subjects can escape set identities or subject-hood. Wittig uses the slash to split the pronoun j/e not to create a schizophrenic subject, but in order to resist being trapped by the label 'woman'. It is not my goal to conflate the theories of Deleuze and Guattari with Wittig's writings (or vice versa), but rather to place them together and let them rub up against one another (like the two bodies in the Schizopullover) to see what new meaning each can draw from the other, as well as from and to Trockel's artwork. This thesis will emphasize the productive tensions that come from placing them together, rather than serve as a comprehensive reading. My reading does not adhere to a rigorous fidelity of the texts, and so this combination of theorists will be my primary point of reference. Whereas Deleuze and Guattari tend to be read in concert with the philosophers they draw on in their own text (Nietzsche, Bergson, Spinoza, Whitehead, etc) I am introducing new writings (Wittig's) and objects (Trockel's) into their self-made canon.

Despite the dissonances between them, their writings open up the potential for subjectivity outside of male/female binaries. Wittig does so with her concept of the 'lesbian', which she claims is not a woman, and thus stands outside the class relation of oppression and exploitation expressed by man/woman. Deleuze and Guattari, in turn,

focus on bodies, not genitals or sexuality. They refer to the body without making it a central force; the work the body produces is what matters. They write, ‘we know nothing of the body until we know what it can do’.⁷⁷ For them, *a* body is a force but *the* body is not (affect precedes the possibility for a body). This line of thought sees the body as nontotalizable, as a series of processes and flows, which allows the body to escape binary terms. For them, there are infinite sexualities. They write, ‘the same applies for sexuality: it is badly explained by the binary organization within each sex. Sexuality brings into play too great a diversity of conjugated becomings; these are like n sexes, an entire war machine through which love passes’.⁷⁸

This view of multiple sexualities is often read as anti-feminist, even by the few Deleuzian feminists that do exist, such as Rosi Braidotti. She states that, ‘Deleuze’s multiple sexuality assumes that women conform to a masculine model which claims to get rid of sexual difference. What results is the dissolution of the claim to specificity voiced by women’.⁷⁹ Braidotti lambasts this way of thinking even further, asserting that, ‘only a man would idealize sexual neutrality’.⁸⁰ Not only is this assertion patently false (Wittig is certainly not a man, and is held up as a bastion of women’s rights and feminist thought, as is Nathalie Sarraute who was a great proponent of sexual neutrality (the neutral form of writing)),⁸¹ but it is this sexual neutrality which drives my reading of feminism.

⁷⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 257.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 278.

⁷⁹ Rosi Braidotti, *Pattern of Dissonance* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 120-121.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Sarraute, whom Wittig has often cited as an influence, wrote that she could not use the feminine gender when she wanted to generalize (and not particularize) what she was writing about. Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightropes*, 134.

It is the specificity of womanhood Braidotti discusses which Wittig calls a form of slavery,⁸² and Trockel calls boring. This essentialist feminism is reductive. The body should not be the limit; one is not one's body (and more specifically, not one's genitalia). If anything, the body is neutral (my reading is not a corporeal feminism) and if neutrality, as Braidotti critiques and Wittig embraces, is masculine, then my reading is a masculine one, just as the lesbian would ideally occupy a masculine position. Of course by 'masculine position' I mean another way of coding neutrality (desirable not for its masculinity, but for its position in relation to constructs of sexuality). Deleuze and Guattari, as mentioned above, were criticized for supporting a 'masculine model' of sexuality that simply called for neutrality in the same way as Sarraute and Wittig. 'Women' cannot be separated from their sex/gender in the same way that men can. Wittig writes, 'For the category of sex is the category that sticks to women, for only they cannot be conceived outside of it. Only *they* are sex, *the* sex...' ⁸³ This neutral position, this place outside of the categorization of sex (be it called 'neutral', 'masculine', or 'lesbian') is what is desirable for Wittig, Deleuze and Guattari, and Trockel. The virgule is neutral. It stands between either two separated halves of a once-whole subject, or between two disparate entities, but because of its position as always centred (centred by its very definition and function) it is neutral.

Wittig and the Virgule: *J/e, On, Opoponax*,

Although Wittig's thinking about gender and women is foundational to my way of approaching a feminist project, it is how she uses language beyond the scope of gender and politics that most links her with Trockel and the virgule. Both create work

⁸² 'What I believe in such a situation is that at the level of philosophy and politics women should do without the privilege of being different and above all never formulate this imposition of being different (relegated to the category of the Other) as a "right to be different", or never abandon themselves to the "pride of being different"'. Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 55.

⁸³ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 8.

that is simultaneously clinical and visceral (sensual), occupied by various people and creatures constantly threatening to transform into other things. Just as Trockel knits the virgule of the schizopullover, Wittig writes it. She does so quite literally in the *Lesbian Body*, but more delicately in her novel *The Opoponax*. This novel, loosely concentrating on the childhood of a young girl, is a gorgeous muddle of confused subjects, narrators, and identities. As is the case with all of Wittig's novels (excluding the remarkable exception of her final novel, *Across the Acheron*) the word 'I' (*je*) never appears unless obscured or divided. Instead, in *The Opoponax* she uses the French *on*. Although the direct translation to English would be 'one', 'you' is used instead. The inconsistency does not escape Wittig – in fact it delights her. She writes, 'Indeed it [one] is so systematically taught that it should not be used that the translator of *The Opoponax* managed never to use it in English'.⁸⁴ By using *on* (or one, or you), Wittig can refer to any number of people, any gender, and do away with 'I' (the I of a main character, the I of the narrator, the I of the reader, the totalized I of a non-virgillian subject) entirely.⁸⁵

The way the book is written leaves the reader constantly unsure as to who is talking, who is acting, who is narrating, who is who. For example, one passage reads, 'Catherine Legrand watches her without moving. Down below children are still running. The little girl whose name is Jacqueline Marchand calls Thumbs and puts up her thumb. It is raining. You are playing in the classroom'.⁸⁶ Although this allows for a difference between those named and the 'you' (for where is Catherine watching from?) the following longer passage shows the true depths of simultaneity and confusion flowing between 'you', Catherine Legrand, Mademoiselle, and potentially limitless others:

⁸⁴ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 83.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 84.

⁸⁶ Monique Wittig, *The Opoponax*, trans. Helen Weaver (Plainfield: Daughter's Inc., 1976), 9.

You rub the pen on your smock. You wipe it on the skin of your hand. You separate the two parts of the nib so you can get your finger between them and clean them. The pointed ends do not go back together again, so that now you write double.⁸⁷ Catherine Legrand raises her finger. Mademoiselle, my pen is broken. Mademoiselle gets mad. That makes the third today, you must pay attention and hold your pen like this. Mademoiselle is standing behind Catherine Legrand. Mademoiselle leans over her shoulder to guide her hand. You are touching her with your head. She smells black and rough. You hold the pen between your thumb and index finger.⁸⁸

Wittig claims that personal pronouns are the primary subject matter of each of her books.⁸⁹ Through her use (or lack thereof) of personal pronouns, she always leaves her viewers on unstable ground (just as Amman claimed Trockel does with her artwork). Who is talking, who is listening, who is living, dead, etc. Ultimately, this virgolian narrator/character/subject is labelled 'the Opoponax'. The Opoponax is truly a virgule; it is entirely different than a subject, but wholly part of it. It decentres by placing itself in a central position, and confuses limits by defying classification. It 'can change its shape.... You can't describe it because it never has the same form... Kingdom, neither animal nor vegetable nor mineral, in other words indeterminate. Humour, variable....'⁹⁰ The Opoponax is ultimately the virgule in Catherine Legrand, causing her to be split, unstable, a non-united 'I' (this is shown through fugue states in which she seemingly embodies the Opoponax). Its debut is described thusly:

Perhaps it wasn't funny and this is why something starts to whirl inside of what seems to be Catherine Legrand and by the time Catherine Legrand has finished lacing her shoe it's very heavy inside her, it hovers in back of her eyes, it looks out through the sockets, it's caught, it can never be anything else but Catherine Legrand.⁹¹

Wittig's beautiful and unstable language is the language of the schizopullover.

If that which occupies the sweater were to speak, what would it say? It would say: 'J/e'

⁸⁷ A slight virgule unto itself, a pen split, but still whole, writing double.

⁸⁸ Wittig, *The Opoponax*, 31.

⁸⁹ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 82.

⁹⁰ Wittig, *The Opoponax*, 161-162.

⁹¹ Ibid., 86.

–with a virgule. Not I, not her, not me, not us, but all of these things, none of these things. If one were to write the story of this sweater, how would they address its wearers? It would be addressed as: *on*⁹² one, you, but you combined. The you/Catherine Legrand of the Opoponax. You/Her, one in the same, but not really. You/Her, One/Me – an echo that has no origin – just as in *The Opoponax*, where you cannot tell where Catherine Legrand ends and you begin, but you know that they are the same, you know that they are different.

Trockel and Wittig both demonstrate virgullan subjectivities through their work: writing the Opoponax, knitting a sweater for it to wear, giving language to the bodies and subject(s) residing in it. Wittig has said that the last line of the Opoponax unlocks the meaning of the entire book,⁹³ and perhaps it is also key for the schizopullover: (for once breaking her own rule about splitting her subjects, as Two become One – united and yet divided within each other. This, for her is love.) ‘You say, *Tant je l’aimais qu’en elle encore je vis*’.⁹⁴ (I loved her so that in her I live still.)⁹⁵

Examples of virgullan subjectivity are rampant throughout Trockel’s oeuvre; two subjects brought together yet divided by the slash, the /, the virgule. By linking various (sometimes dissonant, sometimes similar) things together through the virgule Trockel deterritorializes and reterritorializes them, removing their boundaries only to redraw them, combining them to create a new assemblage, but an assemblage that is never finished becoming (always in process and in flux). These virgullan subjects are all examples of Trockel’s attempts to represent subjects that cannot be identified, unidentifiable identities (subjects without a set subjectivity). If a set identity does not

⁹² It is worth noting that ‘on’ is a neuter gender in French.

⁹³ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 88.

⁹⁴ Wittig, *The Opoponax*, 256.

⁹⁵ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 88. This translation from French to English comes directly from Wittig in her essay ‘The Mark of Gender’ (originally written in English).

exist for a subject, it cannot be marked as other. Trockel's work proves that this can be represented aesthetically. Each chapter of this thesis will discuss a work of art in which Trockel creates these virgolian subjects.

Chapter 1, entitled 'BB/BB', will focus on Trockel's humorous pairing of Brigitte Bardot and Bertolt Brecht within several different artworks. These include drawings combining Brecht and Bardot's features, a reinvention of 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder' using characters dressed as Bardot, and a vitrine filled with information about Brecht and Bardot, entitled the 'Bardot Box'. This pairing of BB/BB appears many, many times within Trockel's artwork, making it a rich subject to explore in terms of the virgule, but also to introduce the reader to her large oeuvre and *modus operandi*. This chapter will also discuss how Trockel's body of work is rhizomatic, and how this concept of the rhizome relates to the virgule.⁹⁶

Chapter 2, 'Mermaid/Angel', explores Trockel's complex sculpture *Pennsylvania Station*. This sculpture represents the virgule of Mermaid/Angel (two different archetypes of woman) by including a fake mermaid (for Trockel, the mermaid is a stand-in for the history of women). By reterritorializing and deterritorializing these two opposite ends of the spectrum of woman (one mysterious and evil, the other virtuous and simple) Trockel shows that woman is not a unity, but a multiplicity which is constantly defined by otherness and constructed by the masculine. This chapter will also expand upon my reading of Trockel and Wittig's radical anti-essentialist feminism and queerness, as well as how Trockel's artwork deals with animals, and how the

⁹⁶ A rhizome (beyond being a botanical term) is a concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari (see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'Introduction: Rhizome', 3-25). A rhizome is basically opposed to binary constructions and instead allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry (and exit) points. A rhizome is a collection of connections that, like its botanical counterpart, continues to grow and expand even after part of it is broken or cut off.

animal is a very important virgolian figure for Trockel (an in-between, almost magical interloper and fluid symbol for many things).

Chapter 3, 'Domestic/Violence', focuses on Trockel's *Balaklava* work. This work, which consists of machine-knit balaclavas decorated with controversial symbols, bridges the seemingly incongruous figures of terrorists and mothers by using women's craft (knitting) to create garments that symbolize terrorism. This divide is not just bridged through artwork, but by real historical figures as well. I will read Trockel's *Balaklava* as a way of working through German history, and explain how Trockel does this in a unique manner, different from other artists of her time (such as Gerhard Richter).

Chapter 4, 'Body/Machine', concentrates on Trockel's *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* (a sculpture/machine and edition of painted panels). In this artwork Trockel brings together the machinic and organic, showing that they (as Deleuze and Guattari argue) are not binary opposites. This artwork will be read primarily through a Deleuzo-Guattarian understanding of the machine and demonstrate how flows of desire operate within not only Trockel's artwork, but also through her process of art-making. Questions of authorship and artistic production (and how Trockel continuously uses means of mechanical production to create her artwork) will also be explored.

The concluding chapter of this thesis, 'Across the/Continental Divide', deals with Trockel's video work *Continental Divide* as well as Monique Wittig's novel *Across the Acheron*. Each of these works show the usually hidden women in surprisingly direct ways. Trockel's body is almost never present in her work (there is a reason why, among the extensive list of artistic mediums she has worked on, performance art is not listed), but *Continental Divide* shows her up close, at length, fighting with herself. Wittig, who again and again makes a point of refusing 'I' and

overly specific naming, uses herself as the main character in *Across the Acheron*, and then proceeds to insult and beat herself in a wide variety of ways. In each of these works the women attempt to come to terms with *their* virgolian nature (not the nature of their work, but themselves *through* their work), and to deny it by becoming whole, undivided, centred subjects. Through these experiences, we learn the limits of the virgule (how it occupies a subject, for how long, and to what extent) and what it means to escape it (ultimately this fate will be tied to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization and becoming imperceptible).⁹⁷

These chapters flow from demonstrating the basic definitions of, and ways in which a virgule operates, to how it sheds new meaning on large and important concepts such as art history and art making, history in general, and feminism, to the very act of destroying the virgule (or attempting to), all the while putting the main focus on Rosemarie Trockel's artwork. (This project is, after all, a reading of her work *through* the virgule, not a manifesto of the virgule.) It will cast a wide net over the fields of art, literature, history, gender studies, queer studies, and politics in order to catch and collect varying examples of the virgule and to demonstrate how far reaching Trockel's artwork is (as it covers all these fields and more). Ultimately, it will give this artwork the in-depth analysis and long-thought care (and attention) it deserves.

⁹⁷ Deterritorialization is any process that decontextualizes a set of relations, making them virtual (an unactualised but real reality). Becoming imperceptible, for Deleuze, is the goal of writing. Ronald Bogue writes that, 'Becoming-imperceptible is a process of elimination whereby one divests oneself of all coded identity and engages the abstract lines of a nonorganic life, the immanent, virtual lines of continuous variation that play through a discursive regimes of signs and nondiscursive machinic assemblages'. *Deleuze's Wake: Tributes and Tributaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 73. In this chapter I tie both of these concepts to the process of becoming a non-virgolian subject.

CHAPTER 1

BB/BB

In this chapter I will examine Rosemarie Trockel's untitled vitrine work (which will be referred to as the Bardot Box). This work is a closed glass case full of seemingly innocuous pieces of memorabilia relating to the French actress Brigitte Bardot. The work is not just about Bardot, however, it is about making connections that undermine the stability of meaning within myth and fandom. The work also demonstrates the connection-making and associative narrative that occurs within Trockel's artwork. This method is, as will be argued, rhizomatic in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, and by exploring it, along with the theory of Deleuze and Guattari, one gains a better understanding of just how large and complex Trockel's work is. Understanding this openness of connections is essential for understanding the rest of the work discussed in this thesis. This chapter also argues that Trockel's portrayal of herself throughout her artwork is demonstrative of a schizophrenic, displaced identity. She uses connections to constantly displace her own identity, by continuously diverting the viewer's attention away from her.

The Initials B.B.

Brigitte Bardot and Bertolt Brecht, linked not by name, but by initials: B.B./B.B. What does it mean to be BB? What are those letters, those symbols composed of? When Brigitte Bardot arrived at the Venice film festival in 1957 she was met with her initials, BB, several stories high, etched against the blue of the sky by three stunt

planes.¹ She was serenaded the whole world round by Serge Gainsbourg's hauntingly poppy 'The Initials BB'. Bertolt Brecht serenaded himself with his gloomy poem 'Of Poor B.B.', a poem quoted in Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt*, in which Bardot stars. When asked where the quoted line comes from, the film's protagonist answers (with a wink to viewers in the know) 'our late BB'.²

The letters BB are not merely the shared initials of two people, but a sign of their subjectivity and mythology that rises above them and extends well beyond them. French author and theorist Simone de Beauvoir separates Bardot from her myth by using her initials, writing, 'If we want to understand what BB represents, it is not important to know what the young woman named Brigitte Bardot is really like'.³ Brecht reduced himself to BB in his poem on which Roland Barthes writes, 'These [BB] are not the initials of fame; this is the person reduced to two markers; these two letters (and repetitive ones at that) frame a void, and this void is the apocalypse...'⁴ It is the space these letters frame which this chapter is most concerned with. The space is the virgule between BB/BB, the slight glimpse of air between the bombshell Bardot as she embraces the bespectacled Brecht (Figure 1.1).

The pairing of Bertolt Brecht and Brigitte Bardot, represented here as BB/BB, is a virgule within Rosemarie Trockel's oeuvre. It is a pairing that Trockel herself created and affirmed as its own distinct category in her self-curated retrospective 'Bodies of Work: 1986-1998'. Works combining the two figures include drawings featuring Bardot's trademark pout paired with Brecht's signature glasses or Caesar haircut

¹ Raoul Levy arranged for this stunt to celebrate the overnight success of Bardot's film *And God Created Woman*. Peter Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess* (London: Frenwin, 1972), 45.

² Yosefa Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 138.

³ Rosemarie Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel. Bodies of Work 1986-1999* (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 54.

⁴ Siegfried Mews, ed., *Critical Essays on Bertolt Brecht* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1989), 245.

(Figure 1.2). Although this pairing seems odd (for what could these two figures, the young French starlet and the German author, have in common?) it exemplifies how Trockel's work is rhizomatic.⁵ As used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the terms rhizome and rhizomatic describe theory and research that is non-binary, that 'ceaselessly establishes connections'⁶ and 'has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things'.⁷ Trockel's work, like the rhizome, is about creating connections that never end, that can connect to any other thing, and if they are broken, they will begin again at some other point. Her work circles and spirals, returning to old themes and subject matter while constantly changing and connecting to new styles and subjects. Bertolt Brecht and Brigitte Bardot, when paired within Trockel's work, create one such rhizome. Each BB reveals new meaning about the other BB, while changing the meaning of both. Theirs is a relationship of discovering connections, of mutualism, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.⁸ They are the orchid and the wasp; together they create multiplicities, a becoming-Bardot of Brecht and a becoming-Brecht of Bardot.⁹

⁵ It also exemplifies the humour within Trockel's work. To put Bardot and Brecht together as a pair is, admittedly, funny. Gregory Williams writes, 'This is the classic terrain of the traditional joke, the technique that Freud called *Verdichtung*, or condensation, in which two unrelated terms are forced into close proximity to produce a joke'. *Permission to Laugh: Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 119.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari use these terms to simply mean getting rid of and then redrawing boundaries (as if on a map). For more on deterritorialization and reterritorialization see: '587 B.C.-A.D. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 111-148., '1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 232-309., 'The Process' in *Anti-Oedipus*, 130-138, 'Barbarian or Imperial Representation' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 200-216.

⁹ The orchid and the wasp are figures used by Deleuze and Guattari to illustrate aspects of mapping, tracing, and how rhizomes are created. The idea is taken from the biological concept of mutualism, in which two different species interact to form a

In this chapter I will unpack the connections these two figures lead to, and reveal why Trockel is so drawn to them. These connections move from Bardot, to Brecht, to Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and the adolescent subject (a very virgolian subject indeed – one that is a perpetual becoming – between child and adult). The centre of these connections is the 'Bardot Box' (Untitled 1993), one of the most complex works among Trockel's BB/BB pieces (Figure 1.3).

Mythology and Fandom: The Bardot Box

The Bardot Box was made for an exhibition at the Galerie Anne de Villepoix in Paris. It consists of a glass vitrine filled with assorted newspaper articles, clothing, drawings, books, and hand written poems all related to Brigitte Bardot. This plethora of items creates the sense that one is either viewing a private scrapbook made by Bardot herself or the collection of an obsessive fan. To begin to understand the Bardot Box, one must first understand the role that myth plays within it and within the life and legacy of Brigitte Bardot. Trockel explores Bardot's mythology, but ultimately shatters it. If myth is a coding, then Trockel decodes Bardot.¹⁰ By decoding Bardot she exposes the myth of Bardot, not to show the reality behind it, but to show that there is no real, no

multiplicity.

How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.

It is 'A veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further'. Ibid.

¹⁰ For more on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of coding and decoding see 'The Machine' in *Anti-Oedipus*, 36-41, and 'The Problem of Oedipus' in *Anti-Oedipus*, 154-165.

actual Bardot at all. Barthes explains that while most significations consists of a first order signifier and signified (whereas the word or image of wine signifies real-world wine) myth consists of a second order signifying system. Within this system, within myth, the signifier of 'wine' no longer relates to real-world wine, but to what wine stands for – to French identity, etc. The second order signified no longer refers to the actual object, and so in the case of the Bardot Box, of the images of Bardot and the text spelling out her name, we are dealing with the myth of Bardot.¹¹

Barthes writes in *Myth Today*, 'We must here recall that the materials of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth'.¹² The objects placed within the Bardot Box are imbued with her mythology, which is certainly a large one. Each item conveys a 'Bardot-ness' whether directly related to the actress or not. An ordinary ballet slipper, which was never worn or owned by Bardot, is now intrinsically linked to her beginnings as a classically trained dancer. A copy of the magazine *Bunte* heralds her cover girl looks and charm, as does a photo of her in a stylish hat proclaiming her a 'sex bomb' and a 'hat girl'. Paparazzi photographs of her and her family reflect the public's obsession with her private life. Trockel also includes a copy of *Paris Match* in which Brigitte Bardot announces her marriage to Bernard d'Ormale, (Figure 1.4) and a box of Lysanxia (an anti-anxiety drug) (Figure 1.5).

Unlike the untouchable Garbo or other stars of the past, Bardot was seen as a new kind of star, one who was really 'real'. Her myth was constructed as natural, naïve, approachable, and genuine. Simone de Beauvoir writes on her naturalness, 'She goes

¹¹ Roland Barthes, 'Wine and Milk' in *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 58-61

¹² Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today' in *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 109.

about barefooted, she turns up her nose at elegant clothes, jewel, girdles, perfumes, make-up, at all artifice. Yet her walk is lascivious and a saint would sell his soul to the devil merely to watch her dance'.¹³ Bardot's first husband, Roger Vadim, claimed 'she doesn't act, she exists' and Bardot confirmed stating, 'that's right, when I'm in front of the camera, I'm simply myself.' and 'I cannot play roles, I can only play me – on and off screen'.¹⁴ But as Trockel writes, 'she doesn't act, she is the act'.¹⁵ The naturalness or realness of Bardot was still a projection; the non-act was an act.

The Bardot Box alludes to actual facts about living people, but presents them through a filter of media and projection. It isn't known, for example, if Bardot ever actually took Lysanxia, but she did suffer from depression and attempted to commit suicide several times. Bardot did marry d'Ormale, but the happy grin and loving sound bites she projects through the slick cover of *Paris Match* cannot be verified as true or false. Further, while this cover of *Paris Match* can be researched and verified as real, the newspaper articles spread throughout the box cannot be. The majority of the articles contain no details as to their original source, and this, combined with the fact that the box already contains several items completely fabricated by Trockel (including a drawing of a snake contorting its body to form 'BB' and a book cover featuring Bardot holding a gun), leaves the viewer uncertain as to what it is real and what is not.

The newspaper articles also speak to the intervention of the media between the consuming public and famous star. Much in the same way that Andy Warhol used news articles for the source material of his *Tuna-fish Disaster* (1963) (Figure 1.6) work,¹⁶

¹³ Simone de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome' in Rosemarie Trockel. *Bodies of Work 1986-1999*, ed. Birte Frenssen (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 54

¹⁴ Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess*, 65.

¹⁵ Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 23.

¹⁶ This work depicts several women who were killed by poisoned tuna fish. Warhol chose to depict them amongst cans of tuna fish, and used the photographs of the woman that appeared in the newspaper to distance the viewer from the women's personal reality

Trockel uses them to show that she is not focusing on a ‘real’ person or object (the actual victims in Warhol’s work, or the actual Bardot in her Bardot Box) but their mediation and consumption through and by the public gaze. One doesn’t learn who Bardot was through the Bardot Box, but they know all about her projected myth. The problem (and the interest) within this piece comes from not knowing where the artificial stops and the real begins, and vice versa.

A small hand written note featuring a drawing of a young girl furthers the presence of the fan within the Box. Although an unidentified book covers half of it, what can be read of the text is reminiscent of a fan letter (Figure 1.7). Written in German, it reads: ‘I love Brigitte Bardot!’ ‘May she have good health’ and ‘Brigitte from Germany!’¹⁷ For Trockel, the fan is an important part of smashing the mythology of Bardot. She is not simply portraying or exploiting the ‘love me’ desire of the neurotic (for the fan is a neurotic, not schizophrenic subject) but using it to replace the general concept (or Barthes construct) of mythology.¹⁸ Here mythology is not a myth, but is the reality of fandom. It is not a desire to be loved, but a desire to embrace objects real or imagined.

Another allusion to the fan comes from a small photo at the bottom centre of the Bardot Box. In it, a young girl sits in front of a wall plastered with magazine cut-outs of celebrity faces. This image is one of a series of photos previously displayed by Trockel called *Fan 1,2,3* (1993) (Figure 1.8-1.10). In the series a girl (the photo is actually of

by throwing them into the larger sense of a ‘disaster’ and using their newspaper-images as a buffer, a mediator. This is not the woman we see, but her photo-journal image.

¹⁷ This last statement could either be the letter’s sign-off, meaning that the fan is also named Brigitte (another doubling, mirroring within the work) or it could speak to notions of Germanicity within the work or to Bardot’s international appeal.

¹⁸ See Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (The Seminars of Jacques Lacan, Book 11)*, Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1998) and Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972).

Trockel as an adolescent) is sitting in her sister's room surrounded by the magazine clippings that the older girl has chosen to paper her personal space with. As the photos progress, they are cropped to emphasize Trockel's face and a cut-out of Brigitte Bardot's. Of course, at the time this photograph was taken Trockel would have been too young for Bardot fever; she experienced it vicariously through her older sister. The 'Fan' of the work's title, the 'Fan' whose room the young girl is sitting in, is not Trockel but her sister. The adolescent Trockel, the 'serious girl in her dirndl jacket',¹⁹ seems uncomfortable and out of place. The work's title points to an identity that Trockel changes and hides from, reveals and refracts. This refraction is typical of Trockel's work, as Birte Frenssen writes, 'Rosemarie Trockel's work has none of the unreflective enthusiasm of the true fan. There is a trace of awkwardness, a touch of embarrassment...always there is something that is not quite right, a distortion in the glass; and this is the very reason why the images she creates will never let us go'.²⁰ Trockel's concept of the distorted fan within the Bardot Box also speaks to an awkward adolescent identity. Trockel, in this photo, is a young girl out of place. She doesn't know who she is (like any adolescent beginning to uncover who they are, what kind of person they will be, what things they will like) and is playing out different selves through her older sister, but also through her sister's icon, Bardot. Will she be a Bardot girl? A fan of Hepburn? Monroe? These decisions must be made.

Bardot was equally loved and loathed by the French public, and the less popular components of her persona are not hidden in Trockel's Bardot Box. Simone de Beauvoir's essay 'The Lolita Syndrome' (a copy of which was exhibited alongside the Bardot Box) for example, focuses on the French public's hatred of Bardot. de Beauvoir writes, 'Once again I could observe that Brigitte Bardot was disliked in her own

¹⁹ Frenssen, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

country'.²¹ Marguerite Duras weighs in on this dislike as well in her essay 'Queen Bardot' (also included in the BB/BB exhibition catalogue). Duras writes, 'Women see her as woman become calamity'.²² Bardot, the woman/calamity, was even blamed when three boys from reputable French families murdered a sleeping old man on a train in France. The parent-teacher association of the boys' school said it was Bardot (and her influence) that was truly responsible for the crime.²³

Trockel is not just regurgitating the well-known myth of Bardot, she is pointing out inconsistencies within her mythology by focusing on the good and the bad aspects of Bardot's life. Trockel exposes Bardot's divisive and dual persona, which is the very thing that draws the artist to her. She states that Bardot, 'embodied and subverted a certain type or image of woman and destroyed the myth that she promoted. She functions as a role model for all kinds of things. And yet she constantly deconstructs her own roles, although not always in a very reflective or conscious way'.²⁴ The Bardot Box follows this pattern of personal/mythological effacement and rebirth. Bardot very much reflects what is most interesting in Trockel's work: contradiction, constant change, schizophrenic subjectivity.

Myth is inconsistent because it is, most often, intensely personal. Many of Bardot's fans would prefer not to think about or discuss her darker side. The reality of Bardot as a person, as a real flesh and blood figure, is neglected by the fan in favour of her myth. When reality comes into conflict with that myth, the myth can shatter, leaving a fan confused, angry, and even confrontational. The neurotic fan attempts to overcode their object of desire, to produce a unified and stable subject. Overcoding means to

²¹ de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome', 54.

²² Marguerite Duras, 'Queen Bardot' in *Rosemarie Trockel, Bodies of Work 1986-1999* (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 58.

²³ de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome', 54.

²⁴ Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 54.

recode in such a way as to produce a unified substance, centres, unification, totalization, and/or finalization.²⁵ Trockel demonstrates this conflict (and ultimate impossibility) of attempting to become a whole, stable subject, while also attempting to decode Bardot and her mythos, in her video piece *Fan Fini*. During the thirteen minute video Trockel interviews three women in three different sequences. Each woman represents a different type of Bardot fan, and each is made up to look like Bardot. With surprisingly few accoutrements, the Bardot fans are transformed into their idol; a yellow wig and dark hairband, black eyeliner, and bare feet do the trick (Figure 1.11). (Trockel slows down the gesture of the women removing their shoes and it becomes a Brechtian gestus (gesture) of Bardot-dom. It shows that it shows.)²⁶

The first fan is a young woman whom the interviewer asks ‘But you’re not of her [Bardot’s] generation, are you?’ echoing the discomfort and displacement of Trockel’s own fandom (which was really her sister’s) in *Fan 1,2,3*. The woman assures us, however, that her fandom is all her own (although influenced by her mother’s more timely adoration of the French starlet). The young girl discusses Bardot’s love of animals (echoing and projecting Trockel’s own well-known love of animals is the presence of her dog Fury in the next scene). When the interviewer brings up Bardot’s unpopular marriage to Bernard d’Ormale, the fan becomes uncomfortably defensive and states that Bardot couldn’t have actually been happy in the relationship or she wouldn’t have tried to kill herself.

The second interview is with a true Bardot collector. This woman has archived large amounts of literature about the actress and owns all of her films (the camera intermittently pans over her sizeable collection, which also contains a dog owner’s

²⁵ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 33.

²⁶ A gestus is a means by which ‘an attitude or single aspect of an attitude’ is revealed through words or actions. John Willett, ed., *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 42.

handbook and a tiny dog figurine) (it is here that Trockel's pet Fury makes an appearance). The fan also mentions Simone de Beauvoir's essay 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome'. Like in the first interview, tempers flare and the fan feels personally challenged when the interviewer brings up Bardot's marriage. She says it has nothing to do with her, to which the interviewer replies 'But you look just like her'. 'So do you', replies the fan, at which point the interviewer turns to face the camera, revealing that she too bears the adornments of Bardot: blonde hair and dark eye makeup. Once again, the viewer is challenged with a failure of identification, the interviewer confuses Bardot's problems as those of her fan (the interviewee) since she appears as Bardot, and if the fan is not Bardot (although she looks just like her) what are we to say of the critical and confrontational interviewer who is parading as Bardot/a Bardot fan herself? Trockel has taken away the fan's solid ground, leaving her confused and unsure of her fan/self position. Finally, the film closes with the word 'Fan' appearing on screen and changing to 'Fini'.

To be a fan is to exist within a neurotic subjectivity. Myth, as Barthes formulates it, is very much like the Lacanian (neurotic) fantasy.²⁷ In the Lacanian fantasy one projects themselves onto others; this exists within a self contained system and when a discontinuity is placed into that fantasy (say, bringing up Bardot's unpopular marriage) the fantasy fails. Trockel is forcing the fantasies, the mythologies of these fans to fail by exploding the myth of Brigitte Bardot with discontinuities. Not only is Trockel asserting her own schizophrenic subjectivity (her myth of Bardot is all encapsulating, full of connections, and can never break down no matter what one discovers about the actress) she is forcing the fans within her video (and possibly the viewer) into this schizophrenic subjectivity as well. In this work Trockel alienates that

²⁷ See Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*

which is Bardot, but also illuminates it. As Bertolt Brecht wrote, ‘a representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time make it seem unfamiliar’.²⁸

Brecht and Bardot: Mother Courage

Brecht’s words are especially relevant here. Although Brigitte Bardot appears to be the main focus of the Bardot Box, Brecht also holds an important place within the work. There are newspaper articles concerning the playwright spread throughout the box, the most prominent of which reads ‘*erbrecht* Brecht’ (a playful nod to the similarity of the German word for ‘inheritance’ (*erbrecht*) and Brecht’s name). Trockel has referenced Bertolt Brecht many times in her artwork, and it is not surprising that she is drawn to him as their work often operates in similar ways.

Trockel’s love of contradictions and contradictions of contradictions is mirrored as a vital part of Brecht’s work, as is her schizophrenic subjectivity. Roland Barthes said of Brecht, ‘He thought in other heads; and in his own, others besides himself... this is true thinking’.²⁹ Brecht also utilised the virgule in his work; his was a theatre of showing/hiding, acting/being, playing/reality. He, like Trockel, informed by disrupting, by alienating and revealing and even at times shocking. Barthes wrote of his work,

And what is this distancing, this discontinuity which provokes the Brechtian shock? It is merely a reading that detaches the sign from its effect. Have you ever seen a Japanese pin? It is a dressmaker’s pin whose head is a tiny bell, so that you cannot forget it once the garment has been finished. Brecht remakes the logosphere by leaving the bell-headed pins in it, the signs furbished with their tiny jingle.³⁰

²⁸ Elin Diamond, ‘Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory’, *The Drama Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1988), 192.

²⁹ Mews, *Critical Essays on Bertolt Brecht*, 246.

³⁰ Ibid.

Brecht split and sewed narratives with his tiny-bell words. These words operated like a virgule, as an opening and connection and combination. Barthes goes on to say Brecht's 'critical art is one which opens a crisis: which lacerates, which crackles the smooth surface, which fissures the crust of languages, loosens and dissolves the stickiness of the logosphere...' ³¹

Trockel explains how Bardot and Brecht, BB/BB, occupy either side of the virgule she has created, stating:

[Brecht and Bardot] are an interesting example of the contradictions and inconsistencies of engagement in our times. While Brecht, in order to educate, points out the infamy of it all, Bardot simply is infamous. Her innocent guilt and her guilty innocence affect you because she doesn't act it, she is this act. Brecht works with our bad conscience. He makes use of our helplessness regarding morality, our need or our want to become better human beings. Bardot makes use of our good conscience, our helplessness regarding beauty. On the other hand, her engagement for animal rights earned her the reputation of a misanthrope; a reputation, of course, which reinforces the attraction of her erotic distance. In the work of Brecht there is a tendency towards the do-gooder ('Gutmensch'). Bardot couples human infamy with a reminiscence of the animal. ³²

Brecht and Bardot share certain qualities for Trockel, but also compliment one another's differences. Bardot could almost be a Brechtian character, attempting good while surrounded by, and filled with moral inconsistencies. If not a Brechtian character, then perhaps a Brechtian actor; Bardot's infamous acting technique, described kindly by Godard as 'she doesn't act, she exists' ³³ and more directly by others as bad or non-existent, can be connected to Brecht's theories of epic theatre and the *Verfremdungseffekt* (distancing effect). Nicolas Paige writes that, 'Bardot's inability to act short-circuits the representational ambiguity already inherent in her stardom: her fake delivery enhances audience distinction from the psychology of character,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 23.

³³ Nicolas Paige, 'Bardot and Godard in 1963: Historicizing the Postmodern Image', *Representations*, No. 88, 20.

exacerbating attention to the material presence of the actress as actress'.³⁴ In other words, she follows (intentionally or, more likely, unintentionally) Brecht's instructions when he says, 'The actor must show his subject, and he must show himself. Of course, he shows his subject by showing himself, and he shows himself by showing his subject'.³⁵ He goes on to say that this technique can be mistaken for bad acting, and that its effectiveness comes from a splitting of personas.³⁶

Trockel most often associates Bardot with the character Mother Courage from Brecht's famous play *Mother Courage and Her Children*. The play, set in Europe during the Thirty Years' War, tells the story of a shrewd mother and saleswoman nicknamed 'Courage'. Courage sells goods off of her cart, usually following and trading with soldiers. She has three children, Eilif, Kattrin, and Swiss Cheese, all of whom meet with tragic ends due to the War (and Courage's inability to value their lives above the good of her business). Trockel, when asked why she makes the connection between Bardot and Courage, responded:

What I mean is that you are trying to refine yourself and advance in a way that others can benefit from. For example, my work dealing with Brigitte Bardot could be taken as a study of this subject. In all her contradictions and inconsistencies, Bardot actually resembles Mother Courage.³⁷

Trockel explicitly makes this connection within the Bardot Box by including a reworked book jacket of *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Figure 1.12).³⁸ The front

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 65.

³⁶ 'The contradiction between acting (demonstration) and experience (empathy) often leads the uninstructed to suppose that only one or the other can be manifest in the work. In reality it is naturally a matter of two mutually (antagonistic) processes which fuse in the actor's work... His particular effectiveness comes from the tussle and tension of the two opposites and also from their depth'. Meg Mumford, *Bertolt Brecht* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 63.

³⁷ Frenssen, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 23.

³⁸ This work is one of Trockel's book drafts. She has made dozens (perhaps hundreds) of these over her career, until recently claiming that they were only a way of recording

of the jacket has a photograph of Brigitte Bardot on it and reads ‘BB’ In small lettering to either side of the cover is written ‘two typical crimes of woman: uprooting flowers and stamping on spiders’. A photo of Bardot clenching a flower between her teeth accompanies this.

Trockel’s most extensive work dealing with *Mother Courage and Her Children* is her six and a half-minute long video entitled *Manus Spleen IV* (Figure 1.13, 1.14). This piece is one of several *Manus Spleen* video works Trockel has made. Each short film revolves around the character Manus, who is always played by the same actress (also named Manu in real life). Presumably, the use of the word spleen in this case relates to its etymological history. In Greece it was the idiomatic equivalent of the heart in English (one was ‘good-spleened’ if they were kind), but the black bile produced by the spleen also caused it to be linked to melancholy and melancholia.³⁹ In 18th and 19th century England neurotic or depressed women (or women just in ‘bad humour’) were considered to be suffering from an affliction of the spleen.⁴⁰ The English term ‘splenetic’ refers to someone in a bad mood, and in French ‘splenetique’ refers to a state of melancholy or sadness. The spleen is an unsurprising choice of anatomy for Trockel; it heals and divides (filters), is essential to binding processes within the body, but is also vital when trauma occurs, as well as being a symbol for kindness and sadness, pain and joy.

Trockel explains that Brecht’s *Mother Courage*, ‘being required reading in

ideas for actual projects. In 2010, however, she exhibited these book drafts around the world as their own, unique artworks.

³⁹ The poet Charles Baudelaire is most often credited with popularizing the spleen as an organ of melancholy.

⁴⁰ George Cheyne, *The English Malady; or, A Treatise of Nervous Diseases of All Kinds, as Spleen, Vapours, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Distempers with the Author’s own Case at Large*, Eric T. Carlson, ed. (Dublin, 1733) (Scholar’s Facsimiles & Reprints, 1976)

German schools after World War II',⁴¹ was a very present influence for her and on *Manus Spleen IV*. She continues, 'The questions it deals with, questions of ethics, of survival strategies, of the social situation of women, are still very essential questions. To me, Brecht is interesting because instead of presenting an ideal model he makes the contradictions and inconsistencies the subject matter of the play'.⁴² She also explains what prompted her to re-work this canonical piece, and what thoughts went into its production:

I ask myself, what could engagement mean today, considering these contradictions? Brecht's didactic aesthetics, aiming at insight and understanding, has obviously failed. But what else could take its place? Can we think of engagement today in terms of self-display for a good cause or rather as altruism with positive side effects?⁴³

And so Trockel attempts, in her reworking of *Mother Courage*, to decode Brecht's classic themes and symbols, to use an elaborate and absurd arrangement of different themes and symbols so that new connections will be made.

In her research for *Manus Spleen IV*, Trockel discovered Brecht's little-known source material: Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen's *The Life of Courage: The Notorious Thief, Whore, and Vagabond*.⁴⁴ This satirical story, written in the 1670s, revolved around an outspoken and independent woman nicknamed Courage who uses her smarts and sexual allure to survive (and make a comparatively good living) during the Thirty Years War. She follows the imperial armies across Europe (the titular whore refers to the label these camp followers were given). Trockel incorporates this character, along with other aspects of Grimmelshausen's book, into her version of Brecht's play. This source material is particularly interesting because of its explanation of the name

⁴¹ Ingvild Goetz, Rainald Schumacher, and Rosemarie Trockel, ed., *Rosemarie Trockel* (Sammlung Goetz, 2002), 23.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

‘Courage’ (which is lacking in Brecht’s version). In *The Life of Courage* the title character, in order to escape certain death, cross-dresses as a guard’s valet. Later, during a wrestling match, a fellow valet slips his hand into her breeches and discovers her ‘courage’ (i.e. her female genitalia), thus earning her the name Courage.

Courage as a name and an attribute is conflicting in both works. Even Mother Courage herself (assumedly renowned and self-named for her courage and survival in the face of war) (or is it truly her feminine ‘courage’? – that which gave her the very children she will inevitably lose) speaks disparagingly of it:

(Mother Courage): Because he’s got to have men of courage, that’s why. If he knew how to plan a proper campaign what would he be needing men of courage for? Ordinary ones would do. It’s always the same; whenever there’s a load of special virtues around it means something stinks.⁴⁵

Surprisingly, despite her many comparisons between Bardot and Mother Courage, (and although Bardot does play a prominent role in the production) it is Manus, not Bardot that plays Mother Courage. In *Manus Spleen IV* Trockel has expanded on, but also collapsed many characters into one another. The key figures are Manus as Mother Courage, wearing a fashionable 1960’s mod dress (one that could be described, with Trockel’s typical wordplay, humour, and eye for small details, as a Courreges design⁴⁶), her daughter Kattrin is dressed as Joan of Arc, while her two sons Swiss Cheese and Eilif are dressed in nude suits (complete with sewn and stuffed genitalia), Jackie Kennedy Onassis stands in as some semblance of Yvette (who, as a prostitute that follows army camps, closely resembles Grimmelshausen’s original Courage). Finally, Brigitte Bardot appears, portrayed by two women identically wigged and made-up to

⁴⁵ Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, trans. John Willett (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 15.

⁴⁶ Even the smallest of details can provide connections and meaning within both Trockel and Brecht’s work: ‘...it is because Brecht’s theatre is a theatre of meaning that its detail is so important’. Roland Barthes, ‘Seven Photo Models of “Mother Courage”’, *TDR*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1967), 44.

look like the starlet (Figure 1.15). These twinned Bardots serve as the work's chorus, already doubled by the BB and BB of Brecht and Bardot, they resound in triplicate, quadrupled in a sea of Bs.

The action of *Manus Spleen IV* consists of Swiss Cheese and Eilif pulling Courage's famed cart across a circular stage while Jackie O (dressed in her iconic large sunglasses and pillbox hat) suggestively polishes a large black cannon. Courage/Manus walks, dances, checks her wares, and admires herself in a pan as Katrin sits in the cart with a radio. Every few seconds Katrin/Joan of Arc changes the dial and listens to different musical and spoken interludes. These include an aria from Tchaikovsky's opera *The Maid of Orleans* (with the lyrics 'Holy Father help me I am afraid'), a drum role from Bresson's *Jeanne d'Arc*, excerpts of songs from Brecht's *Mother Courage* and from his play *Saint Joan of the Stock Yards*, Brigitte Bardot singing 'Contact', John Lennon singing 'Imagine', Bob Dylan singing 'Blowing in the Wind', radio announcements of John Kennedy's assassination, Brecht stating 'I was not a member and am not a member of any communist party' during his 1947 interrogation by the Un-American Activities Committee, and his wife Helen Weigel (who was also an actress that often portrayed Mother Courage) stating 'Communism is good for us'. Peace and war, life and death, hope and futility, capitalism and communism are all spread out for us to hear, with twice doubled Brigitte Bardot clones lip-synching every word and note. At the end of the work, Swiss Cheese and Eilif dive down the barrel of Jackie's canon, an obvious allusion to the two boys being lost to Courage as casualties of war.

All of the characters and actions within *Manus Spleen IV* are, in Trockel's proficiently schizophrenic hands, woven into a series of endless connections. To completely read this work as a totality would most likely be an exercise in madness and futility, but some basic points stand to be addressed. Jackie O was, like Bardot, well

known and loved for her first marriage and work, and persecuted for her later marriage. Weigel and Brecht's contradicting statements on communism are reflected within the battle between capitalism and morals in *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Kattrin's appearance as Joan of Arc is fitting, as she, unlike her mother (and everyone else in the play), is a true martyr, living her mother's life until giving it up for death. Her turn as Joan of Arc also references Brecht's 1931 play *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, in which he transforms the French Jeanne d'Arc into Joan Dark, an innocent but doomed woman in 20th century Chicago.

Connections and reconstructions are the tools of both Trockel and Brecht. As Brecht himself stated, 'Anyone can be creative, it's rewriting other people that's a challenge' — and so it is for these two artists. Their work is text over text and image over image, a poorly scraped palimpsest. From Bardot to Jackie O, from Grimmelshausen's courageous *Thief Whore and Vagabond* to the famous Mother Courage, from Kattrin to Joan of Arc, and then again to Joan Dark, and then again to Bardot, and then again and again to Brecht and again and again and again. Since the work is rhizomatic, these connections will never end, they will only branch out further (and also circle back onto themselves) forever. Like the rhizome, if one line of connections ends or breaks, a new line will start at another point. Within the Bardot Box Trockel has ensured this method of connection making by adding figures (points of connection) other than Bardot and Brecht.

Brecht Beyond Bardot: Chaplin, Eisler, Picasso

Brecht's position and connections within the Bardot Box are not restricted to how he relates to Bardot or the influence of *Mother Courage*. Beyond the accessories Bardot could have worn and the magazine photos directly relating to her, the Bardot

Box contains several items that seem to have little to do with her. This includes a flow chart Trockel made referencing Charlie Chaplin, Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, and Pablo Picasso⁴⁷ (Figure 1.16). What new connections are to be found now? (There will always be new connections, this work cannot help but create them.)

The inclusion of Eisler and Chaplin speaks to their (and Brecht's) shared experiences with the House of Un-American Activities Committee, which interrogated all three men. Eisler and Chaplin were ultimately blacklisted and forced to leave the U.S., while Brecht (the only member of the eleven 'unfriendly witnesses' called to testify before the committee that actually showed up) was not blacklisted, but left the U.S. immediately after his interview. Eisler, a long time friend and collaborator of Brecht, was deemed 'the Karl Marx of music' and both he and Brecht, in order to avoid prosecution, had previously fled Nazi Germany once their music and writing were banned there.

Although Brecht and Chaplin were good friends with Eisler, they did not personally know one another. Brecht greatly admired Chaplin, however, and Chaplin could (not unlike Bardot) be considered a good example of a Brechtian actor. It is well documented that Brecht was fascinated with Chaplin's work; he wrote in his diary on October 29, 1921 that Chaplin (in the film *The Face on the Bar Rom Floor*) moved him more than anything he had ever seen in the cinema before. He also wrote that Chaplin 'would in many ways come closer to the epic than the dramatic theatre's requirements'.⁴⁸ Brecht even wrote a poem about the Little Tramp.

⁴⁷ Initially, the connections of these men with Picasso are a bit scarce. Chaplin asked Picasso (also a member of the communist party) to participate in a demonstration he organized against the expulsion of Eisler (Picasso declined), and Brecht used Picasso's 'Dove of Peace' in the décor for his play 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'. But, since this work is a rhizome, the dead-end of Picasso connections are not a dead end at all. The rhizome, as will be seen, picks up again back at Bardot.

⁴⁸ Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 64.

Bardot and (Bardot as) the Lolita Syndrome

At the centre of (and quite literally placed *in* the centre of) the BB/BB/Eisler/Picasso/Chaplin flow chart lies the word ‘Lolita’. This name is another way that Picasso and Chaplin can be connected. Trockel drops hints to how she has chosen to connect them through the flowchart, namely alluding to their shared ephebophilia (the preference for girls in the their mid to late teens and early twenties). Chaplin’s lifelong attraction to younger women is well documented and attributed to an infatuation with the performer Hetty Kelly and his impregnation of a 16-year-old girl named Lita Grey. In fact, Chaplin’s biographer, Joyce Milton, claims that the novel *Lolita* was directly inspired by Chaplin’s life. It is, Milton states, ‘peppered with clues that lead to the conclusion that the similarities between his *Lolita* and the real-life Lillita McMurray Grey Chaplin are no accident’.⁴⁹ Among the similarities he lists as proof are Chaplin and Humbert Humbert’s shared style of toothbrush moustaches, their love of tennis, their bouts of insanity, as well as the connections between Chaplin’s first love Hetty Kelly and Humbert’s Annabel. He goes on to say that Nabakov never admitted this inspiration outright because he ‘certainly had no desire to be sued by the story’s real-life models’.⁵⁰ (Could it really be, that in the middle of BB and BB, we find CC responsible for HH?) (What then, of PP?)

Pablo Picasso was also known to have a string of young mistresses and wives, including Genevieve Laporte and Jacqueline Roque who were forty-five and forty-six

⁴⁹ Joyce Milton, *Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 279-280.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

years his junior. Trockel even includes a picture of Woody Allen,⁵¹ one of Hollywood's most famous ephebophiles, elsewhere in the Bardot Box to seemingly hit this connection home. Of course, as the stereotype goes, these men were artists, and their sexual preferences are a matter of their unique and artistic temperaments. After all, not just any man can identify a true nymphet. Humbert Humbert, the narrator of Nabakov's novel *Lolita*, explains: 'You have to be an artist and a madman, a creature of infinite melancholy, with a bubble of hot poison in your loins and a super-voluptuous flame permanently aglow in your subtle spine (oh how you have to cringe and hide!),'⁵²

Just as Barthes, in *Mythologies*, claims wine as a symbol for France, Trockel is situating Bardot as the symbol for a nymphet, as the face of the Lolita Syndrome (another name for this ephebophilia in relation to the novel *Lolita*). *Lolita* was published in France in 1955, one year before Bardot gained widespread fame for her role in *And God Created Woman*. She symbolized, for many, a changing type of leading lady that upsettingly reflected Nabokov's nymphet Lolita. Barthes references this change in his essay 'The Face of Garbo' calling it 'the passage from awe to charm...woman as child, woman as kitten'.⁵³ Film critic Herbert Feinstein put it less eloquently, claiming Bardot is 'a particularly hot combination of slut and Little Bo Peep'.⁵⁴

'The Lolita Syndrome' is also the title of the essay by Simone de Beauvoir, which is not only referenced in the Bardot Box, but also in a wall display that often accompanies the Bardot Box. In this display Trockel illustrated the full text of de

⁵¹ Upon first inspection, it is almost impossible to distinguish whether the figure is indeed Woody Allen or the Nabakov character Claire Quilty as played by Peter Sellers in Stanley Kubrick's film version of *Lolita*

⁵² Vladimir Nabakov, *Lolita* (London: Penguin, 2006), 16.

⁵³ Barthes. *Mythologies*. 57.

⁵⁴ Herbert Feinstein, 'My Gorgeous Darling Sweetheart Angels: Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn', *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 15, No. 3 (1962), 65.

Beauvoir's essay with grossly exaggerated drawings of Bardot, along with her Bardot/Brecht combination drawings. In the essay, de Beauvoir writes about a shift in sexuality that privileges the adolescent. She states, 'The adult woman now inhabits the same world as the man, but the child-woman moves in a universe which he cannot enter. The age difference re-establishes between them the distance that seems necessary to desire'.⁵⁵ She goes on to firmly establish Bardot as the poster child for this shift, writing, 'She is without memory, without a past, and thanks to this ignorance, she retains the perfect innocence that is attributed to a mythical childhood... frankness and kindness can be read on her face. She is more like a Pekingese than a cat'.⁵⁶

Bardot is fitting for Trockel to use as a Lolita figure; she was able to occupy the special (virgolian) place of woman/child, brat/seductress that Nabakov describes in his titular character Lolita. Marguerite Duras wrote in her essay 'Queen Bardot' that Bardot 'is beautiful like a woman, but cuddly like a child'.⁵⁷ In continuation of her Lolita-life, Bardot was discovered at a young age by her first husband Roger Vadim, and was engaged to him at the age of 15. (Her parents refused this marriage at first, but after several suicide attempts on the part of Bardot, allowed her to marry him at 18. She swore that she would be 'wed or dead' by 18.⁵⁸) Vadim actively promoted the myth of her naivety and eternal youth, telling reporters that until she was eighteen 'she actually believed that mice laid eggs!'.⁵⁹ She was even known to throw childish temper tantrums and possess the entitled airs of any common too-much doted on violently sugar-sweet child. One producer working on set of an early Bardot comedy stated, 'She was lazy,

⁵⁵ de Beauvoir, Simone, *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome*, 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Duras, *Queen Bardot*, 58.

⁵⁸ Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess*, 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

spoiled, and ungrateful'.⁶⁰ She could truly be Humbert Humbert's 'vulgar darling', his nymphet.⁶¹ The nymphet is described by Humbert as, 'Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travellers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demoniac); and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as "nymphets"'.⁶² A nymphet exists in the realm of the virgule, is a virgule; one can never be a child/nymphet, nymphet/woman, because a nymphet is itself fully both and neither of these things, it is becoming each at once, and never arriving at or changing into any set thing. Humbert explains, 'What drives me insane is the twofold nature of this nymphet—of every nymphet, perhaps; this mixture in my *Lolita* of tender dreamy childishness and a kind of eerie vulgarity, stemming from the snub-nosed cuteness of ads and magazine pictures...'⁶³

Mythical Childhood, Mythical Adolescence (Bardot's Loss is *Lolita*'s Gain)

Not all girls are nymphets, but both are privileged in the in-between world of adolescence. Deleuze and Guattari recognize the virgule in girls and children, in their adolescence, writing, 'The girl and the child do not become; it is becoming itself that is a child or a girl. The child does not become an adult any more than the girl becomes a woman; the girl is the becoming-woman of each sex, just as the child is the becoming-young of every age'.⁶⁴ If girls and children are themselves a becoming, then they are the virgule within child/adult; no longer children, but adolescents, and the adolescent is that virgule. The adolescent is constantly becoming adult while always being a child. As

⁶⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁶¹ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 132.

⁶² Nabokov, *Lolita*, 48.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 277.

soon as they finish becoming adult, they are no longer adolescent, because the adolescent is not a point at which one arrives (it is not something you can become), but is instead a block of becoming through which one passes.

Bardot, the child/vixen, had a prevailing urge to remain in this adolescent block of becoming, to remain young (a raging case of the Peter-Pans). Vadim promoted this as well, and stated that Bardot ‘doesn’t love children... she is too much of a child herself. To her a child is a competitor for attention. A baby, a small child, needs attention constantly – just like Brigitte’.⁶⁵ And, ‘Brigitte’s tragedy is that she just cannot let go of her childhood. Yet she needs constantly to seduce and scandalize to prove to herself how sophisticated and desirable she is. It is a small problem, not unlike schizophrenia’.⁶⁶ Kenneth Green described Bardot as ‘obsessed with the idea of proving that she was ageless, a perennial teenager who wanted to show that she could go on dancing, singing, and whooping it up all night’.⁶⁷ The Peter-Pan syndrome, the refusal to grow up, the desire to remain young, to become permanently adolescent that belonged to Bardot also belonged (unknowingly) to Humbert Humbert’s nymphets. He would grow old, but they would remain young and he was satisfied in this knowledge. He writes, ‘Ah, leave me alone in my pubescent park, in my mossy garden. Let them play around me forever. Never grow up’.⁶⁸ They yearn for the freedom of adulthood with none of the aging or bodily changes, all play and no work.

What does it mean to be this nymphet, starlet, puer aeternus, an ‘enfant charmante et fourbe’,⁶⁹ an adolescent? Guattari describes it as, ‘made up of different sorts of “becomings”: becoming-child, becoming-woman, becoming sexual... These

⁶⁵ Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess*, 109.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁸ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 20.

⁶⁹ Felix Guattari, *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977-1985* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2009), 131.

becomings can occur at any time...'⁷⁰ Adolescence is a powerful, important, but entirely impossible moment. Guattari writes that adolescence 'is the entrance into a sort of extremely troubled interzone where all kinds of possibilities, conflicts, and sometimes extremely difficult and even dramatic clashes suddenly appear'.⁷¹ They are all virgules, all paused and ceaseless becomings, and Trockel explores them all.

Trockel deals with the subject of adolescence in her *Living Means* series of photo-sculptures. These six works, which include *Leben heißt kleine Brötchen backen* (Living means to bake little bread) (1998/2000), *Living Means I tried Everything* (2001), *Leiben heißt Stumpfhosen stricken* (Living Means Knitting Tights) (1998), *Living Means to Appreciate Your Mother Nude* (2001), *Living Means Listening to Records* (1998), and *Living Means Not Good Enough* (2002), are not an official series, and are not always displayed together, but each of their titles begin with 'Living Means' and they are nearly identical in form. Each piece is an almost life-sized photograph of a girl, lying on the floor and surrounded by (sometimes actually present) objects (Figure 1.17). Although their ages are largely indeterminate, it is almost impossible not to connect them with Humbert Humbert's initial and most lovingly detailed impressions of Lolita, her face always turned away from him and towards a magazine, her childish and alluring body best presented for his gaze in this manner: 'There my beauty lay down on her stomach, showing me, showing the thousand eyes wide open in my eyed blood, her slightly raised shoulder-blades, and the bloom along the incurvation of her spine, and the swellings of her tense narrow nates clothed in black, and the seaside of her schoolgirl thighs'.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 132.

⁷² Nabokov, *Lolita*, 45.

One fully expects, if they could inspect the *Living Means* girls further, for their fingernails to be as grubby as any adolescent's after a hard day of play ('When I examined her small hands and drew her attention to their grubby fingernails, she said with a naïve frown, "*Oui ce n'est pas bien*" and went to the washbasin, but I said it did not matter, did not matter at all'⁷³) and their faces to be grimy with dirt or sticky from a sugary treat. In fact, most of the girls' feet (all are bare) are extremely dirty. Adolescence is, of course, the scary and new arena of hygiene, of hair and odour. Lolita's 'Alice-in-Wonderland hair'⁷⁴ will give her zits where it covers her forehead, all the girls at camp will bring new razors, and the lost boys will be forced to sing 'I won't grow up' through cracking voices. Much of Lolita's childishness lay in her refusal to properly wash. Humbert wrote that brushing her teeth was the 'only sanitary act Lo performs with real zest'.⁷⁵ One of Bardot's symbols of youth was her unkempt hair. Simone de Beauvoir describes this, writing that her 'long voluptuous tresses of Melisande flow down to her shoulders, but her hair-do is that of a negligent waif'.⁷⁶ Bardot was wild, and so (because) her hair was wild, unkempt, and dirty. Interestingly, Brecht also falls into the leading lady adolescent cleansing ritual. Benjamin (referencing letters he and Brecht exchanged) explains:

'I taught [the actress] Carola Neher all kinds of things, you know,' he [Brecht] said, 'not just acting – for example, she learned from me how to wash herself. Before that she used to wash just so as not to be dirty. But that was no way to do things. So I taught her how to wash her face. She became so perfect at it that I wanted to film her doing it.'⁷⁷

Brecht was so enamoured with his lessons to Neher that he wrote a poem entitled 'Waschen' about it.

⁷³ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 264.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁶ de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome', 54.

⁷⁷ Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Block, Bertolt Brecht, Georg Lukacs, and Frederic Jameson, *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 2007), 86.

The importance Brecht places on Neher's face in his story is also of interest. Washing one's body is 'no way to do things', so he taught her how to wash her face. The face must be addressed. The face, in Trockel's *Living Means* series, is also highlighted in a curious manner. While the bodies, hair, and bare feet of the girls are shown in full close-to-life-sized photographic detail, their faces are not to be seen. They are, in fact, conspicuously absent. The missing faces don't seem odd at first, since the photos are taken from a vantage point above the girls. From this angle there are no faces to be seen, so why miss them? Why label them as absent? Trockel has presented the face as a present absence by cutting the photographs along the girls' head and bending the paper upwards (Figure 1.18). In this way, one can see their tilted heads and gaze into where their faces would be, if they were there, but they are not. Trockel has left the photograph paper blank, all that one can see is white. She has effectively separated the face from the body, has shown why this matters, and illustrated Deleuze's words to perfection: 'the head is included in the body, the face is not. The face is a surface'.⁷⁸ This is not to say that the face is only a surface, that it exists outside and independently of the body, on the contrary, as Deleuze explains, '*the face ... is not content to cover the head*, but touches all other parts of the body, and even, if necessary, other objects without resemblance'.⁷⁹ According to Deleuze and Guattari, the face overcodes the body, attempts to unify it, make it whole.⁸⁰ They also explain that, 'a rhizome of multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded....'⁸¹ Since Trockel's work is rhizomatic, it cannot risk being overcoded by an overcoding face; of course it is left out.

⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 170.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 8.

Although the face of Bardot is the first thing to jump out at the viewer from the Bardot Box, her body was an entity unto itself. Vadim, said of her body, ‘She had the bottom of a youthful boy. Physically, as well as psychologically, she was the first star to be truly half masculine and half feminine’.⁸² De Beauvoir reflected this sentiment:

Brigitte Bardot is the most perfect specimen of these ambiguous nymphs. Seen from behind, her slender, muscular dancer’s body is almost androgynous. Femininity triumphs in her delightful bosom. The line of her lips forms a childish pout, and at the same time those lips are very kissable.⁸³

Once again Bardot fills the role of adolescent; the adolescent body is largely an androgynous one, not yet woman, not yet man, no longer child. Kristeva calls it, ‘a mirage of pre-language or an indecisive body’.⁸⁴ When Lolita’s hips and breasts inevitably grew to be as large as her mother’s, Humbert would no longer lust after her. Peter Pan is usually portrayed by a woman onstage, to better attempt the verisimilitude of a young boy.

Bardot’s body moved beyond the realm of the adolescent. She was, after all, a highly lusted after (highly ‘developed’) sex symbol. Her body, often on display in her films, is especially focused on during the opening of Godard’s film *Contempt*. In this scene she lays (exactly as Lolita lays to read, and how Trockel’s *Living Means* girls pose) nude on a bed. Her languid exchange with the man next to her plays out:

Camille Javal: You like all of me? My mouth? My Eyes? My nose? My ears?

Paul Javal: Yes, all of you.

Camille: Then you love me totally?

Paul: Yes. Totally.. tenderly .. tragically.

⁸² Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess*, 39.

⁸³ de Beauvoir, *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome*, 54.

⁸⁴ Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 151.

The camera zooms in on her parts, her body, and the dialogue marks these things as *her*, her totality. She is a body to be loved (especially her mouth). Bardot's mouth was one of her defining attributes, a 'very kissable' 'childish pout'.⁸⁵

The face is not secondary to the body, it is vastly important on its own terms. It can be iconographic or evolutionary. The face was also of every importance to the Brechtian adolescent Katrin. Although the play takes place over many, many years and Katrin ages, she is kept suspended, despite her age, in adolescence. She follows her mother wordlessly (literally, due to her muteness) (a muteness which also allows for an array of projections since her voice is gazeless) and does not live her own life. She has been promised that she may marry only after the war is over, and this fantasy marriage becomes her gateway into adulthood. Unlike some, Katrin longs to grow up and walk past the limitations of adolescence. This hope is extinguished when Katrin (who loves children and cares for orphaned hedgehogs in secret) is assaulted by a soldier. He leaves her face scarred and ruined, and so she will never marry. Mother Courage laments, a bit sarcastically (in response to someone declaring the day, for other reasons, historic), 'What I call a historic moment is them bashing my daughter over the eye. She's half wrecked already, won't get no husband now, and her so crazy about kids...'⁸⁶

Although Courage's definition of a historic moment could just as easily involve a large sale, Katrin's scarring truly is important. She will never marry now and she will never grow up. Her mother attempts to console her by giving her the prostitute Yvette's red boots – boots that Katrin sneakily and joyously tried on and stole years before. She no longer wants them. One could easily think of Katrin's red boots as the tragic symbol of her adolescence. She desires them, but is only rewarded with them after being assaulted, and ultimately rejects them. Katrin is inducted into the rare world of

⁸⁵ Simone de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome', 54.

⁸⁶ Brecht, *Mother Courage*, 55.

the true nymphet and Peter Pan. She is paused, her adolescence permanent, and the symbol of this virgule is not her red boots, but her face. More specifically, the symbol of her becoming-virgule is the scar on her face that will keep her from ever marrying – a slash of forever becoming. If the scar had been on her feet, or shoulder, or chest it would be a different story, but the face must be kept pristine, the face should not be marred. Courage states:

Won't leave no mark, and what if it does? Ones I'm really sorry for's the ones they fancy. Drag them around till they're worn out they do. Those they don't care for they leaves alive. I seen girls before now had pretty faces, then in no time looking fit to frighten a hyaena. Can't even go behind a bush without risking trouble, horrible life they lead. Same like with trees, straight well-shaped ones get chopped down to make beams for houses and crooked ones live happily ever after. So it's a stroke of luck for you really. Them boots'll be all right, I greased them before putting them away.⁸⁷

She calls her daughter lucky, lucky to be 'a crooked tree' who will live happily ever after. Is this just an old woman's projection of the mythical childhood? Surely Katrin would disagree in her luck.

Living Means Not Good Enough (2002) (Figure 1.19) is one of the most complex of the living means series, as it contains dozens of book drafts made by Trockel. In it a young girl, wearing nothing but a small and formless pink skirt, is almost hidden from sight by piles and piles of books and magazines. The girl is (facelessly) reading a copy of *Face* magazine. Each of the books surrounding her have been created by Trockel and include a book cover showing twin children wearing *Trockel's Schizopullover* and reads 'WHOLE DAYS'. Another book, entitled 'Du bist der Abgrund' (You're the abyss) shows the artist's mother standing on a bridge. The BB/BB Mother Courage book from the Bardot Box also makes an appearance in the piles, along with a book reading 'die Demokratische und das Andere' (the democratic and the other) and 'Men in Dark Times'. Another reads, 'It's true you can't be number

⁸⁷ Brecht, *Mother Courage*, 58.

one when you're stupid but if only a child can give your life a meaning that's stupid and if only a young and healthy look guarantees (sic) success that may be the truth but it's stupid'.

The overarching theme of this work returns to the complexities of fandom and the intricacies of myth, but is now firmly grounded in an adolescent subjectivity. Adolescent star-adoration shows itself to be (once again) a concern of Trockel's. This work has a more modern twist, heavily featuring the musician Madonna in several books, including one titled 'Miss Madonna'. Marlene Dietrich also appears in one called 'The influence of MARLENE DIETRICH'. The work's title *Living Means Not Good Enough* references feelings of inadequacy that can be caused by magazine starlets, and that are very much the concern of an adolescent girl.

Trockel appears again and again on the books within this work, but always as an adolescent. Trockel's work generally refuses the viewer insight into her identity or any reading of a totalized identity, and although her image is spread throughout these works, she is not to be found. Trockel shows herself as an adolescent, which we have determined is not a set identity, but a virgule, a becoming. She is everywhere, and she is nowhere, this is the heart of the work's schizophrenic subjectivity. There is one book in which Trockel is not an adolescent, however: 'Jahre der Verwirrung' (years of confusion). The caveat? Her head has been digitally removed. She is still not there.

This work returns us to the Bardot Box, not only because of the BB/Mother Courage book draft that appears in both works, but through its themes of fandom, myth, and adolescence. The connections between Trockel's work, no matter how many years apart, often operate in this way, and the Bardot Box is an excellent example of that. Trockel has taken the revelation of Brecht and Bardot to a different place, a place that

does not even centre around them, but around everything that composes and swirls around BB.

Like a Deleuzian rhizome, the Bardot Box has multiple entryways; it circles, continues, and avoids ‘any orientation toward a culmination point or external end’.⁸⁸ Instead of focusing on Chaplin’s acting or love affairs, one could turn to a series of photographs from 1965 in which Bardot poses as Chaplin to blow off steam during the filming of *Viva Maria* (Figure 1.20-1.22), or that Picasso and Bardot met at Cannes where he refused, despite her pleas, to paint her and instead chose her companion Sylvette David as his new muse. Almost immediately following this rejection Bardot dyed her brown hair blonde to match Sylvette’s. Trockel includes an undeveloped roll of film labelled ‘Paris Blonde’ (Figure 1.23) within the Bardot Box, alluding to the dye job that made Bardot’s gold locks an icon.⁸⁹ The Bardot Box also contains a photograph of Bardot in front of a portrait of Sylvette painted by Picasso, furthering Bardot’s lost chance of muse-dom. Much later in her life Bardot commented on this meeting, stating ‘But it was too soon for me to understand I was too young to appreciate his genius. I didn’t ask him anything’.⁹⁰ When questioned as to what she would ask him now, she responded (always the impatient, awkward adolescent), ‘Do you love me, Picasso?’⁹¹ One can even begin at the small, but amusing fact that Bardot, Eisler, Chaplin, Picasso, Brecht, and even the barely mentioned Woody Allen, are all exactly

⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 22.

⁸⁹ In keeping with her myth, the blonde dye job reflected all the desired aspects of a fairy tale princess: beauty, purity, youth. See Marina Warner, ‘The Language of Hair’ in *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994), 353-370) And then, as it tends to do, life imitated art imitated life: Marina Warner writes that, ‘Cinderella’s hairstyle changes according to the fashion of the day – though her hair colour never does, or hardly ever. In 1966, a popular picture book imagined Cinders with the long fringe and bouffant height of Brigitte Bardot’s hairstyle’. *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 365

⁹⁰ Evans, *Bardot: Eternal Sex Goddess*, 142.

⁹¹ Ibid.

five foot five. These connections do not end, they overwhelm, they create compulsive desiring-machines and lead the viewer into a loop of schizophrenic connections.

There is Bardot, there is Brecht, and all the unexpected things that stem from them, but where is Trockel? Her image is spread throughout these works, but they are not her; they are a confused adolescent, a mislabelled fan, a headless body. Within these works, within the BB/BB virgule, Trockel has created her own symbolic order and the viewer is subject to it, is implicated in it. The observer is necessary to complete this schizophrenic subjectivity, to find these connections, and in this way Trockel displaces her identity by putting it on them. She is everywhere within these works, her photograph, her choices, but not her identity. Just as she is not the fan of *Fan 1,2,3*, and as her head has been removed from her photo in the *Living Means Not Good Enough* book 'Jahre der Verwirrung', it is the product of 'years of confusion'.

CHAPTER 2

MERMAID/ANGEL

As argued in the previous chapter, Rosemarie Trockel displaces her own identity (and the identity of Brigitte Bardot) through a complex process of connection making. This chapter will investigate how Trockel follows a similar method in order to constantly relocate not only herself, but also the concept of 'woman' as a whole. Through a carefully constructed pathway of connections that include Surrealist art, the mythology of mermaids, Victorian gender-politics, and even sideshow illusions, Trockel demonstrates how the image of woman, throughout history, has been a construction. This chapter's title, 'Mermaid/Angel', is an allusion to two opposite views of women: one good, virtuous and pure, the other dangerous, overly sexual, and feared. Once again using the theoretical tools of Deleuze and Guattari, this chapter will argue that by playing on these two stereotypes of woman, Trockel is reterritorializing and deterritorializing the idea of woman in order to reveal that woman is not a unity, but a multiplicity. Through these themes, Trockel not only highlights various problematic ways in which the female body is depicted, but also that the concept of the female, of woman, is continuously produced by the masculine and marked as other. Trockel's sculpture *Pennsylvania Station* and its take on this feminine other intertwine with Monique Wittig's own theories of feminism and gender, especially within her novels *The Lesbian Body* and *Les Guérillères*. Both Trockel's and Wittig's work strives to do away with the female body, a body that never truly exists anyway as it is a construction positioned against (outside) the neutral male body.

These women, through their work, ‘propose the disappearance of women as the goal of feminism’.¹ For Wittig, this is done through the concept of the lesbian. For Trockel, it happens through her oeuvre’s scarcity of totalized bodies. Since woman is produced by the masculine, each of these tactics serve to do away with ‘woman’ as a discrete, natural being. Their art shows the bodies of women being mutilated beyond recognition, echoing how this has been done in artwork throughout history, but repeating the destruction for entirely different reasons: to move the female body away from itself, to rip it out of the binary system of sex and gender through which it will always remain other. Together, the two create a type of feminism that has Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts at its core, bringing the schizoanalysts into a realm where it is usually mocked or ignored.

At first glance, *Pennsylvania Station* (1987) (Figure 2.1) is a deceptively simple minimalist amalgamation of cubes, steel and wood that would be at home within any Richard Serra or Donald Judd retrospective (Figure 2.2, 2.3).² The sculpture consists of a steel cube about 120 centimetres tall, which sits next to a slightly taller slatted wooden crate. Both sit on a thin steel slab; the combined length of the work is roughly 500 centimetres. Even its title (which stands out in the sea of untitled Trockel works), referring to the famous American train station, fits into the sweaty, powerful world of action, labour, and industry that minimalist sculptors seem so drawn to (think Richard Serra’s *Pacific Judson Murphy* (1978), named after a steel corporation.)

It is hard to imagine that this sculpture provides insight into how Trockel’s work deals with theories of gender and sexuality, but certain small details adorning the

¹ Teresa de Lauretis, *Figures of Resistance: Essays in Feminism*, Patricia White, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 180.

² The ability to slip seamlessly into others’ work is an important trait in much of Trockel’s work, and reflects that work’s schizophrenic nature. The reverse of this, other artists sliding into Trockel’s work, will be explored in the thesis’ conclusion.

steel and wooden cubes cause the piece to stray from the cool aesthetics of Minimalism and point to a particular Trockel-curated genealogy of how the female body is depicted and constructed throughout art and myth (a genealogy including surrealism, Victorian popular culture, and fairy tales).

The first of the telling details hidden within *Pennsylvania Station* are three stovetop burners decorating the large steel cube.³ Trockel has been creating these minimalist-meets-matron stovetop sculptures (or *Herde*, in the original German) since the 1980s. They are arguably, after her knit canvasses, the work for which she is best known. The *Herde* range from freestanding sculptures (Figure 2.4), like the one in *Pennsylvania Station*, to stovetop burners fitted on wall hangings (Figure 2.5).

Trockel's *Herde* pieces, like her knit canvasses, clearly raise issues of domesticity and the feminine. If her knit works are seen as referencing the feminine art of knitting, then the *Herde* works address the domestic domain of the kitchen and cooking. By adorning typically male, typically minimalist sculptures with this symbol of housewifery, these works play with the discrepancies between male and female, craft and masterpiece, form and function. The *Herde* works are not, however, safe or soft; they play into the inherent danger and violence present within many minimalist works. Just as one can say that a Richard Serra work 'not only looks dangerous, it is dangerous',⁴ the stovetop burners within Trockel's *Herde* are often turned on, and can burn a viewer just as easily as Serra's balanced metal could crush them. Trockel is not merely putting a feminist twist on a typically male art form, nor is she just mocking male art; she is problematizing easy feminist labels and breathing new, if sardonic, life into the old male

³ The steel cube is almost identical to Richard Serra's *Charlie Chaplin* (1978) (Figure 2.6).

⁴ Anna C. Chave, 'Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power', *Arts Magazine* 64 (1990), 274.

masterpieces. This is an act Trockel returns to again and again, with targets ranging from Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter to the surrealist movement.

Pennsylvania Station has produced a large outpouring of adoration, controversy, and wonder from Trockel's critics. Jorg Heiser has deemed it a 'Rosetta Stone of [her] artistic language', ⁵ claiming that it gave him 'the sort of rush you get from a sudden glimpse into the physics of things. It was suddenly like understanding why the earth revolves around the sun'. ⁶ Although Heiser fails to enlighten his readers with just exactly what he now understands, what insights into Trockel's artwork this sculpture provides, it certainly is an enlightening constellation-piece that incorporates many themes, concepts, and imagery at play within Trockel's work. Like most of Trockel's work, *Pennsylvania Station* opens up an almost infinite number of pathways to interpretation. It encourages rhizomatic, schizophrenic connection-making, in which the work is the impetus for the viewer to follow a path of their own creation (the path is their own creation, that there even is a path is Trockel's) that will lead from one theme to another, potentially forever.

Most often (at least in what has been written on the piece in exhibition catalogues), these paths lead to thoughts on the Holocaust. ⁷ The slatted wooden crate (although it has no wheels) is regularly read as a boxcar, and despite its lack of interiority, the steel cube is, more often than not, read as an oven. Art historian Holland Cotter labels the work a masterful encapsulation of 'Kirche, Küche, Kinder' ⁸ and an

⁵ Jorg Heiser, 'The Seeming and the Meaning', *Frieze Magazine*, October (2009).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Michael Kimmelman, 'Art View; Politics Laced with a Dollop of Strangeness', *New York Times*, April 28 (1991).

⁸ *Kirche, Küche, Kinder* is a German slogan (known as the 'Three Ks') that translates to 'church, kitchen, children'. Today it generally refers to an antiquated female role (similar to the American phrase 'barefoot and pregnant'), but has also been associated with Hitler and the Third Reich.

‘Auschwitzian perversion’.⁹ As Elizabeth Sussman argues, the ‘juxtaposition of the boxcar with the heat of the oven could also connote a specific German historical context; the attempted genocide of a part of the human race in the Holocaust’.¹⁰

Reading *Pennsylvania Station* as a work concerned with the Holocaust is completely justified. Sussman is correct that an artist (especially a German artist) combining part of a stove with something resembling a boxcar (resembling it even more because of the title’s direct reference to a famous train station) could bring to mind images of trains, of burning, and thus of the Holocaust and concentration camps. Stopping at this singular interpretation, however, ignores many other aspects of the work and shuts down its potential to open connections and pathways and to produce new meaning. If not for Trockel’s German-ness would these readings be as apparent? Or would the work, with its American title bringing to mind a powerful history of steel and industry, be thought of as little more than a parodic feminist twist on established male artworks? Does one’s reading change after learning about Trockel’s passion for architecture and historic preservation?¹¹ There are no wrong answers here. Instead, the focus should be shifted away from interpreting a set meaning and towards the affects

⁹ Sidra Stich, ed., *Rosemarie Trockel* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 35.

¹⁰ Ibid. (The wording ‘attempted genocide’ is, of course, not only problematic but incorrect; the genocide of European Jews was carried out, not just attempted.)

¹¹ This interest can be seen in, among other works, her 2002 video *Manus Spleen 2*. In the video *Manu* (a reoccurring character in Trockel’s oeuvre) stands next to actor Udo Kier, a native of Cologne, in front of the Josef-Haubrich-Forum. A large group of protestors have gathered (inexplicably carrying flags adorned with skulls and crossbones) in order to hear Kier read a speech protesting the demolition of the Kunsthalle. Although this video is rather simple, the artwork itself is not – mainly because it is impossible to tell where the artwork ends and Trockel’s real-life action begins. Unlike most of her artwork, the two seem inextricably intertwined in this particular project. The Josef-Haubrich-Forum was a real building in Cologne that was really torn down. Whether Kier or Trockel wrote the speech that he read is unknown (at least in the context of the work, Trockel did actually write the speech, not Kier), as is the reality of the protest itself. It is uncertain whether Trockel created a film out of the protest, or created the protest for her film. Trockel did, outside of the video, work to save the Josef-Haubrich-Forum by joining forces with the director of the museum.

and percepts that Trockel makes sensible within the piece, as well as the form of subject embodied in the form of the sculpture.

While there are no wrong answers, there are virgolian answers, most of which can be found within the slatted wooden crate of *Pennsylvania Station*. The virgolian figure that is the focus of my own chain of connections in this chapter is located within the aged and ordinary wooden box sitting next to the steel cube (Figure 2.7).

Discovering the creature lying at the bottom of the crate is awkward and unpleasant, for it is shockingly ugly; a little monster with a forked tail, exposed flattened and sagging breasts, arms pulling desperately at the few tufts of hair left on its oversized head while grinning in a silent scream, teeth exposed. The figure is burned or shrunken, as its skin is mummy-like, dry, blackened. Its bottom half resembles a fish tail, while its upper half looks like a terrible witch. The creature is a left-behind outcast, an abandoned bad birth. ‘Something has gone wrong in its production, as if the irony that went into its creation couldn’t – or didn’t want to – integrate the dirty, repressed surplus’.¹²

Although the figure is only a few inches long, it dominates the sculpture through pure shock and revulsion (and fascination), as if the steel and wood were just a landscape for its birth, the conditions of its horrific creation. The closest set label one could give to it would be ‘mermaid’, because it does seem to be a half human, half fish hybrid. This is not, however, the sort of mermaid fantastical children’s tales are made of. This figure, hidden yet visible, central yet marginal, is not precisely an excess. It is a physical manifestation of an object that doesn’t play into binary constraints, that is not entirely one thing or another – the very definition of a virgolian creature.

¹² Heiser, ‘The Seeming and the Meaning’, 2.

Hybrids and Fairy Tales: When a Mermaid is not a Mermaid

Trockel and Wittig's work are full of animal-human hybrids. In Wittig's novel *Across the Acheron* the narrator strips off her clothes and realizes that her body is slowly changing (and not for the worse) into some sort of animal. 'I look at myself in astonishment: it's true, long, black, glossy hair covers my entire body, replacing what had previously been only down. Then I say: (Ah, here's something to keep me warm in winter!)... I look down at my body once again and see that the hair has now been replaced by hard, shiny scales that I find most attractive. They won't fail to glitter in the sun'.¹³ Wittig's novel *The Lesbian Body* finds its characters constantly turning from woman to animal; legs are easily swapped for flanks, woman whinny and their hair turns into rough manes. They too swim and sing as mermaids or selkies, nuzzle as swan maidens, and possess all the danger of a siren.¹⁴

Trockel, throughout her career has had a propensity for turning humans into animals, animals into humans, and combining the two in sometimes hilarious, sometimes horrifying, ways. Her series of works *Ohne Titel (Pudel + Frau)* (*Untitled (Poodle + Woman)*) (1988-1996) (Figure 2.8) playfully present charcoal drawings of poodles alongside passport-style photographs of a frizzy (yes, poodle) headed woman. Her short video *Out of the kitchen into the fire* (1993) records a naked woman who drops an egg from between her buttocks (Figure 2.9), and in a more disturbing series of drawings (which surrounded *Pennsylvania Station* when it was exhibited in museums) she shows human foetuses within transparent cow buttocks among other unsettling human/animal combinations (Figure 2.10, 2.11). A larger work *Es gibt kein*

¹³ Monique Wittig, *Across the Acheron*, trans. David Le Vay (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1985), 15-16.

¹⁴ See Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), 22, 36, 37, 99.

*unglücklicheres Wesen unter der Sonne, als einen Fetischisten, der sich nach einem Frauenschuh sehnt und mit dem ganzen Weib vorlieb nehmen mufs K.K.:F. (There is no unhappier being under the sun than a fetishist who longs for a woman's shoe and has to make due with the whole woman K.K.:F) (1991) (Figure 2.12)¹⁵ plays on the myth of the selkie, a seal that could change into a woman.¹⁶ The bronze sculpture consists of a life-sized seal hanging from the ceiling, wearing a blonde wig.¹⁷ The seal, with its blonde hair and eerie resemblance to a woman's body, is full of disconcerting sexuality. Strung up by its feet/flippers the creature seems to be more bondage girl than hunter's trophy. It even resembles a blow-up doll due to its fake, stringy hair. The hair is what makes it womanly, but also points out the masquerade at play.¹⁸ The work is alluring and off-putting, sexual and unsexy. This combination of beautiful fairy-tale creature and absurdly ugly reality puts the seal sculpture very much in line with the *Pennsylvania Station* mermaid.*

¹⁵ The piece's unusual title comes from Austrian writer Karl Kraus (1874-1936). Kraus was a controversial figure for his disdain towards psychoanalysis ('Psychoanalysis is the mental illness it purports to cure') and women ('A woman occasionally is quite a serviceable substitute for masturbation') and his conversion from Judaism to Christianity shortly before World War II. Joseph W. Slade, *Pornography and Sexual Representation* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), 415.

¹⁶ For more on selkies see Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994), 371-386.

¹⁷ Another pathway for interpreting this work runs through Brigitte Bardot (as seen in chapter 1 (BB/BB), a popular subject in Trockel's work). The seal's blonde wig is easily read as an indicator of 'Bardot-ness', especially since it was a key part of the Bardot costume Trockel and her interviewees wore in *Fan Fini*. To turn Bardot into a seal is not as absurd as it may at first appear. Trockel says of her hybrid work: 'To connect animals to famous people; I welcome the moment of embarrassment implied in that'. Quoted in Heiser, 'The Seeming and the Meaning', 4.

¹⁸ But just what is the masquerade? Animal as woman, or woman as animal? As Marina Warner points out, hair (especially blonde hair) is often the key to discovering a beautiful princess. She writes on the fairy tale *Donkeyskin* (in which a princess is disguised as a donkey), explaining: 'Her golden hair reveals to the prince that she is not the beast – the she-bear – or the slatternly donkey everyone knows and despises; she becomes available to him as a bride, she sheds her animal lowness to become his equal'. *From the Beast to the Blonde* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 379.

To combine seal and woman (if only through a blonde wig) recalls numerous fairy tales in which a person is magically transformed into an animal. The majority of these tales involve men (*The Frog Prince*, *East of the Sun West of the Moon*, and the *Hedgehog Boy* for example) but few involve women. When women do become animal, become inhuman, they are usually a hybrid or can change fluidly (as is the case with creatures such as mermaids and selkies). This is in contrast to their male counterparts who are changed, usually semi-permanently, by force and as a punishment. Although Wittig and Trockel reference these hybrids and their use in myth, they are not using woman-animal hybrids to show some orientalist version of woman as closer to nature, or to assert the fluidity of the female form. They are instead trying to escape these judgements centred on the body by using their own off-centred versions of the woman/animal hybrid as well as fairy tales to call attention to the absurdity of how women have been depicted throughout history.

Both Trockel and Wittig often reference fairy tales in their work, mixing them together with other myths and fables, adding feminist twists and surreally jarring settings. Wittig's *Les Guérillères*, for example, creates a world in which fairy tales, religious writings, psychoanalysis, and the work of 19th and 20th century theorists are treated equally; all become old stories that have lost their meaning. Many women in the book have names similar to famous theorists, such as Barthes and Sartre (names they possibly gained from their ancestors, who may have taken the names after killing and skinning said theorists – it is hard to know for sure, as the book is written non-linearly).¹⁹ The women tell stories to each other, some from memory, some from what

¹⁹ Although the book's plot is difficult to discern, and not the real point, a basic summation of *Les Guérillères* is that a group of women (perhaps all the world's women) wage war against men, who they see as their oppressors. The women, after a long and difficult fight, conquer the men, kill most of them, and form their own, new

is known as 'the Feminary'. The Feminary's original purpose is unknown to these women, but it resembles a sort of manifesto written by a newly formed society. These tales of memory and Feminary include stories of the Golden Fleece, an incredibly odd retelling of *Genesis*, and, of course, fairy tales. In one instance, poking fun of the 'prick' that sent Sleeping Beauty into her fantastical coma, she writes:

There is the story of her who fell asleep for a hundred years from having wounded her finger with her spindle, the spindle being cited as the symbol of the clitoris. In connection with this story the women make many jokes about the awkwardness of the one who lacked the priceless guidance of a feminary. They say laughing that she must have been the freak spoken of elsewhere, she who, in place of a little pleasure-greedy tongue, had a poisonous sting. They say they do not understand why she was called the sleeping beauty.²⁰

In another example she relates a favourite story of the natives in her imagined land:

Snow-White runs through the forest. Her feet catch in the roots of the trees, which make her trip repeatedly. The women say that the little girls know this story by heart. Rose-Red follows behind her, impelled to cry out while running. Snow-White says she is frightened. Snow-White running says, O my ancestors, I cast myself at your holy knees. Rose-Red laughs. She laughs so much that she falls, that she finally becomes angry. Shrieking with rage, Rose-Red pursues Snow-White with a stick, threatening to knock her down if she does not stop. Snow-White whiter than the silk of her tunic drops down at the foot of a tree. Then Rose-Red red as a peony or else red as a red rose marches furiously to and fro before her, striking the ground with her stick shouting, You haven't got any, you haven't got any, until eventually Snow-White asks, What is it that I have not got? The effect of which is to immobilize Rose-Red saying, Sacred ancestors, you haven't got any. Snow-White says that she has had enough, especially as she is no longer at all ... frightened and seizing hold of the stick she begins to run in all directions, she is seen striking out with all her might against the tree-trunks, lashing the yielding shrubs, striking the mossy roots. At a certain point she gives a great blow with the stick to Rose-Red asleep at the foot of an oak resembling a stout root, pink as a pink rose.²¹

By using well-known fairy tale figures in relation to a world in which there are no men and thus no sexual difference, Wittig is able to revel in their sheer ridiculousness and their often misogynistic undertones.

society. Hundreds, if not thousands, of years later, their descendants live in a (seemingly) peaceful and happy manner, and discuss the Feminary.

²⁰ Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, trans. Davie Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 45-46.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 46-48.

Trockel also uses fairy tale tropes to subvert their inherent violence, sexism, sexuality, and danger. Her most used targets are Pinocchio and, like Wittig, Sleeping Beauty. Playing with the wooden puppet's well-known growing nose and its potential for phallic pun making, she shows various male artists and theorists (such as Wilfried Dickhoff and Bertolt Brecht) with large, obviously penile, noses made of putty or wood (Figure 2.13, 2.14). Her cartoonish drawing *Hände hoch (Hands Up)* (1997) (Figure 2.15) takes this allusion to an even sillier place, showing two men in undershirts. The first man has his hands (one of which contains a flower) raised up high, a bewildered grin on his face, while the other bends behind him pressing his long, Pinocchio-esque nose suggestively into his lower back. All sorts of entendre are at work here, the nose as phallus, the phallus as a weapon (are the man's hands up because he feels threatened by a gun to his back, or at the prospect of the hard 'nose' moving lower?). The piece shows just how droll Trockel's work can be. In these works the phallus is shown as ridiculous, the punch line to a comic strip, not powerful.

Trockel's Sleeping Beauty works turn the table on another male power-centre: the gaze. Most of Trockel's men and boys are pretty, placid, and usually unconscious.²² They languish; hips popped, arms akimbo, wearing belly shirts or nothing at all (Figure 2.16). Again and again, in at least a dozen images, she shows boys and men asleep, and explicitly titles a few *Sleeping Beauty* (Figure 2.17, 2.18). The fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* is a well-known feminist target; she sleeps through her own story, only to be rescued by a man. Trockel is of course playing with that story, but also turning the male gaze back on itself. Her figures, eyes closed, genitals on display (humorously similar to

²² The few men who appear in Wittig's stories are treated in a similar manner: 'They say that most of the men are lying down.... they sleep'. Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, 98. She also sexualizes the male body: 'When they have a prisoner they strip him and make him run through the streets crying.... Sometimes the subject has a fine body broadened at the hips with honeyed skin and muscles not showing. Then they take him by the hand and caress him to make him forget all their bad treatment'. Ibid., 106.

many a Venus in repose), not only begin to sexualize the male body (so often seen as neutral) but allow them to be looked at, uninterrupted and without confrontation. As John Berger explains, 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women, but also the relation of women to themselves'.²³ Trockel subverts this and, while still performing the role of a gazing artist, turns the look to the now docile bodies of men.

Even if the previously mentioned animal/woman hybrids can be seen as a positive difference for women (nature is good, is pure, why not celebrate the stereotype of being more attuned to it?) both Trockel and Wittig point out the danger of any celebration of difference when it comes to gender. Trockel plays on this by making her mermaid hideous, denying it any of the attraction or celebration the creature usually extricates. Wittig states her desire for a lack of difference outright. A vital part of her theoretical elimination of 'woman' is the cessation of celebrating women's difference. She writes, 'What I believe in such a situation is that at the level of philosophy and politics women should do without the privilege of being different and above all never formulate this imposition of being different (relegated to the category of the Other) as a "right to be different" or never abandon themselves to the "pride of being different"',²⁴ and 'Never has the Other been magnified and celebrated to this extent.... the Feminine brain, Feminine writing, and so on...I do not know who is going to profit from this abandonment of the oppressed to a trend that will make them more and more powerless, having lost the faculty of being subjects even before having gained it'.²⁵ To celebrate difference is to still *be* different, to still exist in terms of binary sexuality. The lesbians

²³ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 47.

²⁴ Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

populating Wittig's novels, and the fairy tale hybrids living within Trockel's work point out this danger and show a space in which women can escape it.

Mermaid Versus Angel: The Entrapment of Victorian Fairy Brides

Although Trockel's mermaid is unconventional, it still evokes the large and varied mythos of that creature. For Trockel, the mermaid 'encapsulates the history of woman'²⁶ and has, throughout history, represented every imaginable attribute of woman, from murderous siren to Disney fodder.²⁷ The mermaid is beautiful but dangerous, and is thus the dumping ground for many of society's fears and dreams of women. Originally, the mermaid was a symbol of (and warning against) dangerous female power. Their long, lithe tails were visual representations of monstrous (castrating) female genitalia. Hans Christian Andersen's story *The Little Mermaid* brought the mermaid myth back into popular culture, and largely defined how the mermaid is thought of today.²⁸ The story was written in 1837 and reflected a notable shift in how women were treated outside of the home, a reflection quickly embraced and feared by the people of the time.

For Victorians, the antithesis of the mermaid was the angel. Nina Auerbach writes of a basic divide in thinking about women at this time, explaining that the angel (which was an equally popular figure) was meek, self-sacrificing, and a symbol of a good woman's success within her family and home. The mermaid, on the other hand, symbolized the woman that would not conform, that would not marry, the woman that

²⁶ Stitch, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 18.

²⁷ For more on the history of the mermaid see Marina Warner, 'The Glass Paving and the Secret Foot: The Queen of Sheba II' in *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 111-128.

²⁸ It was the source material for Disney's hugely popular animated film *The Little Mermaid*. Although Andersen claimed that his story had no model, it clearly draws from older Danish tales of the mermaid by authors such as Johannes Evald and B.S. Ingemann. Hauber Mortensen, 'The Little Mermaid: Icon and Disneyfication', *Scandinavian Studies*, Winter (2006).

frightened and represented ‘The crisis of belief that characterized the nineteenth century and brought with it unorthodox and sometimes frightening, new vehicles of transfiguration...an awesome threat to her credulous culture’.²⁹ While the mermaid was a symbol for a free and powerful woman (full of secret magic) an angel would remain faithful and dutiful, always sacrificing herself for others. The fear of this freedom, the fear that women could and would leave their homes made the mermaid a particularly apt vehicle for talking about womanhood as women began to gain more power in and outside their homes. It is worth noting that in Hans Christian Andersen’s *Little Mermaid* the titular character gives up her magic animality in order to become human, become ‘better’, and does so by giving up her voice (literally having her tongue cut out of her head). The metaphor is pushed even further, as the sea witch explains that a woman doesn’t really need a voice to accomplish what matters most: “‘but if you take away my voice”, said the little mermaid, “what is left for me?” “Your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes; surely with these you can enchain a man’s heart””.³⁰ Her animal power is gladly revoked through mutilation, and ultimately, after failing to become human, she is transformed into an angel, her very opposite.³¹

The Victorian institution of marriage was believed to be the ‘pinnacle of evolution’ and ‘a triumph of cultural order over natural chaos’.³² The woman who would not marry, the woman with choice and power, was a threat. The best solution was then to trap her, to change her, and force her to marry – to, in effect, turn the hybrid, virgulin mermaid into a stable, identifiable, and disciplined angel. This thinking

²⁹ Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon, the Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 8.

³⁰ Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid* (Forlager Carlsen, 2001), 22.

³¹ For more on the Little Mermaid story see Marina Warner, ‘The Silence of the Daughters: The Little Mermaid’ in *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 387-408.

³² Carole Silver, ‘East of the Sun and West of the Moon: Victorians and Fairy Brides’, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*. Vol.6, No.2, Autumn (1987), 286.

slipped its way into the stories and fairy tales of the time in the form of the fairy bride. Carole Silver writes, ‘That the 1880s should be especially fascinated with the marriage of fairies is not surprising: this was the era of the Married Women’s Property Acts and of the “New Woman”, of the rise of the “Marriage Question”’.³³ Like the mermaid in *Pennsylvania Station*, the Victorians preferred their mermaids trapped and stripped of their powers.

The tale of the fairy bride has many variations, but most follow the same general outline. A magical woman, most usually a swain maiden, mermaid, or selkie (bringing to mind Trockel’s bewigged seal sculpture and giving another possible reading to her mermaid) is trapped by an admiring man. She is always beautiful, always the ‘most beautiful’, despite (or perhaps because of) her ability to be both animal and woman. Once again a woman’s power is displayed as animal, primitive, and threatening, but also alluring (if only in the man’s desire to tame it). In these stories the man is always able to capture the woman and force her into marriage. This imprisonment is usually made possible by deception and theft, because each of these magical woman have tangible items that allow them to return to their animal form and animal home (most often the sea). The mermaid doffs her mermaid cap (usually described as red with feathers or salmon in colour) and the selkie sheds her sealskin. A version of this story recorded by the Department of Irish Folklore in 1937 describes it thusly:

As a man was walking along the strand of Glenbeigh, he saw a mermaid sitting on a rock combing her hair. He stole over to where she was and seeing a little cap near her he took it, and the mermaid, looking around for her cap could not find it. By losing this cap she had also lost her power to return to the sea. The man then brought her home and married her.³⁴

³³ Silver, ‘East of the Sun and West of the Moon’, 284.

³⁴ Bo Almquist, ‘Of Mermaids and Marriages. Seamus Heaney’s “Maighdean Mara” and Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill’s “an Mhaighdean Mhara” in the Light Folk Tradition’, *Bealoideas*, 58, (1990) 10.

The fairy bride lives with the man, as his wife, for many years, she has children, but is never happy or at home. She misses her true place (the sea) passionately. Many versions of these tales involve the woman constantly gazing at the sea, never (or seldom) speaking or eating, and becoming increasingly ill. The sea is a popular choice for utopian homes, especially in fairy bride stories. The sea was (and, although to a lesser extent in these technology-filled times, still is) vast and unknown to man, mysterious and full of potential pleasure and horror. In his 1888 play *The Lady From the Sea*, an at-the-time scandalous twist on the standard fairy bride story, Henrik Ibsen places great attention and languishes beautifully on homesickness for the sea. The titular character Eilida claims, ‘Night and day, winter and summer, it weighs upon me – this irresistible home-sickness for the sea’.³⁵ She also discusses her dream of dwelling in the sea in an argument with an acquaintance, claiming, ‘I think that if only men had from the beginning accustomed themselves to live on the sea, or in the sea perhaps, we should be more perfect than we are – both better and happier’. She continues, saying that the lack of living in the sea, this land living, is the ‘deepest cause for the sadness of men’.³⁶

Trockel pragmatically explores the mystique of the sea in her series of projected slides *Sea World* (1998) (Figure 2.19-2.21).³⁷ These photos were taken near the shoreline and docks of Hamburg in a single day and show (instead of fairy tale creatures and white-whiskered sailors) black murky water, bleak industrial buildings, and portraits of the mainly Filipino dockworkers.³⁸ Just as Trockel decoded the myth of Bardot, here she is decoding the fairy tale mystique of the ocean. Instead of gorgeous

³⁵ Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House and Other Plays* (Digireads Publishing, 2009), 33.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁷ The work's title is also meant as a reference to the popular American theme parks of the same name.

³⁸ Due to the fact that these Filipino workers are cheaper labour, they comprise the majority of workers.

swells full of mythical life, *Sea World* recodes the ocean as a place of labour and eyesores. Perhaps the ocean, however, is able to resist this coding. Despite Trockel's less than majestic take on it, critics have said that the pictures of the sea itself in this series still hold a mysterious, engaging beauty. Scholar Birte Frenssen writes on the work, 'even if we have to bid farewell to nostalgia, the sea never ceases to exercise its unique fascination'.³⁹

The fairy bride (the mermaid, the selkie, the swain maiden) cannot return to her true home because her human husband has stolen and hidden the vessel that would make return possible (the mermaid cap, the seal skin). The man always takes great care to hide these items, because the assumption is that they are the only things keeping the woman on land with her family. If she were able to return to the sea and abandon her husband and children, she would. This eagerness to abandon, thus destroying, the family structure was a very real fear for many Victorians. Women could divorce their husbands more easily, have more power, and so these tales pointed out the unnaturalness of doing so. As Carole Silver writes, 'Clearly free and easy separation was associated with primitive societies and savage eras'.⁴⁰ A good human woman with respectable Victorian values would never leave her family, only an animal would. The animality of woman was a negative in these tales; Silver continues, '...they did present some of the same issues that were plaguing those who read them: the imbalance of power between the sexes, the nature of female sexuality, and the right of females to leave their mates and children'.⁴¹

In the tales of fairy brides, the magical animal woman inevitably ends up finding her skin or cap (perhaps in Trockel's seal's case, her fake wig) and returning

³⁹ Rosemarie Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel. Bodies of Work 1986-1999* (Cologne: Oktagon, 1998), 113.

⁴⁰ Silver, 'East of the Sun and West of the Moon', 291.

⁴¹ Ibid., 284.

immediately to the sea. In some cases the husband unwittingly allows for this opportunity by leaving behind the key to the object's hiding place, or tossing it aside while frantically looking for a tool. Most often, however, it is the woman's children who make her return to the sea (and their own abandonment) possible.⁴² In an interestingly literal take on Helene Cixous' statement that 'The child owes its life to its parents and its problem is to give it back to them',⁴³ the fairy bride's offspring see their father take out the cap or the skin and report back to their mother on its hiding place (always without knowing what they are doing, simply wanting to tell their mother about this strange and beautiful thing they have seen). Thus they allow her to return to her true life. It is extremely rare, in these stories, that the mother takes her children with her. Usually they stay on land and rarely, if ever, see their mother again.⁴⁴ In extreme cases the children are not allowed to remain on land or sea, as human or animal, and are turned by their mother into rocks that line the coast. Folklorist Bo Almqvist reads this version as 'an allegory on the destructive effect of divorce on children'.⁴⁵ The stories of the fairy bride reflect many of the social concerns during which they were created, especially fears of familial trouble caused by the dissolution of marriages.⁴⁶ They show the 'bad' woman, a woman who would leave her husband and children. These stories stress just how unimaginable that recourse is by placing the blame on the woman's animal side.

The mermaid and selkie's link to antiquated ideas of marriage and women's independence (that both figures could, in some cases, be seen as women who have 'gotten out' of marriage and are no longer captives in their own home) would, no doubt,

⁴² Ibid., 16.

⁴³ Rosemarie Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 12.

⁴⁴ In the case of the mermaid tales, the mother usually comes back exclusively to brush her children's hair – the distracting action which initially caused her capture.

⁴⁵ Almqvist, 'Of Mermaids and Marriages', 40.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

be of great interest to Trockel and is demonstrated in several other of her artworks.⁴⁷

Even more so, they would appeal to Wittig and her thoughts on heterosexual marriage (and heterosexuality in general).⁴⁸ She writes:

This concept (heterosexuality) is a rationalization which consists in presenting as a biological, physical, instinctual fact, inherent to human nature, the seizure by men of women's reproduction and of their physical persons (the exchange of women and goods). Heterosexuality makes the difference of the sexes not a cultural difference but a natural difference. Heterosexuality admits as normal only that sexuality which has a reproductive purpose. Everything else is perversion...⁴⁹

For Trockel, it is her ugly mermaid and off-putting seal-woman that represent the woman who does not play into this contract. They emphasize the perpetual otherness of the feminine, neither married or at home in nature entirely, and are thus dislocated from the masculinist narrative of the fairy bride story. For Wittig, it is the figure of the lesbian that is able to escape into a virgulinian space of non-gender.⁵⁰ Like the fairy bride, 'Lesbians are runaways, fugitives, slaves'⁵¹ and fairy brides are the same as lesbians: '...runaway wives are the same case, they exist in all countries, because the political regime of heterosexuality represents all cultures'.⁵²

⁴⁷ See chapter 3 (Domestic/Violence).

⁴⁸ In her novel, *Across the Acheron*, Wittig relays several accounts in which women are horrifically brutalized by men, yet refuse to leave them.

⁴⁹ Monique Wittig, 'Paradigm', in *Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/Critical Texts*, edited by George Stambolian and Elaine Marks (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 115-116.

⁵⁰ Here again, Page duBois' concept of the Amazon aligns itself with Wittig's women. duBois writes,

In another way, the Amazons existed outside marriage, capable of promiscuity, seducing the Scythian men away from their wives, but also paradoxically virginal, worshipping Artemis and refusing contact with men. Like the Centaurs, the Amazons were seen as hostile to or without need for such civilized institutions as marriage; they refused it for themselves and resisted their queen's marriage. *Centaurs and Amazons*, 34.

⁵¹ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 45.

⁵² Ibid.

Ugly Mermaids and Surrealist Women

The mermaid, throughout its history, has been seen as a symbol of desire, an object of fantasy, beauty, and sexuality. Fairy tales concerning mermaids, without fail, elaborate on their overwhelming beauty. Hans Christian Andersen's little mermaid was '... the prettiest of them all; her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea...' ⁵³ In the *Deutsches Sagenbuch* by Ludwig Bechstein, Melusine 'had a marvellously beautiful face, blue eyes, and blond hair. Her upper body too was wonderfully proportioned...her eyes and face emanated such beauty, and her mouth was so seductive...' ⁵⁴ When one stops to consider the physicality of a mermaid however, its strangeness is apparent. Despite underlying messages of animality equalling uninhibited sexual power and energy, to fetishize a creature that is half woman, half fish is, to put it bluntly, pretty weird. The ugliness of the *Pennsylvania Station* mermaid exploits this oddity by making a mermaid that would not tempt man, a mermaid that could be left alone, outside of constructed gender binaries.

There is, however, a quite practical reason for the *Pennsylvania Station* mermaid's ugliness. The creature's top half most resembles a shrunken head, the practice of which originally had religious significance (shrinking an enemy's head was said to provide a number of magical services, from preventing the dead soul haunting the killer, to giving the killer the dead man's power). Shrunken heads, as early as the 1870s, became popular collector's items and encouraged the production of counterfeit heads. Some of these heads came from bodies stolen from morgues, and some were the heads of monkeys. Interestingly, the head of the *Pennsylvania Station* mermaid is a monkey's head. The monkey is an often-repeated theme throughout Trockel's artwork. She explains that, 'the monkey interests me as an imitator of human beings, as an

⁵³ Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 7.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Bechstein, *Deutsches Sagenbuch* (Georg Wigand Verlag, 1853), 729-730.

imitator full stop',⁵⁵ and she regularly uses the monkey 'as a means ... to reflect and recognize herself as a human being and an artist'.⁵⁶ She depicts monkeys carrying paintbrushes, sitting at easels, and smoking cigars (among other activities).⁵⁷

Despite its similarity to a shrunken head, the *Pennsylvania Station* beast is a product of a different type of fraudulent creature-creation from the late 1800s/early 1900s. (She is more *Wunderkammer* curiosity than religious totem figure.) The overwhelming (and unexpected) repulsiveness of the figure is primarily due to the nature of its creation. It is a faked fake, a replica of a hoax mermaid from the collection of the Musée de l'Homme. Hoax mermaids, like the one Trockel is copying, were prevalent during the 1800s. These curiosities were usually made by stitching together a fish's tail and the upper torso of another animal (in this case, a monkey). The most famous of these faux mermaids was P.T. Barnum's 'Feejee Mermaid' (also known as the Fiji or Fejee mermaid) (Figure 2.22) whose appearance closely matches Trockel's mermaid. Barnum, who gained possession of the creature in 1842, wrote, 'It was an ugly dried-up, black looking diminutive specimen, about three feet long. Its mouth was wide open, its tail turned over, and its arms thrown up, giving it the appearance of

⁵⁵ Rosemarie Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel*, 24.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁷ When placed into the connection-pathway of Victorian fairy brides and Anderson's little mermaid, the monkey becomes an even more interesting symbol for woman. During the 1880s, Victorian Britain was teeming with the images of monkeys. When used in ads for 'Monkey Brand Soap', whose mascot was, unsurprisingly, a monkey, the creature demonstrated not only a strong undercurrent of racism, but also sexism. Many of the ads showed monkeys doing dishes, cleaning the household. They were adorned with the slogan 'my own work'. For 'proper' middleclass women of the time, work was done in the home, unseen. To work outside the home, to work visibly, was seen as unseemly. This raised the problem of how to represent the soap's clientele: women who would use it to clean their home. Advertisers needed to represent domesticity without representing a woman at work in the private sector of the home. The monkey then became the stand-in for woman, simultaneously marking the woman as primitive, other, and animal. Anne McClintock, 'Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising', in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*, ed. Jennifer Scanlon (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 129-152.

having died in great agony'.⁵⁸ The Feejee Mermaid was a hugely popular attraction, although audiences flocking to see the beautiful mermaid promised in the woodcut ads Barnum displayed (Figure 2.23, 2.24) were confused and often disappointed by the horrific creature they were presented with. A reporter from the *Charleston Courier* who had seen the mermaid wrote that 'Of one allusion...the sight of the wonder has forever robbed us – we shall never again discourse, even in poesy, of mermaid beauty, nor woo a mermaid even in our dreams – for the Feejee lady is the very incarnation of ugliness'.⁵⁹

The mermaid in *Pennsylvania Station*, through its ugliness, gives one pause – time to reflect on the peculiarity of the mermaid's allure. Well-known surrealist René Magritte also played on this imagery in his painting *Invention Collective* (1934) (Figure 2.25), which depicts the mermaid's 'horrendous opposite',⁶⁰ the head of a fish placed on a woman's legs. Here he is demystifying the female genitals; they are on full display and so the image is ridiculous, but also disturbing. It demonstrates the surrealists' interest in the mermaid; according to Mary Ann Caws the half-woman, half-fish Melusine was often considered 'the surrealist heroine par excellence, undeniably the feminist model for surrealism at its best'.⁶¹ While Caws sees the mermaid as a feminist model, it also demonstrated the surrealists' preoccupation with the separation and destruction of women's bodies.⁶² Caws continues that the figure of the torn apart

⁵⁸ James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing With Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 81.

⁵⁹ Jan Bondeson, *The Feejee Mermaid and Other Essays in Natural and Unnatural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 51.

⁶⁰ Mary Ann Caws, *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), xv.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶² It also speaks to their strong interest in breaching taboo and fairy tales. Andre Breton mentioned the fairy tale 'Donkeyskin' (in which a young girl is forced to marry her father, but escapes disguised as a donkey) several times in the First Surrealist Manifesto. Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 327.

surrealist woman is ‘...so stressed and dismembered, punctured and severed: Is it any wonder they have (we have) gone to pieces?’⁶³ Similarly, Helene Cixous argues that, ‘...woman is an object for most of the surrealists. They were really a group of pederasts....’ and, ‘I’ve never seen anything as atrocious as *Nadja*. It is so obvious that woman doesn’t exist, that she’s only a pretext, a body upon which to graft some little dream’.⁶⁴

This surrealist image of a woman who is divided, cut apart, or simply framed to show only her sexual organs is repeated in such works as Magritte’s *Representation* (1937) (Figure 2.26) and *Le Viol* (1934) (Figure 2.27), and André Breton’s cover of *Qu’est-ce que le surréalisme* (1934) (Figure 2.28). These works are almost directly copied by Trockel in her work *Untitled* (1984) (Figure 2.29), in which she turns the naked torso of a woman into a pattern (one that would fit in well amongst the patterns of her knit works). Just as *Pennsylvania Station* could be at home seamlessly slipped into a minimalist exhibition without raising any questions, her works *Untitled* (2005) (Figure 2.30) and *Untitled (Wool Film)* (1992) (Figure 2.31) could easily be imagined into the pages of *La Révolution surréaliste*.⁶⁵ And again, like *Pennsylvania Station*, she puts her own sardonic twist onto the works. That most of the Surrealists had a problematic relationship with women, at best romanticizing them to stereotypical ideals of feminine muses, beautiful and ‘in providential communication with the elemental nature force’,⁶⁶ and at worst flagrantly dominating them in the name of art (as

⁶³ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁴ Helene Cixous, ‘Rethinking Differences’, in *Homosexualities and French Literature, Cultural Contexts: Critical Texts*, George Stambolian and Elaine Marks, ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 85.

⁶⁵ A publication started by Andre Breton, Pierre Naville, and Benjamin Peret that ran from 1924-1929 in Paris.

⁶⁶ From Andre Breton’s ‘Arcane 17, Rene Char, *Manuscrits elumines par des peintres du XXe siècle*’ (Paris Bibliotheque Nationale) cited in Caws, *The Surrealist Look*, 28.

André Breton said, ‘we are the masters of women’⁶⁷) does not escape Trockel’s parodic cut. Her 1993 drawing *Godforsaken Frame* (Figure 2.32) shows an elderly naked woman walking with the aid of braces. Two men hold an ornate frame over her torso, capturing her breasts and genitals, effectively cutting out her haggard face and walking aids.

Trockel shines a light on the most manly of art movements in order to break them open and reveal their more ridiculous parts (literally and figuratively, as can be seen in her drawing *L’Amitié franco-allémande (the Franco-German Friendship)* (1993) (Figure 2.33) in which a young woman holds a flashlight up to a small sculpture in a museum. In her other hand is a hammer, which seems poised to smash apart any work unlucky enough to have her beam fall on it).⁶⁸ Through her use of the mermaid in *Pennsylvania Station* Trockel points to how the concept of woman and the female body has been dealt with in art. More specifically, it points to the fact that woman is constructed only in relation to the masculine and that the idea of a totalized female body is a myth.

Trockel’s work is undoubtedly concerned with the politics of women’s bodies and their propensity for destruction (the destruction caused to their bodies and, as will be seen in the next chapter, the destruction their bodies can perform). Her work demonstrates how modernity (and art) turns women into partial objects.⁶⁹ She shows women who have come apart (literally) including *aus* (1997) (Figure 2.34), *Untitled*

⁶⁷ From Breton’s *Le Premier Manifeste du Surrealisme, 1924* as cited in Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 57.

⁶⁸ This work demonstrates Trockel’s interest in art and art history, as well as a humorously reflecting on Isabelle Graw’s remark that her more recent work is too concerned with making ‘commentaries on art history’. Cited in Gregory Williams, *Permission to Laugh: Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 166.

⁶⁹ The psychoanalytic overtones of this word are not lost on me; both Wittig and Trockel tend to use the language of psychoanalysis to mock and subvert it.

(1995) (Figure 2.35), and *Ohne Titel (Frau ohne Unterleib) (Untitled (Woman Without a Lower Half))* (1998) (Figure 2.36). *Woman Without a Lower Half* is an especially good example of Trockel's take on the surrealist/modern tearing apart of women's bodies. The sculpture consists of a wooden platform on which a beeswax model of a woman's lower half (prostrate legs and buttocks) lays. Sitting above the woman's feet is a negative reproduction of old master Georges de la Tour's painting *The Cheat with the Ace of Diamonds* (1635) (Figure 2.37). On the floor, directly underneath where the woman's upper half should be, lies a dark slab of metal, similar to the piece underneath *Pennsylvania Station*. Beyond the obvious allusion that the body of a woman is a 'cheat', Trockel explains that this work is a play upon the well-known magician's trick of sawing a woman in half.⁷⁰ She says this trick 'Owes its success to the social installation of woman as a mystery on the one hand, and as an object of desire on the other'.⁷¹ The power relationship of magician/lovely assistant echoes those of the Victorian male/fairy bride and Surrealist artist/lovely muse. Woman is dominated through the excuse of praise, an even more dangerous form of domination. As Monique Wittig writes in *Les Guérillères*:

The women say, the men have kept you at a distance, they have supported you, they have put you on a pedestal, constructed with an essential difference. They say, men in their way have adored you like goddesses or else burned you at their stakes or else relegated you to their service in their back-yards. They say, so doing they have always in their speech dragged you in the dirt. They say, in

⁷⁰ Magician's tricks and fake mermaids are handily combined in Rafael Courtoisie's short story 'The Mermaid Builder':

The ex-magician would go to the market on the noisiest days. Near the harbor, on days when fishing boats were being unloaded, he would get closer to the ice warehouses and chose a medium-sized swordfish, which, in most cases, was still moving its tail. He would cut it with a carpenter's saw and then put together the four halves: two from the woman and two from the fish. The priciest mermaids were those who showed their breasts to the passersby, the others were purchased by the owners of sea circuses, to keep the bottom of the aquariums clean.

⁷¹ David Ross and Jurgen Harten, *Binationale: German Art of the Late 80s* (Cologne: Dumont, 1988), 282.

speaking they have possessed violated taken subdued humiliated you to their hearts' content.⁷²

Woman Without a Lower Half also wittily references mermaids because its title acts as a re-labelling of a mermaid: a woman without a lower half. The mermaid has no human lower half, her lower body is fish, not woman. She could replace the titular character in this sculpture. The work points out that the mermaid, in addition to being an odd fetish figure, is also the embodiment of disembodiment. To tear up the body in order to become a different entity, to inhabit a different subject position, can be seen quite literally in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale character *The Little Mermaid*. The little mermaid longs for human legs in order to be a whole woman, fully human. She tears her body apart not once, but twice in order to do so. She gives up her voice by having her tongue cut out so that her mermaid tail is split into two and transformed into legs. The mermaid's pain does not end there. Even when she reaches her goal of becoming human she remains in agony. As the sea witch warned her,

Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every step you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow.⁷³

The warning turns out to be true, and at every step the little mermaid bleeds and feels the pain of countless knives running through her legs. Trockel's *Woman Without a Lower Half* could be either a monument to, or warning against, these pains and transformations.

The theme of women's destruction and disappearance in *Woman Without a Lower Half*'s is ultimately realized in its very title. The title states that the piece is a woman without a lower half, while the sculpture shows only the lower half of a woman.

⁷² Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, 100-102.

⁷³ Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 22.

Thus, there is no woman within this work, just as there is no woman within *Pennsylvania Station* (despite having the mermaid's markers of the feminine, the creature is wholly animal, half monkey, half fish). All the indicators of woman produce no woman, just as Trockel's work evades the pinning down of an identity through its schizophrenic nature. The woman is cut apart, but it isn't her body that is cut, she has already ceased to exist. Her legs have been cut off and her tongue is gone. She has been dispossessed of her form and pared down to nothingness.

Woman Without a Body: Deleuzian Anorexia

To return to Surrealism (this time a female surrealist) the words of Claude Cahun⁷⁴ represent the specific form of bodily destruction shown in Trockel and Wittig's work, a sort of 'ultimate anorexia' in a striking manner:

There is too much of everything. I keep silent. I hold my breath. I curl up in a ball, I give up my boundaries, I retreat towards an imaginary centre ... I have my head shaved, my teeth pulled and my breasts cut off – everything that bothers my gaze or slows it down – the stomach, the ovaries, the conscious and cysted brain. When I have nothing more than a heartbeat to note, to perfection, I will have won.⁷⁵

This goal of perfection through the destruction of the body, the same destruction shown in Trockel's *Woman Without a Lower Half*, is the desire for all the parts of one's body to be cut away and neutralized into nothingness. It is a Deleuzian anorexia, an anorexia that simultaneously embraces the body in all its forms while trying to escape the whole of it, the limitations of it, the divided parts of it. An anorexia with 'voids and fullnesses'⁷⁶ where the point is to 'float in one's own body'⁷⁷ (float in, not away from it like a Victorian angel). Deleuze initially discusses anorexia in order to argue against

⁷⁴ Claude Cahun (1894-1954) was a French artist who worked primarily with photography. (And surely Trockel would be drawn to her doubled initials.)

⁷⁵ From Claude Cahun's *Aveux non avenus*, as cited in Caws, *The Surrealist Look*, 35.

⁷⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 110.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

psychoanalytic readings of the disorder that claim it is caused by hysteria. He states that it is not a matter of partial objects or lack, but is instead a form of resistance in which a person experiments with forming their own body on the line of flight to becoming woman. This experimentation (which can be seen as the invention of the body without organs) is about refusing preconceived subject positions centred on the body.⁷⁸ It is useful here because it states that anorexia is not at all about escaping the body, but about becoming a body that cannot be immediately labelled. Deleuze writes of his anorexic subject, 'It is not a matter of a refusal of the body, it is a matter of a refusal of the organism, a refusal of what the organism makes the body undergo.... the anorexic void has nothing to do with lack, it is on the contrary a way of escaping the organic constraining of lack'.⁷⁹ The body then is not the enemy, not the problem. That the body can be used as a tool of identification, of differencing is the problem. The parts of the body that can label one as female are the parts to be torn away.

This Deleuzian anorexia can be seen within Monique Wittig's novel *The Lesbian Body*. The book, which was so anatomically detailed that it necessitated a practising anatomist and surgeon to translate it, is filled, page after page with lists of body parts that make up the 'Lesbian Body':

THE LESBIAN BODY THE JUICE THE / SPITTLE THE SALIVA THE
 SNOT/ THE SWEAT THE TEARS THE WAX / THE URINE THE FAECES
 THE / EXCREMENTS THE BLOOD THE / LYMPH THE JELLY THE
 WATER / THE CHYLE THE CHYME THE / HUMOURS THE SECRETIONS
 THE / PUS THE DISCHARGES THE SUP / PURATIONS THE BILE THE
 JUICE / THE ACIDS THE FLUIDS THE / FLUXES THE FOAM THE
 SULPHUR / THE UREA THE MILK THE / ALBUMEN THE OXYGEN THE
 / FLATULENCE THE POUCHES THE / PERITONEUM, THE OMENTUM, /
 THE PLEURA THE VAGINA / THE VEINS THE ARTERIES THE VESSEL /
 THE NERVES⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See 'Dead Psychoanalysis Analyse', Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*.

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 110.

⁸⁰ Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, 28.

These parts are in a constant state of flux, decay, and torture. They are taken apart and put back together with ease. The narrator of the book writes, 'I discover that your skin can be lifted layer by layer, I pull, it lifts off, it coils above your knees, I pull starting at the labia, it slides the length of the belly, fine to extreme transparency, I pull starting at the loins, the skin uncovers the round muscles and trapezii of the back, ...'⁸¹ In this world, where organs are more often than not rotting or being ripped out, it is obvious that the parts are not desirable, are something that hinder those who own them. They are something to rise above or be whole in spite of.

Interestingly enough, *The Lesbian Body* is often read as a championing homage to the female body – a celebratory ode to its power, totality, and strength instead of an admonition of bodily dependence or capture.⁸² This is hard to believe when the book leaves its readers' noses full with smells of bile and rot. Teresa de Lauretis argues that it is indeed not a celebration of the female body, calling it the 'garbage dump of femininity...in this book, this journey into the body of Western culture, this season in hell. And what takes place here? – the dismemberment and slow decomposition of the *female* body limb by limb, organ by organ, secretion by secretion. No one will be able to stand the sight of it...' ⁸³ *The Lesbian Body* is not a text concerned with denying or escaping the body as much as it concerned with the obliteration of a *female* body.

The Lesbian Body doesn't just cut up bodies through actions; it also tears apart subjects through language. Throughout the novel, the narrator never refers to themselves as 'I' (*Je*). Instead Wittig writes 'j/e'. In this way, the subject is always split and there

⁸¹ Ibid., 17.

⁸² 'She loves women's bodies. That's her primary concern'. Christiane Rochefort, 'The Privilege of Consciousness', in *Homosexualities and French Literature*, 110. See also Helena Michie, *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 128 -129 and Carol P. Christ's keynote address 'Why Women Need the Goddess', University of California Santa Cruz, 1978 (<http://www.goddessariadne.org/whywomenneedthegoddess.htm>).

⁸³ de Lauretis, *Figures of Resistance: Essays in Feminism*, 61-62.

is no I. This use of the virgule is a way for Wittig to avoid gender binaries. She writes, ‘as soon as there is a locator in discourse as soon as there is an “I”, gender manifests itself’.⁸⁴ It is also a way of carving out a space where gender binaries do not exist: ‘j/e is the symbol of the lived, rending experience which is m/y writing, of this cutting in two which throughout literature is the exercise of a language which does not constitute m/e as subject’.⁸⁵ The virgule here creates a virgulian subject position, neither man nor woman, neither divided nor whole.

Neither Trockel nor Wittig are trying to escape the body per se, instead they are trying to create a space in which their bodies do not inherently mark them as different, as other, as the losing half of a binary gender system. (As Wittig states, ‘Woman, female, are terms that indicate semantically that half the human population has been dismissed from humanity’.)⁸⁶ *The Lesbian Body*, *Pennsylvania Station*, and *Woman Without a Lower Half* are texts arguing against the celebration of the female body, because the female body is not a real thing.⁸⁷ That the concept of woman is often considered ‘less than’ or defined by their male counterparts is not a new one. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in *The Second Sex*, ‘She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – She is the Other’.⁸⁸ Luce Irigaray tells us ‘the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by

⁸⁴ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 79.

⁸⁵ Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, 10-11.

⁸⁶ Wittig, ‘Paradigm’, 120.

⁸⁷ Wittig’s dislike of celebrating otherness extends beyond the body and into writing: ‘That there is no “feminine writing” must be said at the outset, and one makes a mistake in using and giving currency to this expression. What is this “feminine” in “feminine writing”? It stands for Woman, thus merging a practice with a myth, the myth of Woman. “Woman” cannot be associated with writing because “Woman” is an imaginary formation and not a concrete reality...’ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 59.

⁸⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989), 16.

male subjects, which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one'.⁸⁹

Trockel and Wittig are pointing out this fact in their work, and then attempting to create a space (a virgillian space) in which women can do without being women.

In the attempt to create this space in their work they are not running away from the body, nor are they celebrating it. Wittig and Trockel are protesting the female body, just as Deleuzian anorexia is a protest, in order 'to escape from the norms of consumption in order not to be an object of consumption oneself. It is a feminine protest, from a woman who wants to have a functioning of the body and not simply organic and social functions which make her dependent'.⁹⁰ And so Wittig and Trockel cut away at the all of the parts of the body, desperately advocating a whole.⁹¹ To be whole is to be a person and not a body, to be a lesbian or a mermaid, and not a woman. In *Les Guérillères* Wittig writes of this theoretical space in which women are not othered because of their female bodies. She writes,

The women say that they perceive their bodies in their entirety. They say that they do not favour any of its parts on the grounds that it was formerly a forbidden object. They say they do not want to become prisoners of their own ideology. They say that they did not garner and develop the symbols that were necessary to them at an earlier period to demonstrate their strength. For example they do not compare the vulvas to the sun moon stars. They do not say that the vulvas are like black suns in the shining night.⁹²

⁸⁹ Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 86.

⁹⁰ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 109-111.

⁹¹ Which is also what Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

An approach based on part-objects is even worse; it is the approach of a demented experimenter who flays, slices, and anatomizes everything in sight, and then proceeds to sew things randomly back together again. You can make any list of part objects you want: hand, breast, mouth, eyes... It's still Frankenstein. What we need to consider is not fundamentally organs without bodies, or the fragmented body; it is the body without organs, animated by various intensive movements that determine the nature and emplacement of the organs in question and make that body an organism or even a system of strata of which the organism is only a part. *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 171 – 172.

⁹² Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, 57-58.

The women (lesbians) above have no need to celebrate or even consider their genitals. Why would one celebrate their genitals if they were indicators of difference? Or, in Wittig's theoretical world of only women (a utopia because there is no difference, no men to make women other) why would one celebrate a vulva any more than they would their elbow? It would be silly. Once again, instead of celebrating 'woman' she is mocking its signifiers, mocking the very feminists who read her as championing the vulva or any other explicitly corporal, biological marker of otherness.

To resist difference, especially bodily difference and the celebration of that difference, is an important goal of Wittig's concept of feminism. This belief mirrors Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts on difference and sexuality, thoughts that are usually seen as anti-feminist. They too believe that to argue for a privileged feminine position is to play into the dangerous game of gender binaries, a game women will always lose. Rosi Braidotti, in an attempt to mock Deleuze and Guattari's take on feminism, ends up demonstrating just how in line with Wittig they are:

To Deleuze, some feminists display the irritating tendency to refuse to dissolve the subject 'woman' into a series of transformative processes which should instead pertain to a generalized and 'gender-free' becoming. In other words, feminists are conceptually mistaken... in their assertion of specific rights and entitlements for women. They are even more misguided when they argue for a specifically feminine sexuality: emphasis on the feminine is restrictive. Deleuze suggests that they should instead draw on the multi-sexed structure of the subject and reclaim all the sexes of which women have been deprived.⁹³

That Wittig wants to do away with women is easily seen. Just what this means, or why this is, has much to do with the state of feminist theory.⁹⁴ According to De Lauretis, there was a crossroads for feminist theory; one road led 'back to the paradox of woman,

⁹³ Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses, Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 80-81.

⁹⁴ 'If there is reason to believe that Wittig would no longer have accepted the designation lesbian-feminist in the 1980s her latest published novel in English, *Across the Acheron*, more than suggests as much...' de Lauretis. *Figures of Resistance*, 60-61.

the maze of sexual difference, the axial oppositions of gender, race, and class...’ and the other ‘leads to the disappearance of women’ – Wittig chose this path.⁹⁵

Refusing to be a woman does not mean being a man. Instead, Wittig creates the lesbian. The lesbian does not merely replace the phallus (as Rosi Braidotti suggests).⁹⁶ (After all, ‘Matriarchy is no less heterosexual than patriarchy: it is only the sex of the oppressor that changes’.⁹⁷) Instead, the work offers up a third answer, one that is neither masculine nor feminine, one that is a virgule between the two. It creates a sexuality in which there are limitless subject positions, not just two. As Wittig states ‘for us there are, it seems, not one or two sexes but many, as many sexes as there are individuals’.⁹⁸ This statement mirrors Deleuze and Guattari’s beliefs towards sexuality (in an uncannily similar way) when they write, ‘For us ...there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis...we know that many beings pass between a man and a woman...’⁹⁹ For Wittig, a celebrated feminist and radical lesbian activist to feel the same about multiple sexuality as Deleuze and Guattari casts a new light on the two’s feminist leanings (previously seen as masculinist or simply not applicable).¹⁰⁰ Rosi Braidotti states, ‘Deleuze’s multiple sexuality assumes that women conform to a masculine model which claims to get rid of sexual difference. What results is the dissolution of

⁹⁵ de Lauretis, *Figures of Resistance*, 178.

⁹⁶ Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 88.

⁹⁷ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 10.

⁹⁸ Monique Wittig, ‘Paradigm’, in *Homosexualites and French Literature*, 119.

⁹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 242.

¹⁰⁰ Hélène Cixous, when asked if the work of Deleuze and Guattari (specifically, *Anti-Oedipus*) aided in a feminine discourse, stated:

I don’t know if what Deleuze proposes directly concerns the feminine discourse... Every blow dealt to the establishment has a positive countereffect, of course, as far as the women’s movement is concerned, but it doesn’t contribute directly to femininity. Anyway, that’s not at all his objective. And nowadays, only works produced by women can contribute something to reflections on femininity. ‘Rethinking Differences,’ 72-73.

the claim to specificity voiced by women'.¹⁰¹ Of course, this dissolution is exactly what Wittig strives for.

How does Wittig do away with women? She creates a theoretical space through her texts in which only women exist, so that woman does not exist. They do not exist because there is no masculine half to define them. There is no sex, because there is no sexual difference, and there is no sexual difference because there is no sex. She writes, 'The designation "woman" will disappear no doubt just as the designation "man" with the oppression/exploitation of women as a class by men as a class. Humankind must find another name for itself and another system of grammar that will do away with genders, the linguistic indicator of political oppositions'.¹⁰² For her, the figure of non-woman is the lesbian, the 'only concept I [Wittig] know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man)'.¹⁰³ She writes, 'Thus a lesbian *has* to be something else, a not-woman, a not-man, a product of society, not a product of nature, for there is no nature in society'.¹⁰⁴ She uses the virgule as a tool of destruction (to tear apart a subject position) but to also give it power. She has been able (if only theoretically) to stake out an arena where binaries do not exist and nothing can be defined as a whole subject, as either one thing or another. In other words, her work exists in a virgulian space and creates virgulian subjects.

Trockel does away with women by refusing to show them as a totality within her artwork. She also refuses to show her own body or to label her artwork as feminine. She uses well-known figures, such as the mermaid, to call upon a history that subjugates women and uses well-known artistic movements to do the same. By pointing out these moments in which the concept of woman is clearly constructed and her body is a thing

¹⁰¹ Rosi Braidotti, *Pattern of Dissonance* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 20-121.

¹⁰² Wittig, 'Paradigm', 121

¹⁰³ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 20.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

to be created or imagined by men, she is able to show their inherent harm and call out for a space in which women can tell their own stories, or (as is seen through her mermaid's ugliness) be left out of the story altogether. Both Trockel and Wittig use myth, popular culture, and their impressive knowledge of theory to show that woman isn't real and should be destroyed so that she can forge out her own virgolian territory. As will be seen in the next chapter, this attempt often calls for violence, a field in which woman is often excluded from. Or, when she is included, is only allowed to do so in very specific ways, with very specific intentions (ways and intentions which, unsurprisingly, Trockel and Wittig's women defy).

CHAPTER 3

DOMESTIC / VIOLENCE

As the last chapter demonstrated, Trockel's work points out the problematic social construction of 'woman' by men. It also stakes out a space in which women can tell their own stories, or at least have them told through Trockel's virgolian artwork. In this chapter we will see just that – Trockel focusing on forgotten and ignored narratives of powerful (and violent) women. This chapter will read Trockel's *Balacklava* works as an entry point into German history. Trockel is, after all, a German artist, and so examining her work in its German context, presenting a narrative of events within Germany, is useful in better understanding her work, and the history of her country. More specifically, this chapter will explain how her work negotiates the events of the *Deutscher Herbst* (German Autumn) of 1977 and the terrorist group the Red Army Faction. It will compare Trockel's artwork on these subjects with other German artists' takes, and show how Trockel puts a uniquely feminist (and virgolian) spin on these narratives. Finally, this chapter will explore the virgolian aspects of terrorism, and argue that it is terrorism's *lack* of virgolian language that necessitates its violent nature. By moving through this narrative, the (often ignored) politics and historicity of Trockel's work will be more fully analysed, which will, in turn, shed a new light on the women of the Red Army Faction and the history of terrorism and fascism within Germany.

Are sweaters inherently feminine? What if they adorn the wearer's breasts with a Woolmark logo? (If it's one hundred percent wool is it one hundred percent woman?) How about René Descartes famous thoughts about thinking and being? (Cogito ergo sum *mulier*?) Is a balaclava, the well-known garment of anonymity and terror, more

naturally worn by women? (What if you put a jaunty rabbit or a pretty pattern of plus marks on it?) These questions seem preposterous, but all of these things have been made by Trockel out of wool, and her wool is, more often than not, coded as a feminine material used to make feminine art. (Figures 3.1-3.3) Trockel claims that using heavily gendered materials, such as wool, greatly interests her. 'I wanted to know', she states, 'what causes a given kind of work to be regarded by women as embarrassing, both in the past and the present whether this has to do with the way material is handled or whether it really lies in the material itself...'¹ This same question could (and should) be raised about readings of Trockel's work. Is it her subject matter, her material, her style that so often causes her work to be coded as feminine, or does this interpretation rely more on the simple fact that she is female? Does her gender automatically mark whatever she produces, no matter the material or aesthetics, as feminine?

Just as *Pennsylvania Station* can justifiably be seen as a work about the Holocaust, Trockel's wool works can be easily read as art about women and their concerns. This surface-level ease of interpretation presents a danger to Trockel's work – the danger that deeper meanings, meanings requiring second looks and connection-making (virgolian meanings) will be ignored. This could easily explain why her knit canvasses and *Herde* pieces are her most well-known; they are easily labelled, easily 'solved'. Within art history, gender based readings tend to be limited to finding a supposed feminine essence within an artwork. As Griselda Pollock explains, too often works by women 'are misread as some kind of iconographical practice, reading signs in paintings as signs of the gender of the artist'. Consequentially, art criticism often 'fails

¹ Doris von Dratein, 'Rosemarie Trockel, Endlich ahnen, nicht nur wissen', *Artforum International* no. 93, Feb-March (1988), 4.

entirely to grasp the deeper criticality of feminist practices...'² I am not looking for signs of Trockel's inherent feminine touch within her sweaters or knit canvasses touting famous philosophy quotations, because to do so would be preposterous. Not only is there no 'touch' there (they're made by machines, they're not her words), but also her works decode (through combining) objects that are symbolically captured as either masculine or feminine. In Trockel's schizoid connection making, both are equally destabilised. According to Pollock both sides of this destabilisation must be acknowledged:

If this engagement with histories of the subject and theories of its sexing enables us to destabilise the illusory magic of the masculine subject, it also undoes any comparable myth of femininity, the idea that femininity is or has an essence, that it is the opposite of masculinity, that the feminine is in any way less conflicted or desiring. For the feminine subject, by definition, must be just as much a complex, ambivalent, contradictory and precarious subjectivity as the masculine.³

While this is referring to the theoretical history and poststructuralist critique of gender and sexuality, Trockel's work also does this. Trockel herself sees little value in talking specifically about one gender entirely separately from another, stating, 'art about women's art is just as tedious as the art of men about men's art'.⁴

Trockel's work can be read as work created by a woman, but to what end? What is she saying about women and so what? Her critics very rarely make it to this stage of interpretation. Instead, I ask (not wanting to be 'a woman wanting to pose woman questions'⁵) what pathways of connections and meaning can viewers wander down other than 'feminist comments vaguely concerned with yarn and housewifery'? There are, as is always the case with Trockel's art, many roads to follow. In this reading I will

² Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference, Feminism, Femininity and the History of Art* (London: Routledge, 2003), xxvii.

³ Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 28.

⁴ Jutta Koether, 'Interview with Rosemarie Trockel'. *Flash Art* 34 (1987), 42.

⁵ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, xxvi.

focus on the subject of violence within her work, as well as how she depicts a volatile and complicated event in German history (the activities of the Red Army Faction during the late 1970s).

This specific interpretation of Trockel's work stems from the theme of dangerous domesticity (domesticity used as weapon, or where icons of femininity or the domestic are menacing), which can be seen throughout her work. For example, her sculpture *Untitled* (1988) (Figure 3.4) shows an armless female bust (made of wax) atop a wood and glass pedestal. Two unplugged irons menacingly face the woman's chest. The wax woman, modelled after a mannequin Trockel found in the streets of Cologne, wears an antiquated hairstyle that screams idealized yet kitschy 1950s housewife. But this housewife is the victim of her own tools of domesticity; the irons can destroy her by melting her wax breasts, especially since she has no hands to defend herself.

There are many examples of household tools turning against the women they are supposed to serve in Trockel's oeuvre, but the women can also attack. In the video work *I don't kehr* (2009). Trockel turns this potential for violence back around onto the domestic sphere by blowing up a life-size model kitchen. The video shows a small one-room building in a desert-like surrounding, then shows Trockel near a detonator, then cuts to a shot of the kitchen exploding. The wreckage was later exhibited in a museum. In this work, Trockel becomes a domestic terrorist, firebombing kitchens instead of department stores.⁶ Here Trockel plays with not just any violence, but large-scale violence, terroristic violence.

Moving from violence within the home forced upon women, to violence outside of the home enacted by women, Trockel takes up the complicated subject of violent women and, more specifically, female terrorists. Not only does terrorism play a unique

⁶ The Red Army Faction's primary targets for bombings were shopping centres.

role in German history, the language of terrorism consists of extremely virgolian components. The virgule is what makes the language of terrorism unstable and lacking. It comes between key constructs and arguments, showing that there are never truly black and white concepts, that there is never really an either/or that can exist without it.

Hate/Caps

An especially complex example of Trockel's play with dangerous domesticity and terrorism can be seen in her 1986 *Balaklava* (Figure 3.5). *Balaklava* consists of five wool balaclavas, each with a unique pattern, housed in individual cardboard boxes.⁷ Although Trockel has taken care to present each pattern in a slightly abstracted manner (some appearing more as nonfigurative fabric designs than well-known cultural and ideological symbols) they can be identified as a hammer and sickle, the iconic rabbit profile of the Playboy Bunny, a series of plus and minus symbols, a black and white striped op-art design, and a swastika. While each of these patterns touch upon a variety of disparate topics, they are brought together by what they are displayed upon: the balaclava.

Although Trockel herself has said that these balaclava works are 'just one of her wool / clothing works' and are, 'not a central image within my work',⁸ the balaclava is unequivocally associated with violence and, more specifically, terrorism. The very name 'balaclava' springs from violence, as they were first used during the Crimean war. British troops stationed in and around the town of Balaklava used these caps (which were usually knit and sent to them by family members) to protect themselves from the

⁷ As is the case with so much of Trockel's artwork the balaclavas are not just displayed in their boxes. They have been displayed (as a group and separately) in glass vitrines, on living models, and in sculptural works, as well as in drawings and paintings.

⁸ Rosemarie Trockel, personal communication via email with Friederike Schuler (Rosemarie Trockel's personal assistant), November 24, 2010.

bitter cold of their surroundings. Today, the garment is very much linked to various terrorist organizations, examples of which range from the Irish Republican Army to Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatistas in Mexico. (Because of their activities, ‘suddenly, guerrilla war is declared every time a ski mask appears in public in Mexico’.⁹)

The balaclava has an especially violent history within Germany, where they are called *Hasskappen* (literally translated, ‘hate hats’ or ‘hate caps’). The caps gained widespread popularity with protestors involved in the student movements of the 1960s and 70s, and later with more violent groups that arose from those movements, such as the Red Army Faction and the June 2nd group. The garment’s use was limited within Germany in the 1970s through the *Radikalenerlass* (radicals’ decree) and the banning of the balaclava came in stages during the second half of the 1980s, mainly to prevent protestors from acting anonymously. The caps were banned completely in 1985 with the passing of the *Vermummungsverbot* (ban on covering faces). Today, those who choose to appear in public wearing the balaclava risk at best a fine and at worst a prison sentence. In 2009 Oliver Tolle, head of Berlin’s police forces, said that he feels this law is greatly effective, stating, ‘Thanks to the ban on balaclavas, we can identify and arrest people who are preparing acts of violence more easily’.¹⁰ Germany’s ban on the garment has also been used by Greek and French government officials in their defence of plans to ban the garment in their own countries.¹¹

In Trockel’s hands, housed in plain boxes without context, covered in fuzzy bunnies and controversial fascist symbols, the balaclava functions as a bridge between

⁹ Jeff Conant, *A Poetics of Resistance: The Revolutionary Public Relations of the Zapatista Insurgency* (New York: AK Press, 2010), 120.

¹⁰ Fiona Cameron, ‘Government Wants to Outlaw Balaclavas During Protests’, *France 24* (November 4, 2009) <http://www.france24.com>.

¹¹ Ibid.

the domestic and the violent, the virgule of home/terror. One imagines a mother or grandmother lovingly knitting a warm hat for their family members, but those hats will be sent off to loved ones dying and killing in wars. In Trockel's world, the very woman knitting the balaclava may use it herself to move beyond her home and become a terrorist. The *Balaklava* works place the feminine craft of knitting right alongside a new women's work: violence and arming oneself. As is typical of her work, when one looks more closely at the *Balaklava* and Trockel's influences in creating them, it is clear that she is dealing not just with issues of the domestic and its limitations or potential for violence, but makes it possible for them (through certain connection pathways) to be placed within a historical and politicized German background. She delves into the issue of 'violence at home' through her stated interest in the 1970s German student protests and the (depending on one's position) famous or infamous RAF (Red Army Faction, or more popularly known as the Baader-Meinhof gang).¹²

The Red Army Faction

The RAF was a left wing, anti-imperialist group founded in 1969 by Andreas Baader (a juvenile delinquent and amateur philosopher prior to the group's formation), Gudrun Ensslin (a young student and activist), Horst Mahler (a prominent lawyer), and Ulrike Meinhof (a well-known journalist and playwright). Their primary goal was to expose what they thought was the inherent fascism of the West German state by

¹² The RAF is best known for freeing Andreas Baader from prison, fire-bombings, and involvement in the activities surrounding the *Deutscher Herbst* (German Autumn) of 1977. Baader had been arrested after being found with guns in his car, and on May 14th, 1970 he was granted a meeting at the Dahlem Institute for Social Research with Ulrike Meinhof, under the guise that she was writing an article about him. Meinhof had recently decided to join the RAF's cause, and had helped to arrange this meeting as a front for Baader's escape. While she interviewed him, several female RAF members stormed the Institute, carrying guns, and proceeded to shoot a librarian and successfully free Baader. It is from this incident that the name 'Baader-Meinhof Gang' was formed.

provoking the state through acts of terrorism. The group also fought against capitalist ideals and protested the war in Vietnam. Although it stemmed from the peaceful and popular student movements, the group started to participate in more violent activities, which soon became a core part of their belief system. As group founder Ulrike Meinhof made clear, they felt bloodshed was a key part of their movement: 'We delight in the death of every cop who gets killed or has ever been killed, and anyone in prison who has tricked and killed the pigs is our brother, sister, comrade, friend – one of us'.¹³

The RAF's many violent acts included bombing the headquarters of the US Army's Fifth Corps in Frankfurt, a German police headquarters in Augsburg, and US Army headquarters in Heidelberg. The group was also responsible for the murders of federal attorney general Siegfried Buback and chief executive of Dresdner Bank, Jürgen Ponto. The infamous German Autumn (which gains its name from the film *Deutschland im Herbst*¹⁴) consisted mainly of the events following the arrests of Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof,¹⁵ Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe. Other members of the RAF, in an attempt to gain their leaders' freedom, kidnapped and murdered Hanns-Martin Schleyer (president of the National Employer's Association and former SS member) and hijacked a Lufthansa plane (with the help of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). The hijackers landed in Mogadishu, but government officials were able to board the plane and rescue all of its passengers. Only one member of the RAF survived.

¹³ Sarah Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism: Language, Violence, and Identity* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2009), 1. I would like to note that I am highly indebted to Sarah Colvin for her translations of many German newspaper articles concerning the RAF, and for translating much of Meinhof's writings into English for the first time. Because of this translation work, Colvin will be heavily cited throughout this chapter.

¹⁴ 1978, directed and written by Alf Brustellin, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Peter Schubert, Bernhard Sinkel, Hans Peter Cloos, Edgar Reitz, Katja Rupe, and Volker Schlöndorff.

¹⁵ Meinhof committed suicide while in prison, prior to the main events of the German Autumn.

The morning after the failed hijacking Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe were found dead in their Stammheim Prison cells. Baader had been shot in the back of the head with a handgun, Ensslin was found hung from her cell window, and Raspe was also found shot. To this day, controversy surrounds their deaths and many believe that they were victims of extrajudicial killings, not suicide.¹⁶

Trockel could hardly help but be influenced by this group and their actions, as she was living in West Germany and in her early twenties (a student herself) during the German Autumn. She recalls, in an interview with friend and curator Isabelle Graw, taking part in the student protest movement through ‘the influence of her older sister’.¹⁷ The RAF’s presence was felt throughout the country, if not the world. The media attention and scandal the group gained was gigantic, and firmly placed them into Germany’s history forever. As RAF historian Richard Huffman writes:

They were the first modern terrorists. They were the first ones who seemed to see the power of personality, the power of the media, and to use terrorism as an end in itself, not something to achieve some other goal. They were the first terrorist group to effectively use mass communications to become powerful and popular and prominent. They were ahead of their time.¹⁸

The controversial group was both loved and hated by the German people. They have moved in the public imaginary over time from loathed killers doomed to failure, to

¹⁶ RAF member Irmgard Möller was also imprisoned in Stammheim at the time. She was found barely alive the same morning, having been stabbed several times in the chest with a butter knife. She contends that there was no suicide pact between the group members and that they were murdered by the state. Other evidence of the murders includes Baader shooting himself with his non-dominant hand (and in the back of the head, an unusual and difficult place to shoot oneself).

¹⁷ Cited in Gregory Williams, *Permission to Laugh: Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 64.

¹⁸ Cited in Bryan Appleyard, ‘The Baader-Meinhof Gang: First Modern Terrorists?’, *The Sunday Times*, October 19 (2008).

worshipped, highly commoditized fashion-youth icons.¹⁹ The RAF has been immortalized through movies, works of art, novels, posters, even bumper stickers.²⁰

The potential influence the RAF had on Trockel and her artwork could be read into the seemingly disparate patterns on each of her balaclava works. The swastika, representing the Third Reich, speaks to the RAF's concern that Germany was still very much a National Socialist state. They were increasingly mindful of the travesties caused by certain Germans during the Holocaust and World War Two, and were frustrated that those same people were now in charge of the police, the schools, and the government.²¹ They saw their outrage and violent actions as the resistance their parents did not put up against Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. Former RAF member Astrid Proll claimed that the RAF was, 'the knife-edge of the general reaction of the young who were furious at their parents for unquestioningly supporting Hitler'.²² And Gudrun Ensslin (less calmly) stated, 'They'll kill us all. You know what kind of pigs we're up against. This is the Auschwitz generation. You can't argue with people who made Auschwitz. They have weapons and we haven't. We must arm ourselves!'²³ The RAF was also extremely interested in, and based much of their philosophy on Communist beliefs, thus explaining the hammer and sickle flags. The op-art balaclava

¹⁹ They are often cited as the first terrorist group to become trendy within youth culture. The term 'Prada Meinhof' was coined in reference to them and refers to the popularity of terrorist groups within pop culture, or to someone who 'treated political causes as fashion accessories'. Appleyard, 'The Baader-Meinhof Gang'.

²⁰ During the German Autumn young people could buy bumper stickers proclaiming 'Ich gehöre nicht zur Baader-Meinhof Gruppe' (I do not belong to the Baader-Meinhof Group) for both style and practicality (the police tended to target any slightly left-looking young people).

²¹ Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger, for example, had been a member of the Nazi Party, and Hans Globke, a high-ranking public servant, had been the Nazi Chancellery secretary.

²² Kate Connolly, 'Astrid Proll's Journey to Terror Chic', *The Guardian*, Sunday 6 October (2002).

²³ Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of A Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 314.

could be said to play on the RAF's concern with fashion,²⁴ and the last two symbols (the playboy bunny and the plus and minus signs) can be seen as referencing the overly sexualized image that the women of the RAF were given by the media, and the virgolian nature of terrorism (both of which will be discussed at length later on in this chapter).

The RAF may also have appealed to Trockel because of its exceptional female members and leaders. Like Bardot, the women of the RAF were both celebrated and vilified, loved and hated, trapped in some ways by motherhood, and primarily known through their public personas created by the media. Although the few in-depth books written on the RAF go into detail about Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin's lives, Andreas Baader was usually seen as the primary leader, and the women he worked with little more than lovers or admirers led astray by his charm. Trockel has stated that much

²⁴ Another pathway: the pattern on this balaclava is an almost exact replica of Bridget Riley's 1963 painting, *Fall* (Figure 3.6). Riley, a British artist born in 1931, was one of the leading figures of the op-art movement. Her role as figurehead of the op-art movement, and her role as a woman artist quickly led to her, and her work, being linked with stereotypical notions of women's work and commodification. Like Trockel, Riley attempted to distance herself from out-dated notions of women's art and production and was quick to challenge the idea that she should be considered a 'woman artist'. She even wrote, in 1973, a short essay entitled 'The Hermaphrodite' in which she argued against the notion that feminism had anything to do with women's art making. She wrote, 'artists who happen to be women need this particular form of hysteria like they need a hole in the head'. 'The Hermaphrodite', In *The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley Collected Writings 1965-1999*, ed. Robert Kudielka (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 39. Also similar to Trockel, Riley did not personally produce the majority of the artwork she displayed. Since the early sixties Riley employed assistants to carry out the actual art making. Nevertheless, critics such as Nigel Gosling continually commented on her femininity and how it was displayed throughout her work, comparing that work to household chores and imbuing her with womanly traits such as patience. He wrote, 'If I had to track down a feminine footprint here, I would point to a certain unforced patience, that quality which can add the thousandth stitch to the nine-hundred-and-ninety-ninth without a tremor...' Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960's* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 117. Trockel purports to be strongly interested in Riley's work and even '...starts her day by staring deeply into a Bridget Riley dot painting that she owns...' Randy Kennedy, 'An Artist's Solo Show Contains Multitudes', *New York Times*, October 23 (2012).

of her work is concerned with forgotten or misrepresented histories of women, she writes:

For me and in my position as a woman it is more difficult, as women have historically always been left out. And that's why I'm interested not only in the history of the victor, but also in that of the weaker party. The masks [her balaclavas], for example, consist not only of what they say or intend to say, but also of what they exclude. They have absence as their subject.²⁵

With this in mind, what history is Trockel trying to tell here? The story of the women of the RAF is a fitting tale, and so her balaclavas can effectively serve to lead viewers down a pathway of discovery about them and why they were such controversial women.

Gudrun

From within the black and white photograph, two young girls stare out past the camera, one with a levelled glare and clenched fist, the other with a goofy half-grin. (Their adolescent discomfort is palpable.) Leaning against a thin railing, their arms around each other, each girl is dressed in slacks and a sweater. This photo looks like any generic vacation photo; they pose begrudgingly in front of a landmark-worthy (though unidentifiable) picturesque precipice, their travel bags placed near their feet. They could be anyone, they could be anywhere, it could be anytime. This is the Gudrun photo, part of Rosemarie Trockel's exhibition *Gudrun Zeichnungen (Drawings)*. The photo's full title is *Ohne Titel (Gudrun in 4-Pullover und Freundin) (Untitled, Gudrun in 4-Pullover and Friend)* (Figure 3.7). The exhibition, which consists of the black and white photograph and several drawings, was only shown at the Schwerte Kunstverin Gallery, and is listed (just as BB/BB was) as a distinct category Trockel created in her

²⁵ Sidra Stich, ed., *Rosemarie Trockel* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), 115.

self-curated retrospective *Bodies of Work - 1986-1998*. The six images are categorized as *Gudrun*, 1966-1998.²⁶

Within the Gudrun series, alongside the inscrutable photo, Trockel has created five drawings. Each drawing is united by a distinct focal point: Gudrun's sweater. In the photo Gudrun (since the photo's title is *Gudrun in 4-Pullover*, we can assume the girl on the right is Gudrun) wears a boldly patterned sweater under her jacket. Trockel has made two charcoal drawings (each untitled, 1997) (Figure 3.8, 3.9) of the girl from the photo, but has cropped the image to show her from the shoulders-up. The pattern of the sweater is clearly visible. In two other works from the series, the sweater is worn in turn by both Barbara Streisand (Figure 3.10) and two cartoon rabbits (Figure 3.11). The next work, *Ohne Titel (Pullovermuster 4 (for)) (Untitled (Pullover Pattern 4 (for)))* (1996) (Figure 3.12) is an acrylic on paper painting which depicts only the enlarged pattern of the sweater. Although the original photograph is black and white, in this breakdown of the sweater Trockel has painted it a dullish green.

Trockel adds colour to the black and white photograph, speaking to the interplay between colour and memory. In his book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes writes, '...colour is a coating applied *later* onto the original truth of the black-and-white photograph. For me, colour is an artifice, a cosmetic (like the kind used to paint corpses)'.²⁷ Just as one later remembers the details of a black and white movie in colour, this photograph has been remembered, re-drawn from Trockel's mind in a distinctly historical green. This green, as anyone familiar with Germany in the 1970s and 1980s can attest, is a truly German green, which was prevalent in the fashion, advertising, and decoration of Germany in the 1970s. The same green as the car Hans-Martin Schleyer

²⁶ The wide discrepancy in the work's dates is because the photo was most likely taken in 1966 and the rest of the drawings were made between 1996 and 1998.

²⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 81.

(the German official kidnapped and killed by the RAF) was found dead in, the same green of the cart which filled in Ensslin's grave (Figure 3.13).

Trockel's fixation on the sweater's pattern, seen through her repetitive sketches, certainly indicates that for her the sweater has a pricking poignancy. Whether or not this interest reveals any personal details concerning the photo, or is simply the result of a repetitive compulsion, it is no surprise that she is drawn to a woven sweater. Knitting and weaving are a fundamental part of Trockel's artwork, which is full of knit garments and her famous canvasses. Trockel also self identifies with the process of knitting, as demonstrated in her self-portrait *Ohne Titel (Selbst) (Untitled (Self))* (1995) (Figure 3.14), a part of her family portraits series. In the series, which includes highly abstracted portraits of her father (all beard and no face), her mother (a terrifying phallic-nosed medusa), and her sisters (smudgy paintings and finger print marks) the artist is shown as a charcoal on paper work, a vaguely head-shaped object made of loosely woven threads.

Throughout her work, Trockel combines the personal with the public, private memories with affecting historical details. When looking at the Gudrun photograph, one is tempted to ponder Trockel's own personal interest in this photo. Is it of family or friends? Of herself? Or is it an unidentifiable stock photo with no known origins or possibility of recognition? The anonymity of this photograph threatens to reduce it to a meaningless decorative image. One tries to fill in the historical, factual blanks, and falls short. Trockel does not, however, leave the image entirely without context. She has not titled it *Two Girls* or *Mountain View*. Even if the photo is to remain inert to the average passer-by, the average viewer, she has appointed it a title to prick one's ears (if not

one's eyes and soul): *Gudrun*. Gudrun is a common girls' name within Germany,²⁸ but the Gudrun that immediately comes to mind, the Gudrun that pricks and causes pause, is Gudrun Ensslin. Could this be a childhood photograph of the infamous RAF terrorist?

Ensslin was one of the original leaders of the RAF, the most prominent female member after Ulrike Meinhof, although it has been argued that she, not Meinhof, was the group's true intellectual leader.²⁹ Ensslin's relationship with Andreas Baader (she was his girlfriend) also led to her being seen merely as 'Baader's lover'³⁰ or 'the ice-cold seductress'.³¹ Her activity within the group included the fire bombing of department stores on April 2, 1968 (which led to Baader's arrest), the freeing of Baader after his arrest, direct involvement in five other bomb attacks, and four deaths. In 1977 she, along with Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe (another RAF member), was sentenced to life in prison for forming a criminal association, committing four murders, and the attempt of 27 more. She was among the three people found dead in Stammheim prison.

For the most part, the German public found Ensslin's involvement with the RAF difficult to comprehend. News reports and other writings on Ensslin during her time in the group always described her as a 'smart and pretty girl' from a good family. She was born 15 August, 1940 in Batholomä, Germany into a large religious family (her father was a Protestant minister). Her education included attending high school in the

²⁸ Other Gudruns worth noting: Gudrun Himmler, Gudrun Inboden (who curated numerous Trockel exhibitions and has written many essays about her work), and actresses Gudrun Brost and Gudrun Landgrebe.

²⁹ Although Ensslin was a member of the group before Meinhof joined, Meinhof's public persona as a well-known journalist garnered her large amounts of attention from the German public. A Google search for each women demonstrates the discrepancy between their 'famousness' – Ulrike Meinhof returns 569,000 hits while Gudrun Ensslin only results in 208,000.

³⁰ Jillian Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (New York: Harper Collins, 1979), 58.

³¹ Ulrike Meinhof, *Everybody Talks about the Weather... We Don't: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*, Karen Bauer, ed., trans. Luise von Flotow (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 71.

United States for a year, and then receiving an elementary school teaching diploma from the Frei Universität in Berlin. She married her husband, Bernward Vesper, but in 1967 met Andreas Baader and divorced her husband soon after. Her son, Felix, lived with Vesper until his suicide in 1971, then lived with foster parents.

The radical choice to leave her husband and child (which Meinhof also made) for an underground life of terrorist activities will be discussed in more depth later, but is echoed within the *Gudrun* exhibition, which includes a small drawing of Barbara Streisand seated next to (what the exhibition catalogue incorrectly labels as) Che Guevara.³² (Figure 3.10) While the inclusion of Che Guevara takes this exhibition into the realm of radical politics and further cements the idea that the titular Gudrun does indeed refer to Ensslin (the RAF's core beliefs were greatly influenced by Guevara's writings), the image's origins speak almost directly to the issues of mother/terrorist. The drawing of Streisand and not-Guevara comes from a film still of the movie *Up the Sandbox* (1972). In the movie Streisand plays a mother of two who has discovered that she is pregnant once again. Instead of dreaming of domesticity, she fantasizes about becoming a radical terrorist, joining guerrilla armies and bombing major landmarks.

Trockel's use of the photograph to (perhaps) represent a member of the RAF recalls Gerhard Richter's definitive RAF artwork, the painting series *18 October 1977* (1988). Both artists begin with the photograph and then break that photograph down in their own repetitive manner to obliquely represent a slippery, problematic past. Each work is a meditation on death, photography, and history. Richter's painting series, (named after the date the three Stammheim prisoners were found dead) consists of fifteen paintings depicting members of the RAF, their cells at Stammheim, Gudrun Ensslin and Ulrike Meinhof while they are still alive (Ensslin in prison garb preparing

³² It is in fact an actor portraying Fidel Castro.

for a line up, Meinhof as a young girl), images of their funerals, and photos of their deaths (Figure 3.15-3.17). Richter gathered these images from television, newspapers, and police photos and then repainted them on a larger scale in black and white. He then ‘unpaints’³³ the image by running brushes and squeegees against the painting while it is still wet, blurring it to slight abstraction. The image that remains is barely identifiable, and hauntingly beautiful.

The deaths of Ensslin, Baader, and Raspe were surrounded by a great deal of controversy. Because of the doubt hovering over the cause of death, the prison released several post-mortem photographs of the prisoners as they were ‘found’, in order to assuage any guilt the public may place on them and to show the stark reality of the members’ deaths. The photos released to the public are clear and precise yet seem unreal. Ensslin’s limply hanging body looks more like a mannequin than a woman, and the pool of blood surrounding Baader’s head resembles a child’s smeared finger paint. The original images read as bad film stills from a low-budget fake snuff flick, a poorly restaged production of a horrific event. Despite this fake-ness, the initial images are incredibly difficult to look at, knowing what they represent.³⁴ Richter brings them back to viewable reality through streaked and dreamy disbelief. By blurring the photos, Richter makes them seem equally more and less real, and wholly more viewable. RAF member Astrid Proll was both astounded and thankful for how Richter’s work allowed her to once again see the photos, saying, ‘I was unable to look for many years. Thanks to the painter, Gerhard Richter, whose *Cycle 18th October 1977* freed these pictures

³³ Robert Storr, ‘October 18, 1977’, *MoMa*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January (2001), 33.

³⁴ While these images are easy to find online, I felt uncomfortable including them in this thesis due to their resemblance to snuff imagery, and because of the difficulty of viewing I mention above. Following the argument above, I found myself having no problem including Richter’s images, which are direct copies of the originals.

from their mass media context, I was finally able to approach them'.³⁵ They reveal the discordance between real life and media.

This combination of belief and disbelief, real world and imagined world plays an important role in Trockel's *Gudrun* series as well. Ultimately, one cannot know if Trockel's *Gudrun* photo is of Gudrun Ensslin. And even if one could, it would hardly matter. Trockel uses and refuses historical facts and events, never leaving her viewer on stable ground. The girl in the photo doesn't actually look much like Gudrun Ensslin (even though photos of her as a youth are difficult to find) but Trockel chooses the loaded name as the work's title. When one considers the commonness of that name, and doubt starts to creep in once again, Trockel averts their stare to the Streisand film still, whose relation to terrorism and motherhood points almost directly back to Ensslin. Trockel's work feeds off a 'bad film'³⁶ aesthetic, an incredulity towards the world in which we live. She, like Deleuze and his concept of bad film aesthetics and the time-image, constructs 'a chronology into which we would slip as if into a perpetual present, but also a complex, stratified time in which we move through different levels simultaneously, present, pasts, futures...'³⁷ She unravels the past and re-knits it into a new historical sweater of her own design. (A Gudrun-green pullover.)

Richter shows his viewers the living images of the RAF members and those of their death simultaneously (it has been said that these photo-paintings 'proposes itself as their afterlife' and that 'the trauma and erasure of their afterlives keeps them

³⁵ Astrid Proll, *Baader-Meinhof, Pictures on the Run 67-77* (London: Scalo Publishers, 1998), 7.

³⁶ Deleuze writes of this, 'The modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world. We do not believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as if they only half concerned us. It is not we who make cinemas, it is the world which looks to like a bad film'. *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Roberta Galeta (London: Continuum Press, 2005), 178.

³⁷ Jacques Aumont, *The Image*, trans. Claire Pajackowska, (London: British Film Institute, 1997), 129-130.

posthumously, spectacularly alive in their deadness'³⁸). His paintings close down the possibilities for a re-imagined future and for the past, they are representations of what has already happened and any emergence of memory is a haze. They show people who have become terrorists and are now finished becoming – are dead. Trockel, however, limits her representation to an adolescent snapshot. In the Gudrun photo the viewer is seeing the young girl, the almost-woman but also what that child will become: not a young blonde girl with a silly smile, but a dead terrorist hanging from a record cable. Gregg Horowitz claims that using photos of the RAF members as youths sends the message that 'even our children are not to be trusted' and 'history is a slaughter-house'.³⁹ The image of Gudrun/(not?) Ensslin in the photograph is the future anterior, is a virgule. In the photo Gudrun is an adolescent (a transitive stage already) who is becoming, inevitably, a terrorist, but through the paused history of the photo she will always be that adolescent. But that adolescent will forever be moving towards becoming a woman with a doomed future, will always be child/terrorist. Trockel's Gudrun photo shows us a virgolian block of becoming in which events are already stuck and set in motion, but will never happen.

Both Richter and Trockel's work concerning the RAF are important in understanding history and its effects. Richter's is a politics of affect; he rescues representation from ideology by working through repetition. He remakes an image by copying it and undoing it, and in the undoing eliminates the terror in the terror/home virgule, making the home (German history) whole again, a non-virgolian space in which memories can be looked at and swallowed. Trockel, however, revels in the split and embraces both home and terror equally. She is working through difference and

³⁸ Gregg M. Horowitz, *Sustaining Loss: Art and Mournful Life* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 134, 141.

³⁹ Ibid., 159.

repetition via small memories, small details and makes the history endlessly different. He is reproducing an event, but she is reproducing a virgolian becoming.

Violent/Woman

To return to Gudrun Ensslin and her virgolian position between the home and terrorism, dangerous and domestic, feminine (sexualized body) and feared terrorist, we turn to another balaclava pattern. This balaclava is white with crisp red rabbits in a line against its background. They are instantly recognizable as the *Playboy* Bunny logo. This pattern obviously brings to mind to issues of female sexuality and objectification, but when placed on the balaclava, it also can be read as speaking to women's issues of the 1970s within German terrorist groups due to its associations with sex, the oppression and objectification of women, journalism, and even its role in the sexual revolution. When looked at alongside Trockel's *Gudrun* series, it also addresses ideologies concerning motherhood and the virgule between woman/terrorist.

Playboy's formula of mixing scholarly writings along with images of nude women was copied by the 1970s German magazine *konkret*, *Playboy's* radical cousin. *konkret* had direct connections to the RAF, as it was founded by Ulrike Meinhof's husband and she was its editor in chief for many years. The magazine combined left-wing political writing with photo spreads of nude women, serialized erotic novels, and articles on varying topics of sex in the Federal Republic. This combination, as was also the case with *Playboy*, proved successful; *konkret* was the bestselling left-wing publication in Germany after *der Spiegel*.⁴⁰ Professor Karin Bauer commented, 'Like no other magazine at the time, *konkret's* mix of politics and sex had its pulse on the anti-bourgeois zeitgeist and the emerging sexual revolution'.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 118.

⁴¹ Meinhof, *Everybody Talks About the Weather*, 36.

This 'emerging sexual revolution' was a key component of the West German women's rights movement in the 1970s. Protest movements within Germany in the 1970s contained an unprecedented number of women, which in turn translated to more women in violent groups. The anonymous author of the famous essay 'Violent Women' wrote that, 'Never before have bombings, liquidations, bank robberies, etc caused so much irritation, in which it is clear that women have given up their silence'.⁴² Statistical facts back this statement up; in 1981 the rate of female criminal convictions was 15%. Currently, the number for western Europe and the US hovers at around 4%, but according to government reports, women made up 60% of those active in West German terrorism.⁴³

What was it about women at this time, in this place, that made them so prone to terrorist activities? Julia Kristeva asks a version of this question in her essay 'Women's Time':

Are women more apt than other social categories, notably the exploited classes, to invest in this implacable machine of terrorism? No categorical response, either positive or negative, can currently be given to this question. It must be pointed out, however, that since the dawn of feminism, and certainly before, the political activity of exceptional women, and thus in a certain sense of liberated women, has taken the form of murder, conspiracy, and crime.⁴⁴

Alongside Kristeva's questioning and the RAF's actions, Monique Wittig was writing her most well-known novel and advocating for violent action.

Like Trockel, Monique Wittig was a student during the 1970s and was heavily involved in French student protests. She was one of the founders of the Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF) (The Women's Liberation movement) as well as being involved with the Revolutionary Feminists, a radical feminist group. Both of these

⁴² Sylvère Lotringer, ed., *The German Issue* (Berlin: Semiotext(e), 2009), 146.

⁴³ Gerrit-Jan Berendse and Ingo Cornils, eds., *Baader-Meinhof Returns: History and Cultural Memory of German Left-Wing Terrorism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Bv Editions, 2008), 86.

⁴⁴ Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 204.

groups fought for women's autonomy from their husbands, for their work to be equally appreciated, and for the availability of contraception and abortion (many of the same things that, as will be discussed later, the RAF stood for). In 1971, the MLF joined forces with the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action, which caused Wittig and like-minded members to fear its majority would become male. Because of this, Wittig founded the Gouines Rouges (Red Dykes), a group concerned with the rights of lesbians and feared their disappearance. The group eventually became a more informal discussion group, which greatly influenced Wittig's later writings, especially *Les Guérillères* in which a group of women wage war against men. The *Guérillères* of the novel, like the women of the RAF, took up arms against their enemy (in this case, men). The book relates, 'They say, let those who call for a new language first learn violence. They say, let those who want to change the world first seize all rifles'.⁴⁵

Although Ulrike Meinhof, before joining the RAF, was very much involved in the mainstream women's rights movement (she especially focused on issues of equal pay and worker's rights⁴⁶), she too eventually rejected it as a bourgeois farce. This reaction was common amongst the women of the RAF. Member Inge Viett, in a 1997 interview, stated that, 'None of us came from the feminist movement'.⁴⁷ Meinhof was slightly more passionate, proclaiming, 'Fuck equal rights for women. We want freedom, we want humanity'.⁴⁸ She, and other members of the group, would refer to the women's movement as *Votzenchauvismus* (cunt chauvinism). The term 'cunt' was used frequently by the RAF, and was generally a conflation of woman, capitalist, and

⁴⁵ Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, trans. David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 85.

⁴⁶ In her 1968 article 'False Consciousness' Meinhof writes, 'The situation has severe consequences. Low wages for women justified by contempt for women's work have led to contempt for women themselves and skewed what might be considered humanly reasonable for men and women'. *Everybody Talks About the Weather*, 197.

⁴⁷ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 188.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

traitor.⁴⁹ Meinhof further explains ‘cunt chauvinism’ in a letter to her RAF comrades in January 1976:

it – cunt chauvinism – creates in the bourgeoisie a situation of competition with men, that is, with their dominant role, by internalizing the pressure to achieve; so it solves the woman problem in a racist way: ‘I can do that too’ – that’s the one thing. It adopts men’s scorn of women... But in that scorn of women is the whole inferiority complex about being a woman – and so there’s competition with the woman who don’t have it – the envy. That’s really about all – it was that structure ... that made me envious of g[udrun] – because she doesn’t have the cunt problem in the same way – and made me crawl about in front of a[ndreas], because he’s a guy... it was the girls got the guy out of jail⁵⁰, not the emancipation of women like in women’s lib or the council of action for women’s liberation – fighting against the guys – but the emancipation of women through armed anti-imperialist struggle ... we want freedom, we want humanity.⁵¹

To the RAF, the women’s movement wanted to place women on the same level as men, not give the two equality on their own terms. Meinhof, at the end of the letter above, states that it is armed action that will emancipate women, not any organized council or movement. This wish, to not be equal, and not be defined by man, is extremely similar to what we saw of Monique Wittig’s beliefs and effectively makes these women lesbians. They would have been exemplary Guérillères.

The women of the RAF, beyond being lesbians (to stress once again, I mean this as a subject position, not a sexual preference) occupied the virgules of home/terror and domestic/violence. Their ability to confront and subvert gender norms in ways both laudable and unconscionable is part of what makes them exemplary Trockel subjects, and also what made them an almost constant source of confusion, anger, and news-fodder in Germany. *Der Spiegel* ran an entire issue related to the subject, with the cover story ‘Die Terroristinnen, Frauen und Gewalt’ (The Terrorists, Women and Violence) which included articles such as ‘Girls are Now Dominating the West German Terrorist

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ This refers to the freeing of Andreas Baader from police custody, carried out by women.

⁵¹ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 199-200.

Scene'. The language used in relation to this news coverage demonstrated the public's inability to deal with female political violence on a productive level. The women were often referred to as girls or monsters. Another *der Spiegel* headline read, 'Früher hätte man sie als Hexen verbrannt' (in the old days they would have been burned as witches).⁵²

When the women of the RAF were not being painted as witches or infantilized, their sexual freedom was being exploited and attacked. The cover of the news and lifestyle magazine *Quick* featured a photo essay entitled 'Ulrike Meinhof and Her Savage Girls' which depicted the women of the RAF in a highly sexualized manner and included a topless photo of Gudrun Ensslin.⁵³ Thus, the news sources were turning the women's sexual liberation and freedom into an apparatus of capture.⁵⁴ Women who were free to do what they pleased with their bodies (often seen, in a manner of cultural norms as 'dangerous') (especially so in this case, where the women chose to take political action against the state) were recoded as mere sexual objects (to make them harmless once again). Their frightening freedom was shifted into liberated sexuality for men's pleasure (similar to *Playboy's* modus operandi). The women then were really just women, and pretty ones at that. *Quick* went on to write that they 'come from bourgeois

⁵² Bettina T. Becker, 'Woman, Violence, Nation: Representations of Female Insurgency in Fiction and Public Discourse in the 1970s and 1980s', *Women in German Yearbook*, Vol. 16 (2000), 218-219.

⁵³ The photo came from a pornographic film, *Das Abonnement*, that Ensslin appeared in.

⁵⁴ An apparatus of capture is a way of decoding and recoding something in order to contain it within a culturally normative system. Just as Deleuze and Guattari explain that earth (something not inherently coded) is reterritorialized to become land (with codes of farming, property value, seen for what commodities it can produce) and that land's apparatus of capture is rent, these women (like the earth, woman is not inherently coded) have coded themselves as terrorists through their own action, own choices, are reterritorialized (by the press, by the 'state') into sexual objects. Thus, their apparatus of capture is the male gaze. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, '7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 424-473.

homes; they have been spoiled... they have radical boyfriends through whom they have entered the militant scene'.⁵⁵

There were two main justifications by the media for the women's actions: their mental health and their sexuality. Even in the 1970s there were many physicians and writers who argued that women involved in revolutionary activity were, most likely, mentally ill.⁵⁶ Some, including the authors of the *Baader Meinhof Report* (a book length document written by the West German Federal Criminal Bureau in 1972) were prepared to blame the birth control pill for the women's actions, but then (unreasonably) reasoned that since Meinhof and Ensslin both had children, this could not be the case.⁵⁷ Ulrike Meinhof was placed under increased scrutiny of mental illness because she had needed brain surgery immediately after giving birth to her twin daughters. Studies on her brain were even performed post-mortem and post-burial, as it was discovered in 2002 that her body had been interred without a brain.⁵⁸

The second popular justification for the women's radical actions was their sexuality; if they were to fight and think like men then they must be lesbians. The *Baader Meinhof Report* often conflated terrorism with lesbianism and claimed both Meinhof and Ensslin showed 'homosexual tendencies'.⁵⁹ These attacks were furthered by a screenplay Meinhof had written titled *Bambule*, in which lesbianism was used as a metaphor for solidarity among marginalized women (much the same way Wittig discusses the figure of the lesbian in most cases). The *Baader-Meinhof Report* described

⁵⁵ Meinhof, *Everybody Talks About the Weather*, 71.

⁵⁶ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 189.

⁵⁷ Berendse, *Baader-Meinhof Returns*, 86.

⁵⁸ The brain had instead been sent to the University of Tübingen but was moved (without formal permission) to a psychiatrist in Magdeburg in 1997. Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 189.

⁵⁹ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 193.

Ensslin and Meinhof as masculine and dominant, ‘more masculine, indeed, than their male comrades’.⁶⁰

Whatever the justifications, many felt that these women simply weren’t acting like women. The *der Spiegel* article, ‘Frauen im Untergrund: “Etwas Irrationales”’ (Women in the Underground: Something Irrational) stated, ‘It was obvious to both men and women that in these cases girls transgressed the boundaries of their traditional role. Their action does not agree with the familiar picture of the sex, which in English is called “the fair sex”, the beautiful, the decent, the fair...’⁶¹ When the women were perceived to act as women should it was considered notable. The *Baader Meinhof Report*, for instance, wrote on how Ensslin was capable of ‘proper feminine behaviour’ when she was arrested in a Hamburg boutique on June 7th, 1972 (six days after Baader’s arrest). The report states that her presence there was little more than ‘straightforward retail therapy’. She was ‘so upset by the loss of her boyfriend that she – just like normal women when they are unhappy – desperately had to buy herself something new’.⁶² Ironically, the type of buildings Ensslin was arrested and labelled a manly crazy lesbian terrorist for blowing up became the same shops where, at least for the authors of the report, she was able to rediscover and indulge in her femininity.⁶³

Terrorist/Mother

Within the ‘Violent Women’ article, its anonymous author poses the question: ‘What’s the difference between a woman who leaves her husband after thirty years of a

⁶⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁶¹ Becker, ‘Woman, Violence, Nation’, 218.

⁶² Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 110.

⁶³ Stereotypical feminine qualities were, however, sometimes blamed as the very reason women became terrorists. In 1978 Psychotherapist Margarete Mitscherlich-Nielsen wrote that women, since they were irrational, lacked a conscience, more easily influenced, and lacked reasoning skills, made excellent terrorists. Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 190.

“happy” marriage and a woman who arms herself?’⁶⁴ For Trockel’s take on the women of the RAF, they are one in the same. Not only did Meinhof and Ensslin occupy the virgule of woman/terrorist, they also occupy the position of mother/terrorist. Both women were married, had children, and left them to join the RAF. As seen in the last chapter, it is one thing for women to be dangerous (the mermaid) but an entirely more problematic thing for them to leave their children (the action all the fairy brides were guilty of, which those stories vehemently warned against). Leaving their children behind is yet another Trockel-woman trait. Bardot most likely suffered from serious post-partum depression, rarely wanting anything to do with her child, and Sylvia Plath (another woman Trockel often depicts⁶⁵) left her children through suicide.

While the author of ‘Violent Women’ says that this choice, ‘Turning one’s back on normality, leaving bourgeois life behind, is a move which everyone can make’,⁶⁶ most people did not see it as a natural one. Throughout her career, Meinhof wrote on issues concerned with simultaneously being a housewife and a political being. She wrote, ‘Housework is not productive work; it does not create added value, but simply reproduces what has been used or used up – it is reproductive work’.⁶⁷ The pressure to be a good mother along with society’s fetishization of the maternal role weighed heavily on Meinhof.⁶⁸ She wrote that, ‘The ideology of motherhood paralyzes working mothers as political beings: as long as she believes she ought to be home with her children, a

⁶⁴ Lotringer, *The German Issue*, 146.

⁶⁵ For example, in Trockel’s 1990 *Benachbarte Felder (Adjacent Fields)*, a book jacket for Plath’s collection of poems, *Winter Trees*, is pasted over a photograph of John F. Kennedy (an allusion to another favorite Trockel woman: Jacqueline Kennedy).

⁶⁶ Lotringer, *The German Issue*, 146.

⁶⁷ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof*, 57.

⁶⁸ She was far from thinking that being a mother or wife was unimportant, however, writing, ‘Personal matters are always political...raising children is totally political; the relationships people have with each other are totally political – because they say something about whether people are oppressed or free’. Cited in Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 50.

working mother will never demand her rights ... a working woman is caught between a rock and a hard place; at home she cannot engage in struggle, and at work she feels alien'.⁶⁹ The tabloid newspaper *Bild-Zeitung* saw Ensslin and Meinhof's decision to leave their family to pursue their political beliefs as a result of their inability to be mothers at all. They wrote, 'She wasn't able to experience the family as a community of love and emotional bonds. Her children were a daily reminder that she was incapable of being a mother'.⁷⁰ The women of the RAF were turned into either radical lesbians to be feared, or seductive but dangerous mermaids – fairy brides who had the gall to leave their family behind because they were more animal than human.⁷¹

Trockel has placed an interesting, if infuriatingly subtle, allusion to these issues of mother/terrorist within her *Gudrun* exhibition, further solidifying the work's relation to Ensslin. Amongst the sweater-wearing rabbits and young girls, Trockel has included a small black and white drawing of Barbara Streisand and Fidel Castro (the actual not-Guevara previously mentioned). (Figure 3.10) Streisand sits next to the political leader, her arm across his lap as he victoriously holds up his hands, showing the two-fingered sign for peace. Upon seeing the work's description as an untitled photo of Streisand and Che Guevara, one begins to wildly reach out (just as with the centre Gudrun photo)

⁶⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁰ Meinhof, *Everybody Talks About the Weather*, 72.

⁷¹ To conjecture over Meinhof and Ensslin's reasons for leaving their children is of course difficult and ultimately unfair. The women's reasons were their own, and many of their actions showed the turmoil their decisions caused them. Meinhof, who throughout her journalistic career wrote of the horrors of orphanages, was rumoured to have handed over her two daughters to a Palestinian orphanage. From prison Ensslin drew pictures for her young son, writing 'Mummy is SO bad at drawing, help, help!' Caroline Harmsen, et al, ed., *Gudrun Ensslin, Bernward Vesper: Notstandsgesetze von Deiner Hand, Letters 1968/1969* (Frankfurt: Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 250. She often fought with her ex-husband concerning his care of her son and her guilt over leaving the boy. She implores her ex-husband to 'PLEASE never say that I wanted to be rid of Felix, I am getting frantic here ... When I get out I "want" Felix terribly, but I don't want to take him away from you'. Ibid.

for strings of understanding. The narrator of the musical *Evita*, which Streisand was originally meant to star in, is based upon and called *Che Guevara*. Perhaps Streisand met with the political leader while having her own Jane Fonda/Hanoi Jane moment? But once one looks past the image's misidentification and realizes Streisand is sitting with Fidel Castro, not Guevara, they will perhaps discover that the image is a film still from Streisand's 1972 *Up the Sandbox*.

In the movie, Streisand plays a mother of two married to a prominent professor. When she finds out she is pregnant with her third child, amidst feeling less important than her husband (even the doctor who confirms her pregnancy only wants to talk about her husband's work, commenting, 'your husband is a lucky man, he's involved with important ideas'), she begins to have vivid fantasies of an alternate life. In one fantasy Streisand abandons her children as they play in a public park so that she, along with members of the Black Panthers, can orchestrate and carry out an elaborate bombing of the Statue of Liberty. In another fantasy, she attends a lecture given by Fidel Castro in which he pontificates on the importance of equality for women, promises state funded childcare, and states that 'you middle class women live like slaves'. When Streisand's character stands up and argues with Castro, she is labelled a 'capitalistic tool' and almost chased out of the building, but learns that she has intrigued the dictator enough to be invited to his personal quarters. During their private meeting Castro attempts to seduce her and convince her to be his partner in revolution. He then confesses, as he tears open his shirt to reveal a large pair of breasts, that he is a woman. And so this fake-fantasy Castro seen in the film still Trockel uses is in no way what he appears to be. He is mislabelled by Trockel's exhibition catalogue as Guevara and is an actor (not Castro at all, and a womanly phony Castro at that). The image Trockel uses isn't even in the movie itself, just a still relegated to the cutting room floor. It is a leftover, hard to

place image that speaks of motherhood and terror, but only when placed into Trockel's schizophrenic web of connections.

Including such lines of dialogue as 'If I knew motherhood was going to be like this I would have turned in my ovaries', *Up the Sandbox* clearly espouses the frustration of motherhood, but the violent activities Streisand dreams of speak directly to issues faced by the women of the RAF. Trockel further ties Streisand's image into the *Gudrun* series by changing the shirt she wears in the original image to the patterned sweater of Gudrun's knit pullover. Just as Trockel showed Ensslin as a youth in the *Gudrun* photo, showed a becoming frozen in time, the Streisand film also represents a flickering becoming, a straddling of two incongruous worlds. As the film progresses, it is increasingly difficult to differentiate between Streisand's fantasies and her reality. By the end of the film it is almost completely unknown whether Streisand has abandoned her family or stuck with them. While Ensslin and Meinhof's stories came to a concrete and tragic end, Trockel keeps the virgule, keeps the potential for becoming, by showing these in-between places and constructs.

Political (In)Action: Spaßguerrilla and the Language of the Virgule

Trockel's balaclava works are truly rhizomatic. They are the centres for seemingly endless connections. While Meinhof and Ensslin serve as stimulating subjects of interpretation, the fact that Trockel references the RAF at all leads down another pathway, and reveals how the humour in her work operates on a political level. The balaclava is only seen as a violent or political garment because of the actions taken by bodies that wear it. When worn by a body participating in terroristic activities, the cap is imbued with these traits. That Trockel places the balaclavas in boxes, where they are little more than preserved artefacts, counteracts these associations. Furthermore, she

places controversial symbols such as the swastika alongside silly rabbits and op-art designs, all made into decorative, almost abstract patterns, effectively depreciating the dramatic value of those ideological symbols and lowering them into the realm of design or logo.

Like many German artists of her generation reacting against their clearly political predecessors, Trockel tends to shy away from overtly political works and to devalue the effect of art within a political sphere. She states, 'Art works on the continuation of politics by other means, but direct change through art is probably more like a fairy tale worth believing in'.⁷² She continues to expand and confuse the message of the balaclava works by using them in her series of animal homes – works in which she combines manmade products with natural materials in order to create comical yet functional houses for animals. For example, in her work *Erdloch für Fledermaüse* (*Burrow for Bats*) (1989) (Figure 3.18) a plaster cast of a balaclava is nestled in a patch of fake moss and displayed on a gallery floor. This piece not only raises questions of unknowingly utilizing and recoding terrorism, but also links the balaclava to the home; the garment literally becomes a home for the bat.⁷³

Through these more absurd balaclava works, Trockel has taken some of the severity and impact out of the violent acts they reference. It would be difficult to take a terrorist wearing her playboy bunny balaclava seriously. Hers is not an oeuvre of extreme passion, but rather playful consideration. Or, as Wilfried Dickhoff put it, one of 'feminist, deconstructive humour'.⁷⁴ To reference the RAF even vaguely, as Trockel does, is actually a bold move. The subject of the RAF, like that of the Holocaust after

⁷² Dratein, 'Rosemarie Trockel', 212.

⁷³ For more on this work (*Erdloch für Fledermaüse*), and how it speaks to themes of humour and violence in Trockel's work, see Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 127-129.

⁷⁴ Jean-Christophe Ammann, et al., *Rosemarie Trockel* (Kunsthalle Basel & ICA London, 1998), 33.

the war, is still delicate and upsetting within Germany. When attempting to gather material for her book *Baader Meinhof: Pictures on the Run 67-77* during the late 1980s, Astrid Proll ran into a great deal of difficulty finding anyone willing to help. She relays, ‘...the whole subject of the RAF was still traumatic and too personal for most people’.⁷⁵ In 2005, the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote that the events of the 1970s ‘still ranked among the elements in the German past that the Germans least wanted to face up to’.⁷⁶

Although the members of the RAF were followers of the Urban Guerrilla movement in which violent actions are a necessity, Trockel’s work is more closely aligned with the concept of *Spaßguerilla* (fun guerrilla, a term coined by Fritz Teufel, who was once anointed the ‘most popular terrorist in Germany’⁷⁷). Teufel was a member of the June 2nd movement and several small terrorist cells unaffiliated with the RAF. He felt that the more violent actions of the RAF were not the correct way for Germany to move forward, to reconcile its already violent past with a hopeful future. In an interview from jail with Sylvere Lotringer he is asked: ‘what other way is there?’

The interview went as follows:

Fritz Teufel: I hope other ideas will develop along the line of what I call:

Spaßguerilla (fun guerrilla)

Sylvere Lotringer: How do you define this kind of guerrilla?

FT: Ridicule. Ridicule kills.

SL: Is that an alternative to actual terrorist killings?

FT: It’s a smarter way to win.⁷⁸

And so, in the light of this ‘fun’ alternative to problematic histories, one should turn to Trockel’s drawing *Mono Zustand* (1987). It is a gorilla wearing the playboy bunny

⁷⁵ Proll, *Pictures on the Run*, 1.

⁷⁶ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 8.

⁷⁷ Lotringer, *German Issue*, 134.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

balaclava (Figure 3.19). Trockel has here created a guerrilla-gorilla, a ridiculing protestor, and in that way has truly encapsulated the ‘Spaßguerrillas’.⁷⁹

This is not to say that Trockel is making light of the serious, violent, and difficult histories which the balaclava (especially a balaclava covered with swastikas) might represent. Her humour is to be taken seriously. Gregory Williams explains that, ‘her humour, tinged with irony, provides a release valve for some of the minor and not-so-minor ethical dilemmas people are forced to confront on a daily basis’.⁸⁰ Irony is indeed a sort of humour especially fit for dealing with troublesome, hurtful topics. Denise Riley relates ‘that irony is not an effect of any leisurely distance, but of the strongest and most serious engagement with hurt’.⁸¹ Trockel herself cites her work as full of this irony, saying, ‘Irony appears when I have to get malicious. It’s a vice that keeps me from ending up a cynic’.⁸² Neither is Trockel choosing to ignore or gloss over her country’s own problematic past. How can an artist take action against and for and of the past? (Especially a past concerned with traumatic historical events?) Just as Trockel does: veiled in humour and accidental connections. Gregg M. Horowitz writes that ‘jokes, like dreams and accidents, are actions under conditions where action is explicitly forbidden.... [they] embody simultaneously a desire and its being forbidden’.⁸³ If the Holocaust or the German Autumn are difficult to discuss, are not seen as acceptable for public consumption, they can be brought up through the disguise of silliness. So Trockel is a political artist, she is a German who addresses her, and her country’s past history. She does so, however, through jokes, under disavowal, taking

⁷⁹ Interestingly, in the Indian subcontinent, balaclavas are commonly referred to as monkey caps (because they blot out most human facial features).

⁸⁰ Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 129.

⁸¹ Denise Riley, *The Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 162.

⁸² Cited in Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 129.

⁸³ Horowitz, *Sustaining Loss*, 149

action where action is not allowed, and this goes far in diagnosing the virgolian nature of her work. Horowitz continues, 'An action under disavowal thus exhibits a strange structure. It attains its end only in appearing to attain no determinate end at all, only in appearing idle or beside the point'.⁸⁴ Trockel's work truly does appear, with its Streisand film stills and sweater reproductions, beside the point, but that is only because she is on point.

A discussion of Trockel's balaclava works, which are so open to various historical and political virgolian spaces and connection pathways, would not be complete without mentioning the final balaclava. This final balaclava is white, with blue plus (+) and minus (-) symbols woven into it. The plusses lay on the left side, neatly ordered, while the minuses are on the right. This pattern is not only a crucial part of Trockel's oeuvre (having appeared many times on various garments), but also my reading of the virgule. To see these oppositional signs next to each other, seemingly balanced, gives this balaclava an initial appearance of order. Unlike the simple mathematic equation $x + -x = 0$, however, this balaclava does not become equal to zero, but is instead a block of neutrality, a neutral zone.

This cap is a neutral garment, at least in reference to Roland Barthes' theoretical construct of 'The Neutral'. He writes, 'I define the Neutral as that which outplays the paradigm, or rather I call Neutral everything that baffles paradigm'.⁸⁵ The Neutral consists of binaries (and of undoing these binaries) of 'twinklings' and 'traits' and many, many other things. It is important to remember that although the word neutral may bring to mind blankness or inactivity, the Neutral is a complex and crowded space. This +/- balaclava is not the balance the two symbols strike up, but all sign, countersigns,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Courses at the College de France (1977-1978)*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 6.

contradictions, and similarities that lay between them. The balaclava is not a '0', it is the virgule between two oppositions. It, like the space of the Neutral, brings together oppositions only to once again repel them and then repeat the process; it is a space of continuous becoming (of constant rubbing up against). This balaclava and this pattern are pure virgolian aesthetics.

The symbols also create an aesthetic representation of how terrorism (more specifically, the language of terrorism) operates. The language of terrorism is full of virgules: you are either with us or against us, us/them, friend/foe. This either/or formula has been labelled by terrorism analyst Iring Fetscher as 'Psychological Dualism'.⁸⁶ There are a plethora of examples of this psychological dualism within the writings and statements of the RAF. Gudrun Ensslin often used the phrase 'you can't argue with that' as a way of proving her point and shutting down opposing views with little concrete evidence or actual argument. Holger Meins, a member of the RAF who died in prison following an extended hunger strike, claimed that one could either be 'swine or human being... either problem or solution...' The group's *Urban Guerilla Concept* begins with Mao's quote 'We must draw a clear line between ourselves and the enemy'.⁸⁷ But, of course, the line between self and enemy can never be clear. The very definition of terrorism and what defines a terrorist is unclear. What constitutes a terrorist is an essentially contested concept, less ontological than a moral pejorative thrown at an enemy.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Iring Fetscher, et al., *Ideologien der Terroristen in der Bundesrepublik* (GESIS-Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, 1981), 180.

⁸⁷ The Red Army Faction, *Red Army Faction: The Urban Guerilla Concept*, trans. Andre Moncourt and J. Smith (Kersplebedeb, Pmplt Edition, 2010).

⁸⁸ As the rambling entry from the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* states: 'Terrorism is a topic that commands attention by individuals, governments, and scholars. However, there is no agreement on what it is or is not, with upward of one hundred operational definitions that often reflect the author's objectives rather than the phenomenon itself.'

Even the RAF, as sure as they were in their own convictions, were often seen as no less fascist than those they fought against. This is a common occurrence within terrorist groups, as Kristeva writes, ‘...the terrorist violence offers as a programme of liberation an order which is even more oppressive, more sacrificial than those it combats’.⁸⁹ A 2002 publication memorializing the victims of the German Autumn (edited by the head of the Dresdner Bank, it should be noted) stated that the RAF, ‘these self styled “antifascists”... showed a totally fascist disregard for humanity’.⁹⁰ The magazine Meinhof once edited, *Konkret*, even turned against her, comparing her involvement in Baader’s jailbreak to the Reichstag fire of 1933. The fire, although never officially blamed on anyone or any group, allowed the Nazis to fight harder against, and almost entirely eliminate, their communist opposition in Berlin.⁹¹ Ernst Alexander Rauter, a journalist for *Konkret*, wrote in one article for the magazine, ‘Someone who wants to change society for the better and is simultaneously in his right mind does not throw bombs at people’.⁹²

Holger Meins’ famous ‘human being or swine’ quote ended with: ‘either the problem or the solution, there’s nothing in between’.⁹³ *There is nothing in between.* The language of terrorism tries to be black and white, to consist of hard-edged set dichotomies, but it cannot. There *is* something in between, something between us and them, enemy and ally; there is the virgule. The virgule consists of all the complicated grey areas between these linguistic oppositions. The language of terrorism, despite its outward appearance, is not stable. It cannot remain static and dichotomist (it is because of this instability that terrorists must always resort to violence, thus making themselves

⁸⁹ Moi, *The Kristeva Reader*,. 203-204.

⁹⁰ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁹² Rauter, *Die Rechte Armee-Fraktion*, 23.

⁹³ Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism*, 116.

terrorists). Trockel, through her balaclava works, draws out this instability and the general instability of the world at large, revealing it to her audience. A playboy bunny on a garment of hate is absurd, is off-kilter, is *not right*. Showing the swastika in German museums is *not right*. Neither are these things wrong, they are not black and white, they are ambiguous, just as Trockel's work and identity are ambiguous. She shows us the flickering between right/wrong, us/them, the virgule. She creates works that straddle worlds and shows them right at their moment of indecision, of becoming. The photo of Ensslin as child/terrorist, the depiction of Barbara Streisand as mother/terrorist show just how tentative the line can be. Her balaclavas revel in bridging concepts, histories, realities, and subjectivities.

CHAPTER 4

BODY/ MACHINE

While understanding how Trockel's work relates to the vast fields of history, feminism, and politics is vital to capturing the breadth of her oeuvre, it is also extremely important to place her work within an art historical context. Thus, this chapter will explore the statements she is making in relation to themes of mechanical production and reproduction, questions of authorship and creation, 'high art' versus 'low art', and the question of 'work' within artwork. The focus of this exploration will be Rosemarie Trockel's sculpture *Painting Machine* and how it fits into a long history of painting machines within both art and literature. This chapter will also argue that *Painting Machine* exemplifies the two discordant ways in which Trockel's artwork portrays the body (visceral versus clinical), and by combining these two seemingly opposite portrayals. By combining the mechanical with the organic, Trockel's work becomes aligned with Deleuze and Guattari's argument that nature and technology are not binary oppositions.

Trockel's bodily presence, when creating the vast majority of her work, is usually usurped by the form of a machine. The machine is the virgule of her artist/artwork. Mechanical modes of production played a central role in her most well known creations, her knit canvasses. They were made by large factory machines, not only questioning the concept of women's work (the handmade, craft) but also the process of industrial production as well as the production and reproduction of artwork.¹

¹ Trockel plays with the juxtaposition of high art (working with canvas) and low art (using wool and knitting). As Griselda Pollock writes, 'Work on quilting, weaving, and embroidery by women has exposed the troubled nature of the Western canon's attempt to valorise its fine art culture above all others by a hierarchy of means, media, and materials. It has become more culturally advanced to make art with pigment and

These works also parodied the arena of painting. By naming them knit *canvasses* she heralded them as a new kind of painting, or, as some critics argued, rang yet another death knell for the medium.²

A lesser-known work of Trockel's, her *Malmaschine (Painting Machine) and 56 Brushstrokes* (1990) (Figure 4.1, 4.2), pushes these themes even further. The work comprises a machine made of iron and steel (the painting machine) and seven sheets of Japanese paper decorated with lines (eight per page) of India ink (the brushstrokes). The machine, which resembles a rudimentary printing press, is made up of steel rollers, wire, and 56 paintbrushes. Each paintbrush was manufactured by Da Vinci, a well-known paintbrush factory in Nuremburg, and is made out of the hair of internationally renowned artists.³ These range from famous performance artist Vito Acconci, to close friends of Trockel such as Walter Dahn, and even include Trockel herself. Each brush bears the name of its donor in small gold letters. When turned on, the painting machine operated independently, dragging the brushes across the paper, leaving long black lines that varied with the consistency and amount of hair in each brush.⁴

canvas, stone or bronze than with linen and thread, wool or clay and pigment'. See Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon* (London: Routledge, 1999), 25.

² For examples, see Lori Waxman, 'Museum of Contemporary Art Looks Back at the 80s', *Chicago Tribune*, April 25 (2012) and Jorg Heiser, 'The Seeming and the Meaning', *Frieze Magazine*, October (2009).

³ The artists who donated hair are: Olivier Mosset, Arnulf Rainer, Vito Acconci, Annette Lemieux, Tishan Hsu, Gerhard Naschberger, David Robbins, Georg Baselitz, Ira Bartell, Elliott Puckette, A.R. Penck, Marcel Odenbach, Micahel Byron, George Condo, Rosemarie Trockel, Peter Schuyff, Annette Messenger, Andrej Roiter, Rune Miels, Donald Baechler, Curtis Anderson, Walter Dahn, Phillip Taaffe, Sophie Calle, Bettina Semmer, John Baldessari, Kiki Smith, David Weiss, Haralampi Oroschakoff, Jutt Koether, Kirsten Ortwed, Nancy Dwyer, John Kessler, Albert Oehlen, Jonathan Lasker, Michael Auder, Rob Scholte, Gerhard Merz, Peter Bommels, Christian Phillip Miller, Andreas Schulze, Gilber and George (the only artists to donate hair not from their head, but from their pubic region), Sigmar Polke, Peter Fischli, Barbara Kruger, Angela Bullock, Hirsch Perlman, Benjamin Katz, Alex Katz, Martin Kippenberger, Johannes Stutgen, James Turrel, Milan Kunc, Nicolaus Schaffhausen, Cindy Sherman.

⁴ The semi-controlled drippings of *Painting Machine* also references Trockel's obsession with the male-dominated field of action painting. Both *56 Brushstrokes* and

Trockel's machine, since it can create art (the brushstrokes) automatically, questions what constitutes an artist and what passes as artwork. A machine is often thought to have no real agency (or at least a degraded agency) so to say that it can create gallery-worthy art is almost as laughably easy as dismissing works produced by animals and children. In many ways the *Painting Machine* does mimic animalistic creation, a topic that appears throughout Trockel's body of work. Her oeuvre contains dozens of drawings showing apes and monkeys holding paintbrushes or palettes, and often uses moths, chickens, elephants, spiders, cats, and dogs not only in the work, but to create the work. For example, her video work *A la Motte* (1993) (Figure 4.3) shows a moth chewing through fabric to form abstract patterns. Similarly, her triptych *Les Sauvage Than the Others* (part of her 2012 retrospective exhibition) (Figure 4.4) consists of three paintings made not by Trockel, but by an orang-utan named Tilda. The work demonstrates how she often equates animals which create art with female artists, cynically pointing out (once again) the stereotype that women are closer to nature, or more savage than men, and about as capable of producing a masterwork as any ape or elephant who have brush and canvas placed in front of them.

By combining the animalistic, artistic, and mechanical, *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* casts a wide net over the relationship between artist and artwork. It simultaneously echoes Andy Warhol's famous quote: 'I want to be a machine',⁵ Joseph Beuys' assertion that 'every human being is an artist',⁶ and Trockel's own sardonic take on Beuys: 'Every animal is a *female* artist'.⁷ In *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes*

Trockel's series *Haarzeichnungen* (*Hair Drawings*) (1990) (Figure 4.5) resemble the drips and splatters of Jackson Pollock.

⁵ Thierry de Duve and Rosalind Krauss, 'Andy Warhol, or the Machine Perfected', *October*, Vol. 48, Spring (1989), 10.

⁶ Caroline Tisdall, *Art into Society, Society into Art* (London: ICA, 1974), 48.

⁷ While Beuys used the male gender of 'artist' in the original German (*Kunstler*), Trockel stated 'Jedes Tier ist eine *Kunstlerin*', the female gender of the noun.

we see a machine playing at being an artist, and artists playing at being a machine (their hair an integral part of the mechanism), but also an artist commenting on the agency of both by equating its output with the artwork of women and animals.

Trockel's painting machine not only reveals her unique method of artistic production, but also contains several virgules displayed throughout her oeuvre: the in-between space of artist and creation, artist and machine, machine and body, and even between the body and the body. As will be seen, her work has two very distinct ways of dealing with the body (beyond, as we saw in chapter 2 (Mermaid/Angel), denying a set identity through gender demarcation). When showing bodies, her work ranges from cold and detached to shockingly visceral, and through these differences it comments on the very virgulian subject of abjection.⁸ The subject exists in between the constructs of subject and object, thus being the virgule between otherwise undivided identities. This particular virgule is at the centre of how Trockel's work portrays bodies, and *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* straddles these seemingly incongruous outliers.

A Concise History of the Painting Machine

Trockel is far from the first artist to create a painting machine. Throughout the history of art and literature there have been almost countless attempts to create automaton artists. For example, Jean Tinguely's *MetaMatics* (1955), when displayed at the Paris Biennale in 1959, made over 40,000 paintings that were given away. In 1968, the Computer Technique Group of Tokyo created the *Automatic Painting Machine No. 1*, yet another automated painting machine. By quickly relaying a (far from complete) history of the endeavour, one can begin to see how Trockel's particular machine is similar to many others' creations, and, more importantly, what makes it unique.

⁸ In this case, abjection as developed by Julia Kristeva. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

In line with Trockel's interests in industrial production was artist Pinot Gallizio, who, in 1957, produced an industrial painting machine that consisted of a printing table connected to several rollers. Each roller (which were manually raised and lowered onto the canvas on the table) was coated in a variety of substances including resin, varnish, drying agents, and paint. Gallizio satirized the art market's voracity for whole authentic works by suggesting that quantity, not quality determined the work's value. He sold the industrial paintings by the meter, and would personally cut each work to the buyer's desired length/price point. Buyers (especially galleries) soon began buying up entire rolls of the paintings, and in response Gallizio (anticipating this demand) continuously raised the price of an entire roll while lowering the per-meter price.⁹ In so doing, he 'highlighted the rapacious and acquisitive logic of the prospecting art market, whose seemingly inexhaustible cash flow revealed its decidedly exclusive credentials and elitist pretensions'.¹⁰

Alfred Jarry, the late 19th century author and inventor of 'pataphysics (the science of imaginary solutions), wrote about a much less concrete painting machine in his novel *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll*, 'Pataphysician, placing it in a post-apocalyptic world. His machine outlasted mankind, roaming 'like a spinning top... swaying and swooping in an infinite variety of directions'. And, 'blowing on the walls' canvas the succession of primary colours ranged according to the tubes of its stomach, like liquor after love...'¹¹ Jarry is often considered a forerunner to the Surrealist movement, and his machines, at times, reflect Trockel's interest in that area.

⁹ Frances Stracey, 'Pinot Gallizio's "Industrial Painting": Towards a Surplus of Life', *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol 28, No. 3 (2005), 400.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll*, 'Pataphysician (Exact Change, 1996), 32.

Both Trockel and Jarry also share a love of combining anthropological and technological themes.

The French poet, playwright, and novelist Raymond Roussel included a painting machine in his most famous novel, *Impressions of Africa* (1910). This novel contained, among a great number of other fantastical machines, a very impressive painting machine. He describes the machine:

Deprived of its shutter, which the young woman still held between her fingers, the plate now stood exposed, revealing a smooth, brown, shiny surface. All eyes were fixed eagerly on this mysterious substance, endowed by Louise with strange photo-mechanical properties. Suddenly, opposite the easel, a slight shudder ran through the automatic arm, which consisted of an ordinary, bright, horizontal blade, bent in the middle; the adjustable angle of the elbow tended to open as wide as possible, owing to a powerful spring, whose effect was counteracted by a flexible metal wire, which, emerging from the sphere, was fastened round the furthest tip of the arm and thus regulated the gap; at present the wire was being stretched to allow the angle to become progressively greater.¹²

Unlike Trockel's thin abstract lines and Jarry's bursts of random paint sprays, Roussel's painting machine is able to produce fantastically realistic copies of anything it is pointed at. Although it is labelled a painting machine (because it uses paint) its mechanics (especially its shutter) more closely resemble the technology behind photography. The camera is a kind of painting machine, mechanically and automatically capturing images without the aid of human hands. Thinking back to Warhol's declaration that he wanted to be a machine, his use of the camera is unsurprising; it acts as a painting machine for an artist who does not want to embrace the human-made. It is, in fact difficult to think of an example of Warhol's work that does not utilise the camera. Major examples that eventually come to mind, however, do not use his own artistic gestures. Instead, they consist of other peoples' bodily traces (his piss paintings, for example).

¹² Raymond Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, trans. Rayner Heppenstall and Lindy Foord (Surrey: One World Press, 2011), 144.

Like Warhol, Roussel distanced himself from his subjects through machines. Although his writings often contain violence, he limits the resulting viscera by creating fantastical inventions; there are Rube Goldberg-esque killing machines, machines to bring loved ones back from the dead (but to also keep them at a safe distance from the living), machines for making music so that humans don't have to, even machines for creating word puzzles (and for answering them – an autoerotic mechanics of riddling). Roussel's use of machines (especially his painting machine), combined with his humour, violence, and outrageous imagination are similar to Trockel's creations. Both bridge various divides and, as will be seen later, help one to understand how virgolian machines function, creating unexpected and unintended outputs. Studying these outputs, as well as how the virgule operates within the work of Trockel, Roussel, and Franz Kafka will also expand upon Deleuze and Guattari's concept of celibate machines (machines which direct flows of desire in a very specific way).

What Kind of Machine is *Painting Machine*?

While there are many, many painting machines, Trockel's machine is especially virgolian. Since the virgule is a space of artistic creation in which seemingly disparate entities are combined (simultaneously the same and not, all and neither), or even just a space in which set identities and indicators of identity do not necessarily exist, then this machine is a virgolian machine creating virgolian spaces. Before discussing these spaces, of which there are many (body/machine, artist/machine, artist/artwork, to name a few) one must first break apart how the *Painting Machine* operates, and by what definition it is actually a machine. Deleuze and Guattari's take on machines (both real and imagined) will help us down this path.

The painting machine of *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* is, by practically all definitions, a machine. Of course, a set definition for the term machine is

difficult to pin down. The word itself is derived from the Latin *machina*, which is from the Doric Greek *machana* and *mechos*, meaning ‘contrivance, machine, engine, means, expedient, remedy’.¹³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* has more than 11 major definitions for machine, and dozens of sub-definitions. These range from the human body, to plans and plots, and even genitals. The machine definition I am referring to is the most commonly referenced: an object generally categorized as capable of powering and accomplishing a task (in this case painting lines onto a canvas) and which has moving parts that perform, or assist in performing, work (here, the rollers, paintbrushes, wires, and engine); in other words, an industrial machine.

Trockel’s painting machine can also be defined as several different types of Deleuzo-Guattarian machines (primarily a desiring machine and a celibate machine). Deleuzo-Guattarian machines, unlike the machines defined above, do have agency. As will be discussed in-depth throughout this chapter, during the life of *Painting Machine* it was transformed from a generic machine of industry to a desiring machine to, more specifically, a celibate machine, and in this span Trockel herself became a desiring machine. These last two transformations are especially important. By being able to (theoretically if not entirely literally) change oneself into a machine, the virgule of machine/body and machine/artist are achieved. To produce a celibate machine, as will be seen, is to create a machine that can create blocks of virgolian spaces.

Before defining these Deleuzo-Guattarian machines, it must first be understood that they are essential to everyday life and are not just metaphors or intangible theoretical constructs. Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘Everywhere *it* is machines – real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by

¹³ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

other machines, with all the necessary coupling and connections'.¹⁴ Of course machines, for the two theorists, are not necessarily mechanical. They can be any number of different objects: people, parts of nature, books, and, as will be discussed at length later, artworks.¹⁵ For Deleuze and Guattari a machine is a system of interruptions and breaks which produce assemblages and aid in the flow and creation of desire.¹⁶ A machine cuts off elements from different things, systems, and objects and synthesizes them into a direct flow of desire. Thus, Trockel's painting machine, which brings together the hair of many different artists in order to unite them into a new flow of desire (an artwork – the fifty-six brushstrokes), is (at this most basic level) a Deleuzo-Guattarian machine.

Part of what makes Trockel's *Painting Machine* a uniquely Deleuzo-Guattarian machine is what happened to it after producing its first set of paintings: Trockel took out its engine so that it could never paint again, making it a broken machine. If we go back to the standard definition of a machine where moving parts are integral, then the painting machine, which no longer functions as that machine should, is hardly a machine at all. This absence (which is not really an absence¹⁷) makes it even more of a Deleuzo-Guattarian machine, more specifically, a desiring machine.¹⁸ A desiring

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 1.

¹⁵ For example, in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari compare books as literary machines to various other types of machines. This introduction also expands on their concept of the machinic and their definition of what constitutes a machine. *A Thousand Plateaus: Introduction Rhizome*, p. 3-25.

¹⁶ For more on machinic assemblages, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3-25.

¹⁷ Within Deleuze and Guattari's writings, there is never any concept of absence. Since schizoanalysis is essentially a theory against psychoanalysis, the idea of lack is argued against.

¹⁸ Of course, for Deleuze and Guattari all machines are desiring machines. For more on this and desiring production in general see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1-9. On desire in general, Felix Guattari explains, 'For Gilles Deleuze and me desire is everything that exists

machine collects flows of desire and utilises them to produce different flows of desire. Desire is a central principle within Deleuze and Guattari's writing and is independently capable of production. While most machines' value lies in what their output (and the energy they are capable of transferring to that output), desiring machines are measured by their lack of function, and this lack of function is what constitutes their output. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, '...the machine transmits value to the product... Desiring-machines, on the contrary, continually break down as they run, and in fact only run when they are not functioning properly'.¹⁹ A desiring machine, by its very definition, is a broken machine and so *Painting Machine*, with its forever-stalled brushes, is a desiring machine.

That Trockel chooses to create broken machines, or use machines in ways other than they were intended to be used, not only shows the Deleuzo-Guattarian theory behind her work, but also sheds light onto her production of artwork on a larger scale. Most of Trockel's knit works are churned out by large industrial machines meant to produce thousands of garments in a relatively speedy manner. Each knit canvas, however, is always only created once. She uses the methods of mass production, but clings to the unique, the singular. This also translates to how she uses parts of her art once they are made; even though the same subject matter and objects seem to repeat again and again within her work (her *Schizopullover*, for example) they are the not repetitions, but originals (if one is to see the sweater in a photograph, then a movie, and then a book mock-up it is always the same, original, only sweater). Similarly, her most

before the opposition between subject and object, *before* representation and production. It's everything, whereby the world and affects constitute us outside of ourselves, in spite of ourselves. It's everything that overflows from us. That's why we define it as flow (*flux*)'. 'Interview with Felix Guattari', in *Homosexualities and French Literature, Cultural Contexts / Critical Texts*, George Stambolian and Elaine Marks, ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 57.

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 31.

recent retrospective, 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos', shows newer work by Trockel (a large crab) sitting atop stacks of cut-apart knit canvasses. (Figure 5.12) These canvasses were not made expressly for the 2012 show, but are in fact the same artworks one would have seen hanging on any number of German museum walls in the 1980s and 90s, now destroyed.²⁰

Trockel inhibits the repeated production of the canvasses, the recurrence of the logos, the creation of new objects, and, in the work at hand, the *56 Brushstrokes*. Her work is not repetitive, it is singular, but neither is it merely *not* repetitive. It is actively, haltingly so. Trockel uses all the primary tools of repetitive production (namely machines) to create unique works. This of course plays on the concept of handmade woman-craft versus manly industry, but also speaks to an innate desire for delayed becoming, a virgolian stasis of always becoming, never became. A work of Trockel's is never truly finished, for it could be resurrected or destroyed anew at any moment.

This habit of using singular works, and reusing them often through destruction not only speaks to Trockel's methods of production, but to her identity as an artist. By taking away the *Painting Machine*'s ability to produce more work, Trockel has cut off its flow of desire, thus implicating herself as a desiring machine. According to Deleuze and Guattari, 'Desiring machines are binary machines, obeying a binary set of rules governing associations: one machine is always coupled with another [There] is always a flow producing machine and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of this flow....'²¹ By taking out the engine of *Painting Machine* Trockel has not

²⁰ According to critic Roberta Smith, the reintroduction of Trockel's famous knit canvasses in this manner 'intimates that in many ways they were obvious one-liners.. How liberating, then, to cut them up and be done with them'. 'Connecting Kindred Spirits, "Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos", at the New Museum', *New York Times*. October 25 (2012).

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 5.

only made it a desiring machine (removing its ability to produce flow) but has made *herself* a desiring machine by being the entity to draw off said flow. She is the machine coupled with her painting machine; she is the interrupting machine necessary to the binary nature of desiring machines. She and her work exist in the virgule of body/machine (her body destroys the machine, thus making her body a type of machine, while simultaneously intertwining the two into a different type of machine), but also creation/destruction.

For an artist to link themselves to their artwork through its very destruction is rather common within the art world, and within the theory of Deleuze and Guattari. The theorists write about the phenomenon at length, stating: ‘Art often takes advantage of this property [that they break down] of desiring-machines by creating veritable group fantasies in which desiring-production is used to short-circuit social production, and to interfere with the reproductive function of technical machines by introducing an element of dysfunction’.²² They go on to list Arman’s burnt violins, Cesar’s crushed cars, and the work of Ravel among their examples of this type of artistic destruction. Further examples of this broken down artist/desiring machine connection include the work of surrealists such as Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp. Man Ray’s *Self Portrait* (1916) (Figure 4.6) was a machine assemblage consisting of two electronic bells, a push button, and the artist’s handprint. The bells were in no way connected to the button, so when a visitor pushed it and there was no ringing response of the bells it, as Man Ray himself explained, ‘Made people furious. They pushed the electric button and nothing happened. They thought if you push the button the bell should ring. It didn’t’.²³ These

²² Ibid, 31.

²³ Barbara Zabel, ‘Man Ray and the Machine’, *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Autumn (1989), 79.

unmet expectations are easily found in Trockel's painting machine as well; viewers want to see the machine in action, and since it is a machine it should be active.²⁴

Celibate Machines

Although Roussel's literary painting machine was more photographic than Trockel's, it provides valuable insight into how *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* functions. Like Trockel, Roussel (who wrote about many different machines, not just the painting machine) tended to link himself directly with their production and destruction. Foucault, in his early book on Roussel, *Death and the Labyrinth*, called him '...the ever-watchful engineer of the repetition-machines. But he is also the machines themselves'.²⁵ This conflation of artist and machine, creator/creation is seen in both Roussel and Trockel's work, and once again brings to mind Warhol's famous quote; does either Roussel or Trockel want to be a machine?

Trockel is not the only artist to be influenced by Roussel. Many Parisian (especially Dadaist) artists of the time cited Roussel as an inspiration for their work.²⁶ A large 1938 Surrealist exhibition, for example, included a piece of artwork which was a 'machine for reading Roussel' (due in part to his *New Impressions of Africa*'s ridiculously complex system of brackets).²⁷ His stage production *Impressions of Africa* made a significant impression on Duchamp, who called the play a 'decisive shock' and stated that 'It is true that I am indebted to Raymond Roussel for having enabled me,

²⁴ Trockel creates her own mechanical bell (but this one works, and rings itself, is autoerotic, celibate) in *As Far as Possible* (2012)

²⁵ Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, trans. Charles Ruas (New York: Continuum, 1963), 70.

²⁶ Despite his life-long quest for fame, Roussel was not impressed by this credit. He said, 'people say I'm a Dadaist, but I don't even know what a Dadaist is!' Michael Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2000), 23.

²⁷ Ibid.

from 1912, to think of something else instead of retinal painting'.²⁸ Duchamp also gave Roussel credit for his famous work *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, explaining, 'From his *Impressions d'Afrique* I got the general approach. This play ... helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw at once I could use Roussel as an influence.'²⁹

Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* and Roussel's machines are also linked together by Deleuze and Guattari. They categorize each as celibate machines. Other examples of celibate machines as given by Deleuze and Guattari include the machines of Alfred Jarry (primarily his *Surmale (Supermale)*³⁰) and Franz Kafka's horrific writing machine from *In the Penal Colony*.³¹ Although these examples seem extremely disparate, they are indeed all categorically celibate machines. Celibate machines are among three machines (celibate, miraculating, and paranoiac³²) that descend from desiring machines. The celibate machine succeeds these other two machines, and is called celibate because it is autoerotic and automatic. While flows of desire go into the celibate machine, they do not come out in the same manner as the other machines. A celibate machine continuously has flows of desire put into it, and performs its mechanical functions, but does not end in stable, reliable production.

Kafka's tortuous writing machine found in his short story *In the Penal Colony*, for

²⁸ Abba Cherniack-Tzuriel, 'Theatre of the Mechanized Grotesque: Roussel's *Impressions of Africa*', *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 20, No. 2, June (1976), 108.

²⁹ James Johnson, 'The Great Trouble with Art', *Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, Vol. 13 (1946), 24.

³⁰ This machine, from Jarry's novel of the same name, is often cited as the first literary instance of a sex cyborg.

³¹ In this story an outside observer witnesses a machine used to punish soldiers. The machine is made up of needles, which are repeatedly pressed into the soldiers back in order to form the words of his sentencing. By the time the prisoner dies, it is said that they understand what they did wrong because of the needles' impressions.

³² Paranoiac machines produce partial objects, miraculating machines produce resonance between these objects, and the celibate machine interrupts reproduction and produces pure intensities. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 'The Desiring-Machines', 1-50.

example, has flows placed into it (the desire of the officer to punish the prisoner and the prisoner himself) and is put into motion (the needles begin to puncture the prisoner) but the intended effect (for the prisoner to understand what it is he did wrong) seems impossible to reach.³³ The story's narrator portrays the prisoners as animalistic in their lack of understanding. Since they have no idea what is happening to them, the intended output is not produced. The narrator also makes a point of saying that there is no way anyone could understand the machines writing, because it is illegible. Even when the officer sacrifices himself to the machine he fails to understand his crime, because the machine breaks down.

Although it is not what is expected or wanted, the celibate machine does produce something. Deleuze and Guattari write:

What is produced by means of it? The answer would seem to be: intensive quantities. There is a schizophrenic experience of intensive quantities in their pure state, to a point that is almost unbearable – a celibate misery and glory experienced to the fullest, like a cry suspended between life and death, an intense feeling of transition, states of pure naked intensity...³⁴

These 'intensive quantities' and 'feelings of ... pure, naked intensity' are exactly what Kafka's officer says the prisoner will feel. They also resemble the strange reactions many of Roussel's characters have when they are put into machines meant to kill them: they become serene or joyous and seem filled with an unknowable, otherworldly wisdom. So while the intended state of fear and penance are not reached, there are profound emotions created by the machines. The celibate machine is able to straddle states of transition and create otherwise unconceivable products, just as the virgule does.

³³ For more on Kafka's machines and how the machinic operates in his literature see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, '1914: One or Several Wolves?', 26-39. For more expansive writings on Kafka's work see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards A Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 18-19.

Trockel's painting machine can also be classified as a celibate machine.

Although it does not have the capacity for torture, as many of the above-mentioned machines do, it can certainly be considered autoerotic (it runs automatically, of its own volition, without another object needed) and it produces unexpected results. The *Painting Machine* is meant (was built) to produce brushstrokes on paper, but the flows of desire cannot come out as intended since Trockel has taken out its engine. This doesn't mean it produces nothing; it too produces intensive quantities and an 'intense feeling of transition'. It straddles many things, human and machine, artist and production, and, as will be discussed later, two different ways of exploring the body.

The Work of Machinic Artwork

When considering these different machines that are being created, doing different jobs and being produced by different entities, what is to be made of the work in the artwork? The production and reproduction of artwork is complex, especially within the system of Trockel's *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes*. The artist, while in many ways a machine, also creates and controls machines. In this instance, Deleuze and Guattari name the artist the 'master of objects',³⁵ one who breaks, shatters, and burns objects only to place them in front of the audience as whole again (functional desiring machines). Trockel has created a machine (which in and of itself is a work of art) that produces artwork and is made of artists.

The machine allows for the artwork (the brushstrokes on canvas) to be reproduced indefinitely, which raises questions of *reproduction*. As Walter Benjamin explains, artwork has always been reproducible through the actions of man and their handicraft, but 'Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents

³⁵ Ibid., 32.

something new'.³⁶ This newness relies in part on the questions of creator/creation, but also in what is being produced and how it should be labelled.³⁷ In *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* the machine is displayed alongside the fruits of its labour. The lines between work, art, artwork, and industrial production are all blurred here. What is the artwork, and what is producing the artwork? The actual machine itself is displayed, and since it no longer functions, must be considered part of the artwork. What the machine produces, even though it is called a painting machine, is not referred to by Trockel as painting, but as *Brushstrokes*. Is she delineating painting as a uniquely human creative endeavour that cannot be replicated by a machine? Is the physical work (the verb of the machine) painting, but not its product-noun? To pose the same question that art historian Andrew Benjamin asks in regards to Robert Ryman's monochromatic paintings, 'in what sense is what is taking place here a painting?'³⁸

What does it mean to move painting beyond the hand of the artist? Man Ray, in his artwork *Danger/Dancer* (1920), placed the burden of actual work onto a spray gun filled with paint, removing the artist's body from the actual production of artwork.³⁹ He wrote that, 'It was thrilling to paint a picture, hardly touching the surface, a purely cerebral act, as it were'.⁴⁰ Art produced by 'purely cerebral act(s)' were often given attributes such as 'clean', and more 'pure'. Marcel Duchamp focused on this clean and

³⁶ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, trans. Hannah Arendt (New York: Random House Inc., 1992), 218.

³⁷ Of course, the fact that Trockel has broken the machine so that it will never again produce a set of brushstrokes safely 'preserves the authority' of the first (and only, thus original) set. The questions Benjamin raises in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' concerning authenticity and a work's unique position in time and space will remain un-raised unless Trockel chooses to fix the machine. Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*.

³⁸ Andrew E. Benjamin, *Object Painting: Philosophical Essays* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 1994), 92.

³⁹ Of course, it should be acknowledged that the artist made the work of art that is making the work of art.

⁴⁰ Zabel, *Man Ray and the Machine*, 77.

removed aspect of the artist-less art making stating that it represented a ‘completely *dry* drawing, a *dry* conception of art’.⁴¹ This ‘dry’ art bestowed value on the distancing of an artist from their artwork. Yves Klein exemplified this ideal in his *Blue Anthropometries* where he thoroughly ‘rejected the brush’⁴² by painting with women’s bodies. He wrote, ‘I could continue to maintain a precise distance from my creation and still dominate its execution. In this way I stayed clean’.⁴³ This cleanness, while for Klein was partly spiritual, is a major movement in the history of art, separating the mental from the embodied. Trockel’s painting machine shares Klein’s humour and use of bodies, but she does not dominate the production in the same way as Klein (who would appear larger than life in a tuxedo and with a backing orchestra). Instead, she leaves the role of director to the machine and its mechanized brushes. She is present in the work (her hair is included among the fifty-six brushes), but this presence relegates her to just another part of the machine, just another stroke on the paper amongst many others.

Although Trockel’s painting machine moves the production of artwork out of the artist’s actual hands, as Man Ray did, it does not reject the artist’s body. And although she is embracing the artist’s body, she is in no way rejecting the brush, as Klein does. She has made brushes out of artists’ bodies, which blurs and synthesizes the boundaries between the clean (or removed) and the visceral. Trockel’s use of artists’ hair to create the actual markings of the work of art in *56 Brushstrokes* is the key arbiter in this melding process. Using actual pieces of human bodies (and artists’ bodies at that) complicates questions of work in artwork and painting even further by bringing the

⁴¹ Elmer Peterson and Michael Sanouillet, *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: De Capo Press, 1989), 130.

⁴² Tracey Warr, ed., *The Artist’s Body* (New York: Phaidon, 2000), 93.

⁴³ Jane Blocker, *What the Body Cost, Desire, History, and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 93.

issue of authorship and authenticity to the forefront. Because the actual body is involved in the creation of the artwork, and not just an inorganic machine, there is a stronger tie to the mark-creator's presence and authority. Because these bodies are not just anonymous identically unclad women (as is the case with Klein's work) but *artists* (successful, well-known artists at that) there is a special aura placed on the authorship and authority of the brushstrokes' origins.

The artist is indispensable to their artwork, at least within the cultural realm at large. As Roland Barthes writes in his essay 'Death of the Author', art is 'tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions...the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it...' ⁴⁴ This extends to the principle that work made by the actual hand of the artist is superior to works that the artist never actually came into contact with. Painting is often separated from other objects of production, is considered special because of its intrinsic human creativity, but as Rosalind Krauss confirms, 'that doesn't stop painting from being a commodity, with its fatal consequence the fetishization of the "handmade"' ⁴⁵

Krauss labels this fetishization of the handmade and the artist's name as 'an art history of the proper name' and compares it to a murder mystery in which the only goal of the work is to find out 'who did it'. ⁴⁶ (Or, as Barthes puts it, 'when the Author has been found, the text is "explained" – victory to the critic'. ⁴⁷) Krauss also attributes the identification of authorship as one of the primary stabilizers within the art world. This search is certainly extended to Trockel's *Painting Machine*. Once the viewer discovers that each brush is made of hair belonging to an artist, they may become more interested

⁴⁴ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 143.

⁴⁵ de Duve and Krauss, *Andy Warhol*, 11.

⁴⁶ Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 28.

⁴⁷ Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 147.

in the somewhat banal brushstrokes themselves, searching out the marks of their favourite artists, or paying more attention to those left by artists they have heard of. Are certain lines more interesting because of the hair that made them? More valuable because of their creator's cache? The actual contact or authentication an artist inflicts onto their artwork could certainly extend from handmade brushstrokes to marks left by other parts of their body (in this case, their hair). It can even be argued that Trockel's *56 Brushstrokes* trump typical painting in this regard, since the actual body of the artist is making the marks, thus removing the tool of the brush and coming into direct bodily contact with the canvas.

The Body of the Painting Machine: Clean Body, Dry Body

It is important to reground the discussion of Trockel's *Painting Machine* in the fact that, although it is a mechanized non-living being, it is made from actual body parts. Trockel's union of machine and human makes sense in the realm of *Anti-Oedipus*, where '...everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines – all of them connected to those of the body'.⁴⁸ Although industry and nature are often seen as opposing forces, Deleuze and Guattari explain that this is not the case. For them, not only does industry use nature in its production, its refuse generally returns to nature. Nature and industry, body and machine, are not opposed, binary objects. They write,

We make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one within nature in the form of production or industry, just as they do within the life of man as a species. ...man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other—not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc.); rather, they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

Trockel combines the mechanical and the natural in *Painting Machine* (human hair and electric motors) but the two synthesize to create something new, something both natural and mechanical, and neither wholly natural nor wholly mechanical.

This combination of the mechanical and the organic also plays a huge role in the work of Raymond Roussel; the boundaries between human and machine are often blurred. Roussel's literary universe is filled with what Foucault describes as 'human machines'.⁵⁰ Each machine encountered in Roussel's writing relies on an organic component. These range from the obvious (a water powered weaving machine) to the absurd (an automated mosaic-making contraption powered by weather predictions which uses human teeth as its medium). Roussel's version of a painting machine would have been impossible to make without the aid of nature. Its creator, Louise, had attempted to make the machine for years, but needed a 'particular essential oil till then undiscovered'.⁵¹ While in Paris (her home) she could not find the oil, but once she becomes shipwrecked in Africa she discovers it and is able to complete her machine.

To further blur the lines between art-producing machine and creator-body-machine, just as Trockel's *Painting Machine* attempts to do, Louise herself is subjected to mechanization through her efforts to create her painting machine. Her long days spent in the African climate searching for the essential oil needed to fuel the machine resulted in an internal tumour on her lung. She could not breathe properly, and so a series of sounding tubes were inserted into her body that were operated and charged through a metal plug surgically fitted into her side. Although she attempted to cover up her new mechanized parts with an intricate officer's jacket, she still is described as

⁵⁰ Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 16.

⁵¹ Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, 216.

uncomfortably mechanical in appearance.⁵² Louise and Rosemarie: creators turned machine by their machinic creations.

Beyond this combination of the organic and the machinic, Roussel treats the human body in a very specific way. Even bodies not combined with machines are still mechanical and clean. Bodily fluids, messiness, and other visceral realities are denied, and if they cannot be denied, Roussel invents marvellous creations to keep them in check.⁵³ Examples include an emperor's spear smeared with a special poison that, 'while ensuring immediate death, also possessed the remarkable property of keeping the tissues from immediate putrefaction',⁵⁴ and an axe containing 'a curious wooden blade which, as it cut through the flesh, had the effect of immediately congealing the blood, and absorbed even the first few drops whose loss could not be avoided'.⁵⁵ Body parts, for Roussel, could become any tool one wished them to be, their grotesqueness easily lost through his writing. One of the strange performers in *Impressions of Africa*, for example, serenades the audience with his own tibia, which was turned into a flute after an accident necessitated that his leg be amputated. There is no sense of shame or

⁵² Roussel elaborates, 'An internal tumour had formed in Louise's lung, and the poor physical condition of the affected part prevented full expulsion of the air she breathed in'. In order to fix this problem Louise needed an artificial escape for the air in her lungs. To cover the mechanics of the solution she, '...decided on an officer's uniform; she could then make the sounding tubes look like the aglets of a shoulder knot, imitating the subterfuge by which the ear trumpets of deaf persons may be concealed in umbrella frames of the handles of fans.' *Impressions of Africa*, 216-217.

⁵³ This desire for clean bodies in part results from a denial of death through a denial of decay. Roussel was especially horrified by the prospects of growing old, bodily deterioration, and (until his last few months of life) dying. He wrote several poems concerning this process and went to extreme lengths to prevent his hair from turning grey or falling out. One account from his faux-mistress (she had been hired by Roussel's mother to hide his homosexuality) stated that, on the advice of his doctor, he would place extremely hot pans on his head (to the point of causing burns) in an attempt to remedy baldness or graying hair. The author even had a specially made coffin created for his mother that had a glass window in it, so that he could 'see her until the very end'. Ford, *Raymond Roussel*, 180.

⁵⁴ Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, 221.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

disgust when dealing with the body in Roussel's work, because it is always immaculate and removed.

Trockel's use of the body in much of her work, especially the *Painting Machine*, echoes this aesthetic of clean, dry bodies. The painting machine uses the bodies of other artists, but in an extremely clinical way. Each lock of hair has been neatly attached to a standard paintbrush and if one did not already know that the hair belonged to humans, the machine's brushes would appear beyond ordinary. Since each brush is labelled with the name of the artist whose hair it is made from, the use of human body parts is revealed, but the labelling also keeps those body parts clean and contained. The impeccable gold lettering resembles labels on scientific specimens of insects or cultures, carefully attributed to their source and contained for unsullied inspection.

Trockel's *Woman Without a Lower Half* also demonstrates these dry and fluidless bodies. (Figure 2.36) The woman is cut in half (as Trockel says, alluding to a magician's trick) and yet no blood is spilled, all is clean and white. The woman might as well have been cut apart with Roussel's magical blood-clotting axe. (Which also caused visions of magicians. As Roussel writes, 'One was reminded, in spite of oneself, of those dummies used by conjurers, which, having been cleverly substituted for the live assistant by means of some piece of furniture with a false bottom, are neatly cut up on the stage into slabs...' ⁵⁶) While Roussel never allows his bodies to leak and always leaves them cut up into tidy slabs, the bodies within Trockel's work often begin to ooze and deteriorate. Her clean machinic works lay on one half of a virgolian divide and her leaking visceral works on the other. *Painting Machine* bridges this divide.

⁵⁶ Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, 16.

The Body in the Painting Machine: Leaking Body, Abject Body

Despite its detached and surgically precise arrangement, the fact that Trockel's *Painting Machine* is made up of actual human body parts is still disturbingly curious. Any dismembered body part can be considered disgusting, but Trockel's choice of hair is uniquely dichotomous. Hair, animal or synthetic, is commonly used in paintbrushes just as Trockel has done in her machine, but the use of human hair raises many new issues. Hair has always elicited strong reactions. For example, Deleuze, in his essay 'Coldness and Cruelty', discusses psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psycopathia Sexualis* (a grouping of perversion studies first published in 1886 meant to be used by doctors, jurors, and other medical professionals) and points out that although most of its contents are written in an appropriately detached and scientific manner, cases involving hair allow strong emotions to seep in. Writing about hair despoilers he (Krafft-Ebing) relates that a,

...dangerous pigtail fetishist was spreading anxiety in Berlin... These people are so dangerous that they ought definitely to be subject to long-term confinement in an asylum until their eventual recovery. They do not by any means deserve unqualified leniency... When I think of the immense sorrow caused to a family in which a young girl is thus deprived of her beautiful hair, I find it quite impossible to understand that such people are not confined indefinitely to an asylum... Let us hope that the new penal law will remedy this situation.⁵⁷

While still on the head, while still alive and growing and attached to a body, hair is considered beautiful and attractive – the stuff of golden-locked legends and fairy tale princesses. Once hair has been removed from the head it becomes disgusting, unclean, and taboo. Hair has been a popular theoretical subject, ranging from a common fetish object to a magical symbol within the study of anthropology. Deleuze and Guattari, however, believe that hair is not simply a replacement phallus or just another part of the body. They write that, 'hair *is* a thing in its own right, a material part in an aggressing

⁵⁷ Cited in Gilles Deleuze, 'Coldness and Cruelty', In *Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 135, f.5.

apparatus, in a separating machine'.⁵⁸ While Deleuze and Guattari would make this argument about almost any body part (each being a machine of its own, since everything is machanic) their choice to use hair as the primary example is important. Hair is an extremely liminal substance, whose meaning and import varies wildly from culture to culture, time-to-time. Even within fairy tales, for example, hair is a major focal point for heroines but, as Marina Warner writes in her book *From Beast to Beauty*, hair is often a symbol of beastliness: 'Hairiness indicates animal nature; it is the distinctive sign of wilderness and its inhabitant, and bears the freight of Judaeo-Christian ambivalence about the place of instinct and nature, fertility and sexuality'.⁵⁹

Hair's liminal position is only exacerbated by advancing technology. Through this filter, not only is Trockel's machine one that can produce paintings, but can even (perhaps) produce the artists who have donated their hair to it. DNA and cloning technologies mean it is not impossible that the hair the machine holds could be used to double or resurrect the artists upon their deaths. Hair has also been the subject of many legal debates. In 1984, for example, John Moore filed suit against his doctor for using his spleen in a commercial manner (to create viable cell lines), and after many trials the California Supreme Court stated that Moore had no right to his cells. In fact, the court ruled that things considered human waste (which specifically included hair) did not have the 'dignity of the human cell'.⁶⁰

Even though hair can produce scientific miracles and attract handsome princes, it is still largely considered disgusting, especially when removed from the head. According to Kristeva, one reason for this is hair's ability to be both inside and outside,

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 199. (Their thoughts on hair in this instance are largely based in a discussion of anthropologist E. R. Leach.)

⁵⁹ Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1994), 359.

⁶⁰ Robert Mitchell and Catherine Waldby, *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 93.

part of and apart from the body (object). Like vomit, blood, and semen, hair elicits primal responses. The object is one's reaction to this breakdown of interiority and exteriority, a reaction of horror or disgust. All the body's leaking matter (the very matter which Roussel, and sometimes Trockel, attempted to keep at bay) force one to contemplate their own bodiliness and truly acknowledge death. Kristeva writes that, 'These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being... Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit-cadere, cadaver'.⁶¹ Kristeva differentiates the knowledge and meaning of death from the horrific experience of actually confronting one's own materiality, which shows death.

While Trockel's painting machine attempts to deny death with its clean presentation of bodies, her work often features the opposite; it embraces the object and forces viewers to face it, and death, full on. A large amount of her artwork is full of leaking bodies, their fluids, and visceral actualities. Her sculpture *Untitled (Eva in a Trance with Ectoplasm)* (1989) (Figure 4.7)⁶² displays a puffy brown sphere leaking filthy white viscous liquid. While the work could be a reference to the more bodily work of Eva Hesse (given Trockel's affinity for dedicating works of art to other artists), it is more likely a reference to the famous medium Eva C.⁶³ Eva C., who lived in the

⁶¹ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3.

⁶² In one of the countless schizophrenic connections to be found within Trockel's work, this sculpture is identical to a drawing Roussel had made for his book *New Impressions of Africa* (Figure 4.8).

⁶³ Eva C. (also known as Martha Beraud and Eva Carriere), born 1886, was a French psychic medium and spiritualist known for producing ectoplasm (a liquid or semi-liquid substance said to be associated with spiritual/psychic presences). She was studied by countless scientists, given gynaecological exams, and even forced to perform séances in the nude in order to prove her authenticity. It was later revealed that she hid the means to produce ectoplasm in her hair. For more on Eva C. see: Marina Warner, 'Ethereal Body: The Quest for Ectoplasm', *Cabinet*, Issue 12, Fall/Winter (2003).

late 1800s/early 1900s, was known for her displays of ectoplasm. If the sculpture is dedicated to the medium and not the artist, then it is an excellent example of viscera in Trockel's work. Ectoplasm was a gelatinous white substance thought to be caused by ghosts during séances. It was usually 'excreted'⁶⁴ through the medium's nose, mouth, or genitals, and photos of its occurrence are quite unsettling. (Figure 4.9, 4.10)

Trockel has also made an entire series of works centring on the subject of hydrocephalus. As this condition was once crudely called 'water on the brain', Trockel (in an equally crude manner) roughly sculpts and draws alien-like heads, deformed and twisted by her childish strokes, leaking flows of unclean water from their tops. (Examples include *Hydrocephalus II* (1982) (Figure 4.11) and *Hydrocephalus* (1983) (Figure 4.12). She draws hair that looks like excrement or is freshly scalped (*Untitled* 1988) (Figure 4.13)). She shows human foetuses inside of oxen rears, records naked women shitting out chicken eggs (*Out of the Kitchen into the Fire* (1993)) and displays negatives of photographed eggs, causing them to look like lumps of faeces (*Untitled (negative Eiweiß) (Negative Egg White)* (1993) (Figure 4.14)). Her portraits of her mother (*Untitled (Mutter)* (1995) (Figure 4.15)) are stripped of their skin, showing a hideous scattering of muscles, veins, and tissues. Even her other works concerning hair can be abject and disgusting; her drawing *Untitled* (1991) (Figure 4.16), for example, shows a nude, half-bald, hollow-eyed girl having her hair eaten (or vomited back up?) by a male figure looming behind her. These are only a small selection of the unidentifiable oozing body parts, animal/human hybrids, and leaking vessels that exist within Trockel's oeuvre.

⁶⁴ Of course, practically all instances of this phenomenon have been discredited as hoaxes.

These works truly display the ‘collapse of the border between inside and outside’⁶⁵ and question the ‘integrity of one’s “own and clean self.”’⁶⁶ They are, as Kristeva states of the abject, full of ‘.... urine, blood, sperm, excrement that show up in order to reassure a subject that is lacking its own and clean self’.⁶⁷ Abjection is an appropriate subject for Trockel’s artwork, as it is highly virgolian. That which is inside the body (spit, milk, urine, faeces, blood, etc.) is abject, but only becomes so once it moves beyond the body’s boundary. One sees these objects outside the body, but simultaneously realizes that they have come from within a body (one sees them in the body and outside the body at the same time) thus the abject is only horrifying and dangerous because of this duality, this simultaneous being part of and not part of the body. As Kristeva writes, ‘It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite’.⁶⁸ In other words, a space in which two distinct actualities are blurred into and out of one: the virgolian.

The inability to define a subject position, the discomfort produced by a simultaneous being/not being, a continuous becoming, is what drives Trockel’s artwork. How else can one reconcile an oeuvre which has produced both the bodily presence of *Woman Without a Lower Half* and her shockingly crude hydrocephalus works? Trockel creates messy bodies while attempting to contain them by cutting them apart, draining them of their entrails and placing them under glass, but they always escape into the world and crawl out of the vitrine with renewed viscera. *Painting Machine and 56 Brushstrokes* straddles these two dissonant forms. It appears clean and inconspicuous, but contains the abjectness and taboo of hair and human body parts cut away from their

⁶⁵ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 53.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 4.

original owners. It is the virgule between Trockel's different ways of dealing with the body. In this way, we can see just what the work as a celibate machine produces: not the brushstrokes that are expected of it, but, to repeat Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the celibate machine, a 'schizophrenic experience of intensive quantities....a cry suspended between life and death, an intense feeling of transition, states of pure naked intensity'.⁶⁹ To be more specific, it produces the horror and anxiety of the abject, of being between living and dead, bodily and mechanic.

The body is a telling subject matter, but is hardly a mere subject (as Simone de Beauvoir famously exclaimed, 'the body is not a thing it is a situation'⁷⁰) and as we have seen, is dealt with it in very different ways. While Roussel deals with the more mechanical aspects of the body, Kristeva and Hesse acknowledge the oozing interiority of all bodies. What does it mean for Trockel, in her work, to straddle these two views and reactions? Why the virgule glimmer of both at once? Why neither/nor and either/or?

This virgule glimmering can also be seen, and perhaps more thoroughly understood, in how Wittig deals with the body in her novels. She is simultaneously sensual and visceral, detached and clinical. In *The Lesbian Body* she writes about body parts without disgust or shame, but in such detail that I, as a reader, am at times appalled by the sheer overload of bodily fluids, colours, smells, and tastes: '...your yellow smoking intestines spread in the hollow of your hands your tongue spat from your mouth long green strings of your bile flowing over your breasts...'⁷¹ Wittig's narrator dissects her lover with all the emotion of a coroner: 'I discover your skin can be

⁶⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 18-19.

⁷⁰ Jo-Ann P. Fuchs, 'Female Eroticism in *The Second Sex*', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer (1980).

⁷¹ Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), 15.

lifted layer by layer, I pull, it lifts off, it coils above your knees, I pull starting at the labia, it slides the length of the belly, fine to extreme transparency, I pull starting at the loins, the skin uncovers the round muscles and trapezii of the back, ...'⁷² For Wittig, the body can be torn apart and put back together with ease. Wittig's body is both present and absent. Helene Cixous states that, 'with her [Wittig] undoubtedly, the body is there! But it is a disturbed body, a body intoxicated with words because she is trying to conjure up the flesh, to evoke it with words: this body, in fact, is very absent... It is indeed: "Where are they, where are my organs?"'⁷³

A present absence, the knowledge that there are organs to be lost and found; these are the hallmarks of a virgolian body.⁷⁴ There is simultaneously a desire for these organs to be removed (as demonstrated in chapter 2 with the concept of Deleuzian anorexia) and a horror at their removal, at their inside/outside status (as seen in Kristeva's conception of the abject). Wittig's body is unstable because it is constantly changing and never landing on one set identity or state of being. Trockel's work is the

⁷² Ibid., 17.

⁷³ Christiane Markward, 'Interview with Hélène Cixous', *SubStance* Vol.5, No. 13 (1976), 26.

⁷⁴ They are also indicators of the body without organs (BwO), an image used by Deleuze and Guattari throughout both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The BwO can refer to any number of perceptions concerned with reality (it is a phrase they use again and again in a number of different, often vague or contradictory ways), but can also be used to describe one's relationship with their own (literal) body. To make oneself a 'body without organs' is, to put it in a very basic way, when a person opens up their body not only to physical realities, but virtual realities as well. This allows their body to interact with other bodies, and/or enter into 'becomings'. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari write that this process is related to becoming '...the schizo body' which wages 'its own active internal struggle against the organs, at the price of catatonia'. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 150. The BwO, in this way, is very much related to the 'ultimate anorexia' we saw in the chapter 2. It too tries to escape and embrace the body. Deleuze and Guattari continue, 'The BwO: it is already under way the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off, or loses them'. Ibid. As will be seen in the next chapter, the relation of one to their body through the BwO relationship can often, if 'botched' lead to death. Ibid., 149. For more on the BwO see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 9-16.

same. Both Wittig and Trockel's bodies can change at any moment, into any possible thing; they change towards becoming animals, or towards death, or rebirth, or mechanical automatons. And, most importantly, although they are constantly going towards these becomings, these changes, they never quite arrive, they are always only partly formed or realized, never not changing.

CONCLUSION

ACROSS THE / CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

‘I am dead because I have no desire,
I have no desire because I think I possess,
I think I possess because I do not try to give;
Trying to give, we see that we have nothing,
Seeing that we have nothing, we try to give ourselves,
Trying to give ourselves, we see that we *are* nothing,
Seeing that we are nothing, we desire to become,
Desiring to become, we live’.

René Daumal¹

Wittig’s work is virgulian not only in subject matter but also in writing style and politics of subjectivity. The line between j and e, t and u represents the split nature of the individual and the other, the wholly unwhole nature of the subject and self. Both Trockel and Wittig’s portrayal of the virgulian body stems from their unique politics of subjectivity. Their identities are positioned beyond the body, beyond their gender or physicality. The j/e of Wittig’s writing, the simultaneous presence and absence of Trockel from her own work, the indistinguishable questioning of artist and work, work and artist, where one subject ends and another begins, is fuel for, and cause of, the endless loop of schizophrenic connections that can be found in their oeuvre.

This identity positioning in which the self is repeatedly shattered and reformed is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the result of the interactions of desiring-machines. Desiring machines utilise and create flows of desire, and desire is beyond language. Desiring machines also exemplify the non-subjectness of both Trockel and Wittig’s work. In fact, it is desiring machines that are real and the subject that is an effect of

¹ Cited in Véra Daumal, ‘Afterword’, in René Daumal, *Mount Analogue: A Tale of Non-Euclidian and Symbolically Authentic Mountaineering Adventures*, trans. Carol Cosman (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004).

their multiple chains of production. Deleuze and Guattari explain: 'The subject itself is not at the centre, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery with no fixed identity, forever decentred, defined by the states through which it passes'.² Fixed identities cannot take place here.

What if one tries to fix an identity, to define a centred subject? Julia Kristeva writes, on the subject of identity, 'But when I *seek* (myself) or experience *jouissance* then I is *heterogeneous*. Discomfort, unease, dizziness stemming from an ambiguity that through the violence of a revolt *against* demarcates a space out of which signs and objects arise'.³ When one searches for themselves, they are met with unpleasantness. As will be seen, this is just as true for Trockel and Wittig. What happens when each woman addresses herself? Unease and, perhaps, death.

Rosemarie Trockel/Rosemarie Trockel

Throughout my exploration of Rosemarie Trockel's work there has been something missing, a lack (of course, this lack cannot be a true lack or void, it is, instead, a surface level observation). Amidst all of Trockel's immensely broad and varied oeuvre, one in which almost all forms of media and technology are taken on, and in which a seemingly endless string of connections from a seemingly endless supply of subjects and objects are intertwined with a masterful ease and often comical flair, there exists no self-performance, no image, no photo, no display whatsoever of the actual person, the actual body (unified, un-refracted, whole) of Rosemarie Trockel.

Trockel began her career in the 1970s, and was one of the first members of Monika Spruth's (originally) all-female gallery and artist collective, which also

² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 21, 24.

³ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 10.

included prominent artists such as Cindy Sherman, Hannah Höch, and Barbara Kruger, all of whom put a great deal of value on the body and often used it as one of their primary mediums.⁴ It is odd then that Trockel's body is the only medium which she has not utilised. It is not just a physical body that is absent from her oeuvre, it is the signifier of that body. It is 'Rosemarie Trockel', or a form of 'I-ness'. She is not seen, not named. Surely we see her in dribs and drabs: a young girl sitting awkwardly in a room that does not belong to her,⁵ reflected in the more outspoken voices of the violent youths of her youth, filtered through archetypal women such as Bardot and Courage, and through the actual physicality of her hair, which is lost amongst dozens of identical hairs.

We have seen how Trockel's work functions as a rhizome. It can connect any point of itself to a new point,⁶ it never ceases making these connections, and they can go on forever.⁷ If for any reason a connection breaks or ruptures, a new connection will begin or a new line of intensity will be opened. This is, as Deleuze and Guattari have written, the basis of a schizophrenic subjectivity – the antidote to the fragile teetering of a neurotic subject whose world collapses with any rupture, with the inability to say 'and, and, and, and...' They write, in their book *Anti-Oedipus*, 'The code of delirium or of desire proves to have an extraordinary fluidity. It might be said that the schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, the he deliberately *scrambles all the codes*, by

⁴ For more on Trockel's work with these women and her early career see Gregory Williams, *Permission To Laugh: Humour and Politics in Contemporary German Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 65.

⁵ The young Trockel is purposely not the subject of this work anyway, as the photos are entitled *Fan 1, 2, 3*, referencing her sister, not her.

⁶ '...any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.' Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 7.

⁷ 'A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles'. Ibid.

quickly shifting from one to another'.⁸ But is the rhizome infallible? Does the schizophrenic never stumble? Of course not; even a rhizome can be obstructed, and once that happens 'it's all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces'.⁹ But how does this occur? Discovering the failure of the rhizome in Trockel's work is essential to a comprehensive understanding of that work. Both Trockel and Wittig face this failure by facing themselves through silly yet brutal attempts to be perceptible, to stop becoming and just be. In doing so, they show the full extent in which the virgule operates.

This process begins with a video and then becomes lost in a river (several rivers, *flows*). The video is, surprisingly, the sole exception to Trockel's seemingly self-imposed rule of non-direct presence.¹⁰ It is her eighteen minute and 30 seconds long *Continental Divide* (1994) (Figure 5.1). The work's watery title is more of a referent to the separation and division within a subject than the landmark; usually, a continental divide is a drainage body of water within a continent that feeds two separate oceans. The video is in colour and has Ravel's Bolero for its dramatic score.¹¹ It begins from a high angle, not unlike what a security camera in a convenience store or police interrogation room would show. We see two women, dressed identically in Trockel's typical dirty-blond bob cut and uniform of a butch suit jacket, white button up shirt, and khaki Dockers. One woman sits in a chair, the other stalks angrily around her in circles. As the standing woman begins to speak, the viewer realizes that it is Trockel herself gruffly demanding that her doppelganger 'Tell me the name of the best artist!' The seated woman, slouching, already tired and broken, gives a name and the

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, 15.

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 14.

¹⁰ Of course, her history with agoraphobia adds to her non-public nature.

¹¹ As is the case with so many of Trockel's works, this title also has an amusing pop-culture reference as the theme to Bo Derek's infamous film *Ten*. What can be said that hasn't already? The perfect woman, the perfect artist – numerically decided, naturally.

Trockel/Interrogator yells at the woman in the chair not ‘to give me bait’ and warning her ‘you better take care’. Each incorrect name is met with a barrage of punches and slaps from the questioner. After about ninety seconds of this, the camera changes position, showing us the seated woman’s face: it is also Trockel, but Trockel/Tortured. The line of questioning continues, slowly and deliberately Trockel/Tortured lists off the names of well-known contemporary artists as Trockel/Interrogator screams her displeasure with alternately perverse endearments (‘you’re getting on my nerves, darling’, ‘don’t pile it on baby, don’t pile it on, don’t pile it on!’, ‘nasty nasty’) and threats (‘you better watch’, ‘think before you speak’, ‘don’t make me flaming mad!’, ‘I will give you a good lesson, you should learn’, ‘you are risking your life darling!’). At times, Trockel/Interrogator’s speech is ripped straight from an abusive victim-blaming narrative (‘don’t blame me for this [kicking her]’, ‘do you want to provoke me, huh?’, ‘you asked for it’, ‘you don’t like me, or what?’). The mistreatment continues, combining physical assault with taunts and jeers of ‘bitch’, ‘fool’, ‘idiot’, ‘stupid ass’, ‘you son of a bitch’, among many, many others. At times Trockel/Tortured is shoved off of her chair, or simply falls off it in sheer exhaustion. She is kicked and then forced back to her seat by Trockel/Interrogator. The camera pauses on her face, which becomes bloodier and more bruised with each wrong answer, as her hair and clothes become sadly dishevelled. The level of violence that is always glimmering at the edges of Trockel’s work is here unleashed in cathartic torrents. Was she always holding back for herself? Why is this confrontation of self so extremely upsetting and visceral for her?

After naming sixty-nine unsatisfactory artists, all of whom come from a list compiled by *Focus* (labelled by critic Ronald Jones as ‘Germany’s magazine for

morons'¹²) of the top 100 artists of 1994, entitled 'Das neue Focus-Trendbarometer',¹³ Trockel/Interrogator sadly, genuinely despairs: 'I'm really lost. I'm lost. I give up, I'm lost'. In this work we do indeed see Trockel herself (Trockel as woman, Trockel as artist, Trockel as a body), but this body is split into two, and we see her most as tortured and torturer, bloodied, helpless, enraged, and aggressive. If Trockel's *Schizopullover* is like seeing double, then *Continental Divide* is a much more sinister mirror (mirror on the wall, who is the greatest artist of them all?). Trockel is both evil queen and servile mirror. In fact, Trockel/Interrogator becomes much more enraged when a woman artist is mentioned, putting Trockel/Tortured into powerful headlocks and chokeholds after her mention of Louise Bourgeois. The mention of Roni Horn is met with a bloodcurdling scream of 'How could you DARE to name Horn?! How could you DARE to name that name?!'¹⁴

As Trockel angrily berates and abuses her doppelganger, yelling, 'I'm fed up with you! I'm fed up with you! I'm fed up with you! I'm fed up with you!', the fleetingly utopian space of the faux-united subject within *Schizopullover* is destroyed, unravelled before our very eyes. Not only does *Continental Divide* show Trockel addressing herself (at long last looking to the side and realizing who she shares the sweater-space with) it shows *Rosemarie Trockel*, her body, her self, *her*. This confrontation, this final revealing of self may seem like the climax of all the rhizomatic identity weaving and deceiving Trockel's work has thus far shown – the ultimate work

¹² Ronald Jones, 'Rosemarie Trockel', *Frieze*, Issue 19 (1994), 1.

¹³ The editors take into account factors such as the artists' age, market prices, nationality, and gallery. In the year prior to this, Trockel did not even make the list, and in 1994 she came in as number 30.

¹⁴ Of course, this name-calling should be taken with a grain of salt; Trockel's work continuously balances between violence and humour. Most likely this work is meant more as a good-natured ribbing / critique of how the art world at large functions, and not a personal attack against these artists (many of whom are friends and acquaintances of Trockel's, and appear in her Painting Machine work.) Although one should also remember Freud's declaration that jokes are simply truths too ugly to be stated flat out.

in which she finds herself and triumphs. In reality, however, it leaves Trockel no better off. She is, in fact, much worse for wear, literally battered and bruised, bloodied and further from herself, more lost than ever.

Like Trockel, Monique Wittig is almost always absent from her work. Just as Trockel refuses to show herself, Wittig refuses the writing of 'I'. *The Opoponax* refers only to the French *on* ('one')¹⁵ and proper names. *The Lesbian Body* reveals only a divided I (j/e), and *Les Guerilleres* treats the subject as collective (*elles*). This avoidance, this reliance on run-around personal pronouns is, according to Wittig, the subject matter of each of her novels. Each of these literary manoeuvres does away with the 'I' of the main characters, the narrators, and the reader.¹⁶ Again like Trockel, Wittig at last reveals herself, her 'I' in her own watery work. This work, her novel *Across the Acheron*, is named after the mythical river Acheron. Also known as the river of pain, which 'gushes with tears',¹⁷ or the river Styx, in which souls of the dead are transported to Hades. In the book, Wittig simultaneously desires and fears the Acheron. She travels through circles of hell (most set in various locations around San Francisco) and limbo (dive bars where ominous women buy her drinks and she dances to forget) to arrive at the river and ultimately cross it into heaven.

Wittig is quick to let her readers know that her Acheron is not Virgil's famous river.¹⁸ The novel's original French title *Virgil, Non* (which, translated to English, means *Virgil, No*) sees to that. Indeed, Wittig's Acheron is more aligned with that of

¹⁵ Although in the English translation this is changed to 'you'. Wittig addresses this in her book *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, saying: 'Indeed it is so systematically taught that it [one] should not be used that the translator of *The Opoponax* managed never to use it in English'. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 83.

¹⁶ Wittig, *Straight Mind*, 84.

¹⁷ *Licymnius, Fragment 770* in Porphyry's, *On the Styx*, trans. A. Campbell, Vol. Greek Lyric V) (Greek lyric C5th B.C.)

¹⁸ And, in turn, *definitely* not the Acheron of Sigmund Freud (he used Virgil's description of the Acheron as the 'dedicatory motto' of *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

Sappho, who writes of the river: ‘A longing grips me to die and see the dewy, lotus-covered banks of Akheron’.¹⁹ Sappho is an apt inspiration for the book, since she can be read as a fluid, virgolian subject who, according to Page duBois, ‘destabilizes’ and ‘unbalances’ master narratives of Greek antiquity and patriarchy.²⁰ Sappho resists fixed boundaries, duBois continues:

If we read her biographies, the attempts to make sense of her life, we realize that there is no there there; Sappho the poet is a multiple, unfixed, constantly transmuting subject. She is a Lesbian supposed lesbian who supposedly died for love of a man. She may be a mother who celebrates her erotic desire for women. She writes *epithalamia*, poems written in honour of marriage, even as she mourns her separation from women she has loved.²¹

The Greek poet from Lesbos even utilises personal pronouns in a similarly virgolian way as Wittig, constantly shifting from a position of ‘I’ to an ‘I-you’.²²

Across the Acheron is Wittig’s last novel, and in it she finally uses the term ‘I’.

Not only does she say ‘I’, she does so in direct reference to herself – the main character’s name is Wittig. She too meets the facing of herself with vast amounts of physical pain and verbal haranguing. In the book Wittig must, just like Dante’s protagonist, go through the circles of hell and across the Acheron in order to gain entrance to heaven. (This chance is permitted only because of the love and pity shown to her by one of Heaven’s topless, Harley Davidson riding lesbian angels.) Instead of punishing herself along the way, as Trockel did, Wittig is led and abused by her otherworldly guide, Manastabal. Manastabal taunts Wittig with all of her own innermost demons throughout her journey of self-discovery, of coming to terms with her ‘I’. She tosses around jeers such as ‘Wittig, fear affects you like a blow on the head

¹⁹ *Sappho, Fragment 95*, trans. A. Campbell, Vol. Greek Lyric I (Greek lyric C6th B.C.)

²⁰ Page duBois, *Sappho is Burning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

²² *Ibid.*, 37.

and fills you with cowardice',²³ 'Shut up, you drivelling old fool',²⁴ 'Don't aim too bloody high, you wretched creature. Dust you were born and to dust you will return',²⁵ 'paper lesbian',²⁶ 'Once again you have nearly ruined everything... you showing off at every turn',²⁷ 'so impetuous!',²⁸ and 'stupid cunt',²⁹ to name but a few.

Manastabal is not Wittig's only tormentor; the occupants of hell and limbo are constantly attacking her, spitting in her face, berating her lesbianism ('You come from Castro, that's obvious from the look of you. Ah, the gay life! I haven't even a moment to myself to regret it',³⁰), and physically assaulting her. Every action is impossibly full of hatred and self-loathing. Like Trockel, Wittig even has her own full-out altercation with a doppelganger. She writes:

I succeed in grasping a handful of curls and swing her over my head. Then the battle is face to face, almost groping sometimes boxing, sometimes hand to hand, sometimes we throw each other to the ground, there are judo grips, locks, sideways cuts, sometimes karate blows, shutos, maygirls. I fight with all my strength, for the angel's attack is increasingly concentrated.³¹

At times Wittig attempts to save these poor, thankless souls (perhaps as Trockel attempts to find and save her fellow listed artists), but to no avail. They do not want her help.

At the novel's end, Wittig actually makes it to heaven and is seemingly united with the self she had been searching for. This goal is only met, however, through Wittig's death (she must be dead to cross the Acheron and be allowed into heaven). Thus she is changed into something other than herself by the very journey that was

²³ Monique Wittig, *Across the Acheron*, trans. David Le Vay (London: Peter Owens Publishers, 1985), 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 11.

²⁶ Ibid., 29.

²⁷ Ibid., 35.

²⁸ Ibid., 98.

²⁹ Ibid., 48.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 114.

meant to save her self. Trockel's similar attempt, to find the best artist, the pinnacle of what she is, leaves her the same way, unable to recognize even her own name. Try as they might, both Wittig and Trockel are unable to come to terms with or discover a stable, unified version of themselves. They are left beaten and broken, or the attempt literally kills them.

Wittig and Trockel try to leave the space of the virgule, the constant becoming, in order to be a perceptible subject, to actually *become*. For Trockel, her virgule (her space of extreme, uncommon intensity) is the continental divide between herself and herself, and the intangible inability for the *Schizopullover* to truly divide or unite. For Wittig it is the Acheron and the literal / virgule slash between her lesbians' 'j' and 'e'. Just as Trockel inevitably tosses her hands up and despairs that she is 'really lost. I'm lost. I give up, I'm lost', Wittig loses herself until death transforms her within the watery divide of her novel. Crossing the Acheron should give her answers, provide her a becoming-became. Instead, she writes, 'But as soon as I start to swim I forget who I am, in what company, where, and why, for the Acheron is the river of oblivion and Manastabal, my guide, has thought it right for me to bathe in it'.³² In trying to achieve a neurotic goal of wholeness, these women lose their identity.

Are they doomed to never know a stable self? To always be the distant unknown Deleuzo-Guattarian imperceptible subject and never the settled perceptible being, *woman*? Are their travels across their fluid selves a Sisyphean task? Is the impossibility located in their gender? Luce Irigaray contends that,

Woman is neither open nor closed. She is indefinite, infinite, form is never complete in her. She is not infinite but neither is she a unit(y), such as a letter, number, figure in a series, proper noun, unique object (in a) world of the senses, simple ideality in an intelligible whole, entity of a foundation, etc. This incompleteness in her form, her morphology allows her continually to become

³² Wittig, *Across the Acheron*, 34.

something else, though this is not to say that she is ever univocally nothing. No metaphor completes her.³³

If they are indeed doomed to this fate, it is, according to Gertrude Stein, the worst possible thing. She writes that, 'It is difficult to have no identity but it is extremely difficult the knowing not having an identity. One might say impossible'.³⁴ Even though it might be difficult to bear, this impossibility is what, in essence, drives their work, their ability to create. Stein continues, 'One might say it is impossible but that it is not impossible is proved by the existence of masterpieces which are just that. They are knowing that there is no identity and producing while identity is not. That is what a masterpiece is'.³⁵ Of course, Trockel and Wittig *have* identities. They exist in the world and interact with it in every-day ways. The important discernment is, however, that their identities are very much de-centred, schizoid, or queer.

In many ways, Trockel's and Wittig's representation of their bodies and identities are exemplary of Deleuze and Guattari's body without organs (BwO).³⁶ They write that 'the body without organs is not a dead body, but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart organization.... The full body without organs is a body populated by multiplicities'.³⁷ And, as Elizabeth Grosz explains, Deleuze and Guattari 'distinguish the BwO from the singular, organized, self-contained organic body...'³⁸

³³ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 229.

³⁴ Gertrude Stein, *What are Masterpieces* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1970), 90-91.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ See my discussion of the BwO and Deleuzian Anorexia in chapter 2 (Mermaid/Angel), 102-110 and chapter 4 (Body/Machine), 174.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 30.

³⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 172.

To have a unified, whole, centred body is not desirable, but neither is complete de-centring of one's identity. They advocate neither a stable identity nor a complete dissolution of identity.

Work comes from a person, an identity, but to contain that identity, to have it settled, trapped, captured – to have it actually become and not be becoming – is the end of that work's creation. So Trockel and Wittig are not destined to a sorrowful existence of failing at their goal to become whole. Instead, I contend, very much along the lines of Deleuze and Guattari, that the unsteady space of the virgule, rhizomatic identity, is not a negative. These women's works are an affirmation of positive non-identity.³⁹ They represent improper, nomadic subjects who ultimately embrace non-identity and becoming other. If they were to become perceptible it would be a fate far worse than Stein's. It is the end of politics, the end of the possibility of the new or vital, the halting of creation. Death. Deleuze and Guattari give the example of Freud's horsey little Hans. When Freud oedipalized the boy by explaining to him his own psyche (essentially showing himself to himself – Freud as the shortcut Wittig and Trockel never had), giving Hans his 'I' as it were, he ends him. This is how we destroy a rhizome, by finding ourselves. Deleuze and Guattari write,

Look at what happened to Little Hans, already, an example of child psychoanalysis at its purest: they kept on BREAKING HIS RHIZOME and BLOTCHING HIS MAP, setting it straight for him, blocking his every way out, until he began to desire his own shame and guilt, until they had rooted shame and guilt in him, PHOBIA (they barred him from the rhizome of the building, then from the rhizome of the street, they rooted him in his parents' bed, they radicled him to his own body.⁴⁰

³⁹ Of course, this is a common concept in queer theory and the writings of Michel Foucault - identity demands having one's proper place fixed.

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 14.

And as they have already stated, once that happens ‘it’s all over’.⁴¹ If a set, identifiable identity is achieved then Trockel and Wittig are automatically othered by the masculine neutral, and so they cease to exist (they become creations).

Following this reasoning, the space of the virgule (here the Acheron, the Continental Divide) has a direct correlation to Deleuze and Guattari’s own view of politics and theory. It’s even similarly damp. Towards the end of their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari begin to throw out funny, succinct one-line slogans in support of the rhizome. This quickly descends into a rousing (written) verse of the classic song *Old Man River*: ‘As they say about old man river, He don’t plant ‘tatos / Don’t plant cotton / Them that plants them is soon forgotten / But old man river, he just keeps rolling along’.⁴² In other words, the rhizome, like the virgule, the Acheron, the continental divide, and even the personified old man of the river has no beginning or end, just a middle – a divide that unifies the flows of intensity, vitality, and creative life. ‘Interbeing. Intermezzo’.⁴³ Virgule.

The middle is key to how Trockel and Wittig see the world, create their world, and make their art. The space of the middle is also exceptional for Deleuze and Guattari. They write that it is ‘by no means average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed’.⁴⁴ Not only is the middle (the virgule, the Acheron, the divide, the old man) important to the block of becoming, it is the only thing becoming consists of. (For Deleuze and Guattari, ‘a line of becoming has only a middle’.⁴⁵) The middle is thus a place of constant, un-ending movement that is essential to creation and becoming imperceptible. It is the neutral between Trockel’s knit + and – caps. In Trockel’s case,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 25.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 293.

this explains a great deal of the mysteries within her unconventional oeuvre. Many critics puzzle at how and why Trockel seemingly flits from style to style, medium to medium, looking for all the world like several different artists (schizophrenic). Her most well known works, her knit canvasses, were only made for a few years in the 1980s. As soon as they amassed great popularity and recognition she stopped making them. Endless repetition would be neurotic, so Trockel cannot subscribe to it. But neither is her progression a straight line (it is a twisty rooty rhizome) and so in the early 2000s she picked up on them again. She explains, saying, 'I never work by variations: formal development does not appeal to me. Each sculpture is self-contained, connected. I could call it a crude whole, a broad sweep: my sculptures each fill a hole: the hole of the unfamiliar, the unknown; what interests me is discovering the holes'.⁴⁶

These holes that Trockel revels in are the spaces of the virgule – where two subjects or objects or concepts rub up against one another in a neutral space, but the virgule is not the centre (not *centred*). In fact, these spaces can only exist, only be inhabited and created by de-centred subjects. There must be a total dissolution of the notion of a centre, and in turn, any origins or authentic identities. Trockel uses her virgular artwork web and Wittig uses the lesbian. The lesbian is not wholly a woman, nor a gender, nor a body for Wittig, but a subject position (or, more accurately, a subject process). The lesbian stands in the seemingly impossible off centre middle, at the 'outposts of the human (of humankind)'.⁴⁷

So it becomes clear that a rhizome can be broken by pinning down a stable subject, by finding oneself, one's 'I'. In turn, it also becomes clear that Trockel and Wittig have in no way failed. Their body of work is not about searching for themselves

⁴⁶ Quoted in Doris von Dratein, 'Rosemarie Trockel, Endlich ahnen, nicht nur wissen', *Artforum International*, No. 93, Feb-March (1988).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 46.

without finding, but is instead an affirmative theory of the pain of the search, of remaining in the search and never getting to an end; being caught here is where the potential for new generation and creation lies. They are staying inside their virgules and thus their life. Wittig agrees that to find 'I' is fatal (at least in a literary sense). She writes,

For when one becomes a locator, when one says 'I' and, in so doing, reappropriates language as a whole, proceeding from oneself alone, with the tremendous power to use all language, it is then and there, according to linguists and philosophers, that the supreme act of subjectivity, the advent of subjectivity into consciousness, occurs. It is when starting to speak that one becomes 'I.' This act – the becoming of *the* subject through the exercise of language and through locution – in order to be real, implies that the locator be an absolute subject. For a relative subject is inconceivable, a relative subject could not speak at all. I mean that in spite of the harsh law of gender and its enforcement upon women, no woman can say I: without being for herself a total subject – that is, ungendered, universal, whole.⁴⁸

Deleuze and Guattari also address this problem of self-identification, asking:

Why have we kept our own names? Out of habit, purely out of habit. To make ourselves unrecognizable in turn. To render imperceptible, not ourselves, but what makes us act, feel, and think ... To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.⁴⁹

They do not stop being 'I' but move beyond it. Wittig becomes imperceptible not by rejecting the 'I', but by expanding it to its utmost limits, and then beyond. Her j/e is not so much divided as completely blown up. She writes, 'The bar in the j/e of *The Lesbian Body* is a sign of excess. A sign that helps to imagine an excess of "I", an "I" exalted. "I" has become so powerful in *The Lesbian Body* that it can attack... nothing resists this "I"'.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3.

⁵⁰ Wittig, *The Straight Mind*, 87.

Trockel practices becoming imperceptible through the balance of being and nothing that the virgule hinges on, as well as through micropolitics/the molecular.⁵¹ Her oeuvre does not consist of shutting identities out, but of embracing them (all). Deleuze and Guattari explain that this is to ‘make a world’ (‘Becoming everybody/everything (*tout le monde*) is to world (*faire monde*), to make a world (*faire un monde*)’.⁵²) In other words, to ‘be like everybody else’.⁵³ To become imperceptible in this case is not to find oneself as a whole being or to entirely deny oneself. It is, instead, to go unnoticed and unnamed. They continue, ‘To go unnoticed is by no means easy. To be a stranger, even to one’s doorman or neighbours. If it is so difficult to be “like” everybody else, it is because it is an affair of becoming. Not everybody becomes everybody... becoming everybody/everything. This requires much asceticism, much sobriety, much creative involution’.⁵⁴ Trockel’s work is, for the most part, the aesthetic realisation of this. Her work is stark, colourless (but for a few bright, although patterned knits). But to be like everyone else? To be a stranger? Yes, she does this too.

I have left out an important detail of Trockel’s *Continental Divide*: within the sixty-nine names that Trockel/Tortured gives to Trockel/Interrogator is her own. A little more than half way through she says it: *her name*, Trockel. But Trockel hardly notices Trockel’s ‘Trockel’. She doesn’t call off the interrogation. Instead, she sarcastically yells, ‘You hit the jackpot! You hit the jackpot!’ Although this may seem like recognition, it could really fit after any name in this work. The search isn’t ended, it continues and remains unfulfilled. Trockel is just another name in a list of meaningless names. We see this same thing happen in *Painting Machine and 56*

⁵¹ Micropolitics is a term used by Deleuze and Foucault to refer to small, individualized political levels. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 213-216.

⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 280.

⁵³ Ibid., 279.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Brushstrokes, when Trockel includes herself amongst the brushes, hers is identical to all the rest, and is thus lost among them. Monique Wittig also reaches this point of imperceptibility in her novel *The Opoponax*, which has been called ‘everybody’s childhood’.⁵⁵ Marguerite Duras praised the novel by calling it ‘a work of art that belongs to us all, that we’ve all written’.⁵⁶

To become imperceptible is to escape symbolic order, to become intensity, but both Trockel and Wittig have bodies, real-world bodies with genitalia that marks them as gendered and that must interact with other real world bodies in the real world. Thus, they are constantly moving towards an imperceptibility, towards becoming something truly other than what is located in their forms, but since their activities and modes of creation stem from those bodies they are always snapped back down to them. This back and forth, this battle between attempt and failure exists within the space of the virgule. This is a symbolic order all Trockel’s own, one in which she creates a feminist art which denies the universality of the body, the self.

As can be seen, Trockel’s artworks are real-world aesthetic examples of how virgolian subjectivity can exist and how she attempts imperceptibility. She makes the rhizome visible; she shows us both the map and the tracing.⁵⁷ With her guidance we see that Brigitte Bardot and Bertolt Brecht create multitudes, they show that myth is an allusion because the other half of myth (the real) is also an allusion. We learn that woman, as depicted through the history of art and the world, is as real as a monkey sewn onto a fish. New histories, forgotten histories of terrorists giving birth to both revolutions and children are discovered because of her knitting and sartorial choices

⁵⁵ Lea D. Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightropes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 136.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Referencing Deleuze and Guattari’s wasp and orchid as examples of the tracing and mapping that is deterritorialization and reterritorialization. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.

(swastikas and playboy bunnies are very in this year). The organic is the mechanic, because both are assemblages of desire, because one needs the other to be created, because Trockel puts our bloody, visceral bodies under glass.

Trockel's becoming imperceptible doesn't end here. (It doesn't end ever, really. It is a constant becoming, a virgolian block). Her 2012 retrospective 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos' demonstrates this to perfection. Even in a retrospective (generally defined as an exhibition of work from an extended period of one artist's activity) she is positioning herself as one among many. Whereas, according to Arthur Danto her 1998 retrospective 'Group Work' 'look[ed] like a group show',⁵⁸ this exhibition *is* a group show. Trockel's work is shown alongside fourteen other artists, all of whom she carefully chose to include. The artists range from unknown outsiders, to long-forgotten superstar botanists, to those who, for whatever reason, are just not as well known as they should be. (Although Trockel's name and gallery-pulling-power has brought them to light, her work does not support them, they are all fascinating and stand on their own.)

The artists include: Morton Bartlett (1901-1992, Chicago) who made exquisitely detailed sculptures of young girls dancing (Figure 5.2). The sculptures were never before displayed, as during his lifetime they served as the artists 'surrogate family',⁵⁹ not artwork in and of themselves. The gorgeous and delicate girls also served as photographic muses (hundreds of photos of them were discovered in Bartlett's home after he died) (Figure 5.3). John James Audubon (1783-1851), the French-American ornithologist, naturalist, and painter is also included in the show, as is Leopold (1822-1895) and Rudolph Blaschka (1857-1939), a father and son team who made

⁵⁸ Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 45.)

⁵⁹ Lynne Cooke, ed., *Rosemarie Trockel, A Cosmos* (New York: The Moncaelli Press, 2012), 45.

impressively realistic glass flowers and marine life specimens. James Castle (1899-1977), one of the primary examples of outsider art in this exhibition, was born in Idaho and never learned to read, write, or even speak.⁶⁰ His parents owned a general store, from which he collected scraps of cardboard and paper. He used this refuse, along with his own saliva mixed with dirt, to create crafty, quirky sculptures of birds and other wildlife (Figure 5.4). At the opposite end of the spectrum is Salvador Dali (1904-1989), whose work *Aphrodisiac Telephone* (1936) (Figure 5.5) is included in 'A Cosmos'. His inclusion further illustrates Trockel's ties with surrealism, but also highlights her sardonic play with male masters. Alongside his lobster-adorned phone, Trockel has brought in her own shellfish: a twenty-eight pound taxidermied lobster. (Crustacean envy, Salvador?) Also in the show is London aristocrat Mary Delany (1700-1780), who began her artistic practice at age 72 after being widowed for a second time. Before her death she created over 995 highly detailed paper flowers. Then there is artist Ruth Francken (1924-2006, Prague) who, like Trockel, can make the commonplace (phones, scissors, alarm clocks) appear beyond threatening (displaying some domestic violence of her own).⁶¹ Following the theme of naturalism, Maria Sybylla Merian (1647-1717, Frankfurt) is also part of the show. She was the daughter of a renowned scientific illustrator and made impressive contributions of her own to the field of zoological illustration. She travelled throughout her life in search of new, exotic plant and insect specimens to use as medicine or food. (A real-life Louise?)⁶² Jose Celestino Mutis (1732-1808, Spain) was also a botanical illustrator, and is included in the show as well. Manuel Montalvo (1937-2009, Madrid) studied painting and won many notable prizes

⁶⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁶¹ See chapter 3 (Domestic / Violence).

⁶² Louise was the character in Raymond Roussel's *Impressions of Africa* who created the painting machine using exotic plants she had discovered in Africa. See chapter 4 (Body/Machine).

for his work, but abandoned this artistic career for a job in the commercial ceramic industry. Toward the end of his life he began making art again, the result of which was the dozens of amazing illustrated journals included in this exhibition. (These books echo Trockel's own book drafts, which are also part of the show. Was Montalvo's beautiful work the inspiration behind Trockel finally revealing her former scribbles as stand alone art pieces?) Resonating with Trockel's interest in insects on film (think her video work *A la Motte* – which, coincidentally, is also in the show) is documentarian turned animator Wladyslaw Starewicz (1882-1965, Moscow). Starewicz began his life making documentaries about insects, but found them too hard to work with when alive. He taught himself stop-motion filmmaking using the corpses of dead insects, which he then used to create fantastical short films. For example, the film shown in the exhibition ('The Cameraman's Revenge') tells the story of Mr. and Mrs. Beetle and their romantic indiscretions. Then there is artist Judith Scott (known for being written about in, and on the cover of, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Touching-Feeling*⁶³) who was deaf, mute, had Down's syndrome, and was institutionalized for most of her life. When her twin sister moved her to California she began to make the art she is known for: objects wrapped in yarn.⁶⁴ Finally, Trockel has included (and collaborated on one work with) Gunter Weseler (1930, Poland). Weseler is known for his 'breathing objects' in which he wraps small motors in fake fur.

⁶³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 22-24.

⁶⁴ Even when Trockel's work isn't completely hidden among the plethora of other work in this retrospective, her own personal role in the show is. She is artist, but also curator, collector, collaborator. And a good one at that – one floor of the New Museum's show is entirely dedicated to a juxtaposition of her work with Judith Scott's. While Scott's yarn is visceral and womanly, Trockel's, hanging on the wall and imitating with all their might colour field paintings (even bearing Miles Davis' songs as titles) are masculine and neutral. (Figure 5.6)

All of these artists, and the wide range of work they bring to the exhibition, demonstrate the non-hierarchical components of Trockel's process and oeuvre. The take-home message that the exhibition itself (the text included in it, anyway) and critics seem to promote is Trockel's lack of style. As the wall-text for the exhibition states, 'Although remarkably inventive and prolific, Trockel has deflected any identifiable stylistic signature'. *Guardian* critic Jason Farago agrees, writing, 'For decades, she has studiously avoided anything that can be called a style'.⁶⁵ What is special about Trockel's work, however, is not a lack of style. (Her work certainly does have a style, as I could walk into the gallery and easily recognize her drawings, her ceramic work, her use of yarn.) What makes her work so intriguing, so special is that her style is rhizomatic, schizophrenic. While I could recognize her older works, I was also ready to believe that any of the other works in the room were made by her, new works in which she was rhizomatically expanding her oeuvre. If the Dali phone or the Starewicz film had been mislabelled as being by Trockel, I would not have doubted it for a second. In fact, this mislabelling has occurred and been believed by several 'experts'; the New Museum is promoting the show using one of Bartlett's dancers, and *The Guardian* identified the sculpture as Trockel's. The caption reads: 'Tiny dancer.... Rosemarie Trockel's *Untitled* (1950-60)' (Figure 5.7). Trockel would have been anywhere from zero to ten years old when the piece was made.⁶⁶ Each artist included in the exhibition are new connection points for Trockel's rhizomatic oeuvre, new constellation points in her cosmos.

The multiple artists and their work included in 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos' not only help with her constant becoming (imperceptible), they also give entirely new

⁶⁵ Jason Farago, 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos Review', *The Guardian*, 8 Nov. (2012)

⁶⁶ This is only one prominent example of the misidentification 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos' has caused. There have been dozens and dozens made in the brief time the show has been open.

meanings, when juxtaposed with her older work, to her oeuvre. For example, one of her living-means adolescents (*Living Means To Appreciate your Mother Nude*) (2001) lies in a vitrine alongside *Fly Me To the Moon* (2011) (Figure 5.8). *Fly Me to the Moon* is a collaboration between Trockel and Weseler, in which a plastic baby lies in a cradle. The young girl with mother issues is now a mother herself, albeit of a possibly dead (the baby has an unnerving fly on its cheek) and disguised (the baby is in a Snoopy costume) infant. Or is that rosy-cheeked child a ruse? Next to it lies a fur mass, decidedly not dead, because it is rising up and down, breathing. Is the girl actually the mother of something more sinister (a bad birth not unlike the mermaid of *Pennsylvania Station*)?

Other works beyond this new collaboration add to Trockel's rhizome. A photograph by Trockel, *Prima-Age* (2012) (Figure 5.9) shows a teenage boy who looks shockingly like the plaster wall model of her 1986 photo *Plasterwall as Model* (Figure 2.16).) Has the young boy grown up and acquired a love of tattoos and botany? What does the automated bell in *As Far as Possible* (2012) (Figure 5.10) have to say about Trockel's *Painting Machine*? While the older machine is broken, this bell is fully functional and even rings on its own. Trockel is expanding her world of celibate machines and machinic desire. Her drawing *Mechanical Reproduction* (1995) (Figure 5.11) also has much to add to the discussion I present in chapter 4 (Body/Machine), as it is the perfect combination of mechanical and organic, another bridge between the two seemingly disparate fields. And of course, when discussing how Trockel is constantly changing and evolving her work, one must mention *Lucky Devil* (2012) (Figure 5.12). This work is composed of Trockel's famous knit canvasses, but she has torn them apart, cut them into squares and topped them with a crab. They are off the wall scraps, and completely new (while being old – they are not new canvasses made just to be torn up,

they are her originals). Who is lucky? Certainly not the critics and collectors who constantly cry out for her knit canvasses.

The exhibition's most notable reworking of old work to new work is its inclusion of Trockel's 'book drafts' and 'unrealised projects'. These works, of which there are hundreds, consist primarily of sketches and dummy books (most of which are empty beyond their covers). Trockel has been creating them throughout her entire career, and while there are many that can be connected to projects which have come to fruition (sketches of characters that will appear in her Bardot/Brecht influenced *Manus Spleen IV* film, for example) the majority of them are connected to what Trockel originally labelled 'failed' projects. In 2002, however, these works began to be shown alongside her other work in museum exhibitions and gallery shows. To resurrect these sketches after they had lain dormant for so long was seen by some critics as an end – as Trockel coming to terms with failure. (Critic Birte Frenssen argued that their addition was due to Trockel's inability to 'recognize the opposition between masterpiece and marginalia'.⁶⁷) But as Gregory Williams explains, 'The act of submitting these "unrealised" books and catalogues years later to the scrutiny of viewers implies as much a reactivation of latent ideas as a laying to rest of failed projects'.⁶⁸ Indeed, to see these book drafts and unrealised projects decades after they, and the works they were connected to, were created is to rethink all of Trockel's oeuvre. At times (infuriatingly indeed) it is to even pre-retroactively or proactively rethink them; the sketches mentioned above are dated two years after *Manus Spleen IV* was made. This return, this spiralling, is an integral part of Trockel's process, what she calls '*derlangsame Entstehungsproze*' (the slow process of creation).⁶⁹ This 'slow process of creation' is a

⁶⁷ Cited in Williams, *Permission to Laugh*, 125.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁶⁹ Cited in Ibid.

continuous becoming. Trockel's work is special because it is not static, but constantly changing, it will never become anything settled. To quote Williams once again, 'The in-between status of the "unrealised" books, editions, and catalogues represents one of Trockel's most radical attempts to embrace the fragmentary as a means of avoiding an unwelcome moment of closure'.⁷⁰

As I explained at the beginning of this thesis, Trockel's work is often seen as infuriating by those who write about her. How could it not be? She is constantly changing, moving forward but backwards, circling and spiralling like a rhizome. Her work has no linear progression, is never on solid ground (what is one day a classic work, her knit canvasses, for example, is the next day cut apart and part of a new work.) How does one label? How does one give credit? How does one judge? Jean-Christophe Ammann's 1998 quote is more relevant now than ever:

When you come to write about Rosemarie Trockel's work, you literally feel the ground cut away from beneath your feet. Even the simplest statements do not seem to work since, when taken together, they act upon complete uncertainty. It is easier to write about this or that work, or collection of works, although, in so doing, you soon get an uneasy feeling that you might be arguing from the particular to the general. This approach itself runs against the grain of her work. Or, perhaps, not, for it is impossible to grasp the sense of that work as a whole. I think, in fact, that one of Rosemarie Trockel's main challenges to the viewer is that she makes it impossible even to think in terms of a possible whole, that is, she prevents you from discussing her work on the basis of seeing it as a whole. The question then arises whether Rosemarie Trockel is aiming to elude any interpretation of her work, whether, in fact, she is being deliberately ambiguous.⁷¹

These questions, this infuriatingly slippery collection of work and process, are what make Trockel's work so very extraordinary. In light of her new retrospective (the new readings I give above being only a small fraction of how my take on her work has changed, evolved along with her) I could start this entire project again (and may very

⁷⁰ Ibid., 126.

⁷¹ Jean-Christophe Ammann, *Rosemarie Trockel* (Kunstahalle Basel & ICA London, 1998), 6.

well need to), finding new connections and new meanings. On the downside I could start my project again. On the plus side, I could start my project again, and again, and again, using the same work and reading them in entirely new ways, in new light, with new connections and juxtapositions. Trockel will continue to make these until she dies. Trockel and her work are always becoming imperceptible, but never arriving at that end point (for when she dies, she is not imperceptible, but dead).

That's the problem of becoming. It never happens (if it happened it wouldn't be a becoming). It is a virgolian block. It doesn't announce itself and it is not easy, not obvious, not even always that interesting. This can be seen in another work in Trockel's retrospective: *The Problem of Becoming*. This photo is just one among many, lined up in an unvisited staircase in the New Museum: a dozen photos in a grid, and *The Problem of Becoming* in a bottom corner of that grid. The photo itself doesn't grab you; it is of an unidentified spongy material, beige against beige, but its title says it all. Becoming is a process, a problematic process that isn't often noticed as it happens, or if it is, is considered infuriating or uneven. Becoming both is and fuels Trockel's *derlangsame Entstehungsproze*. She excels at maintaining the difficult process of becoming; never letting her work become stable or remain static. If her *Schizopullover* were somehow kept on two subjects long enough for them to become one (through a fairy-tale curse, maybe?) she would not hesitate to cut it off of them. Perhaps it would make a cosy outfit for her *Lucky Devil* crab to wear, or perhaps it would be placed amongst the pile of knit canvas scraps below him. Either way, it will, like the vast majority of her work, continue becoming.

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Figure 0.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Schizopullover*



Figure 0.2. Rosemarie Trockel, *Schizopullover*, 1988

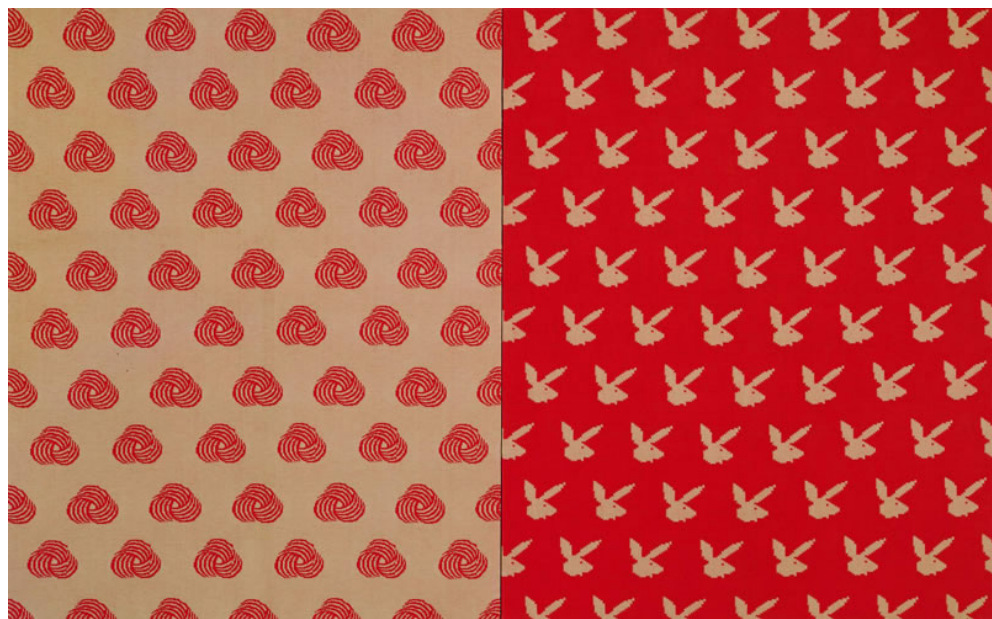


Figure 0.3. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1987

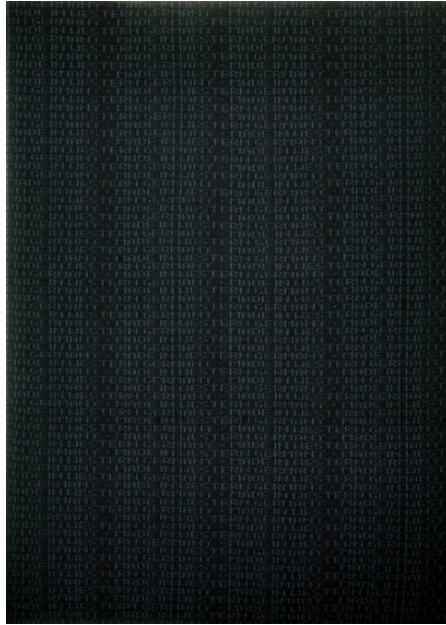


Figure 0.4. Rosemarie Trockel, *Made in West Germany*, 1989

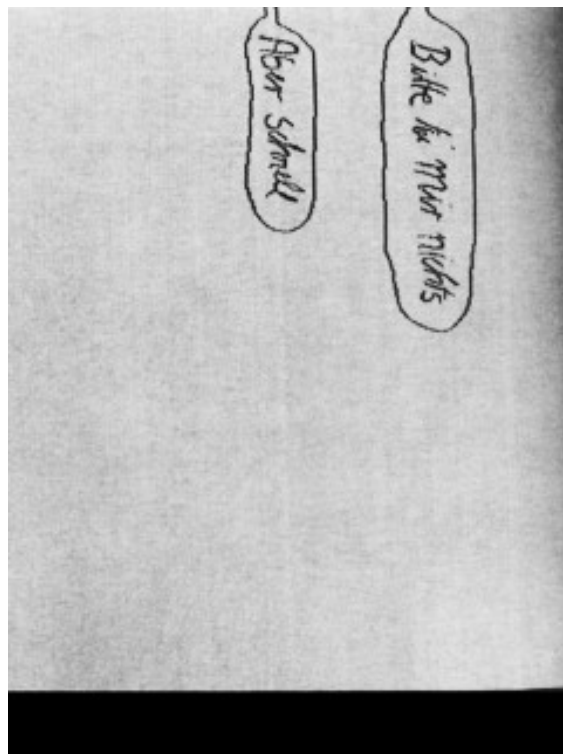


Figure 0.5. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1989



Figure 0.6. Rosemarie Trockel, *Schizopullover*, 1988

ANIMAL -----Centaur-----HUMAN MALE-----Amazon-----FEMALE
 (animal/male) (male/female)

Figure 0.7. Page duBois, *Centaur and Amazons*, 70.



Figure 1.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1993

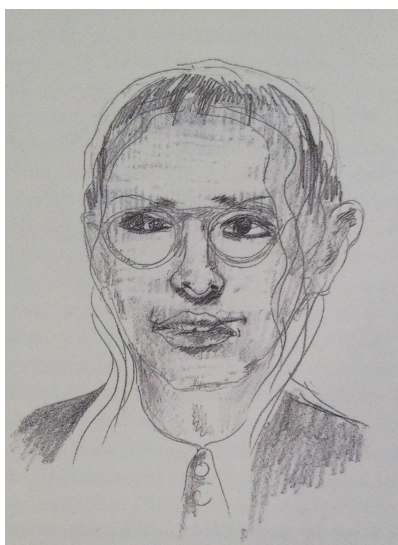


Figure 1.2. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (BB)*, 1993



Figure 1.3. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1993



Figure 1.4. Rosemarie Trockel, *Badot Box Detail*, 1993

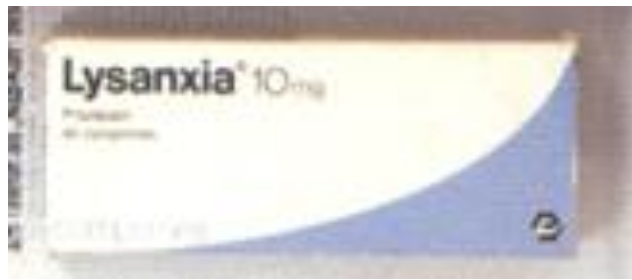


Figure 1.5. Rosemarie Trockel, *Bardot Box Detail*, 1993



Figure 1.6. Andy Warhol, *Tunafish Disasters*, 1963



Figure 1.7. Rosemarie Trockel, Bardot Box Detail, 1993



Figure 1.8. Rosemarie Trockel, *Fan 1*, 1993



Figure 1.9. Rosemarie Trockel, *Fan 2*, 1993



Figure 1.10. Rosemarie Trockel, *Fan 3*, 1993



Figure 1.11. Rosemarie Trockel, *Fan Fini*, 1993

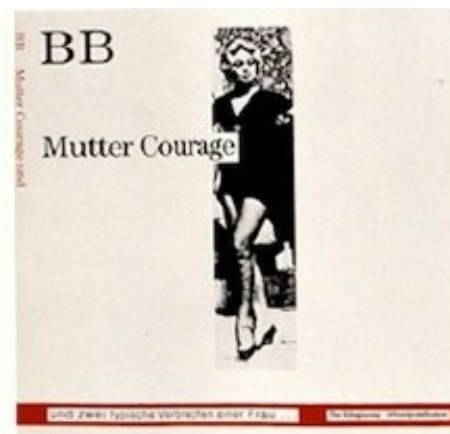


Figure 1.12. Rosemarie Trockel, *BB Mutter Courage und zwei typische Verbrechen einer Frau*, 1993

Manus Spleen 4, 2002 (Videostills)



Figure 1.13, 1.14. Rosemarie Trockel, *Manus Spleen IV*, 2002



Figure 1.15. Rosemarie Trockel, *Manus Spleen IV*, 2002

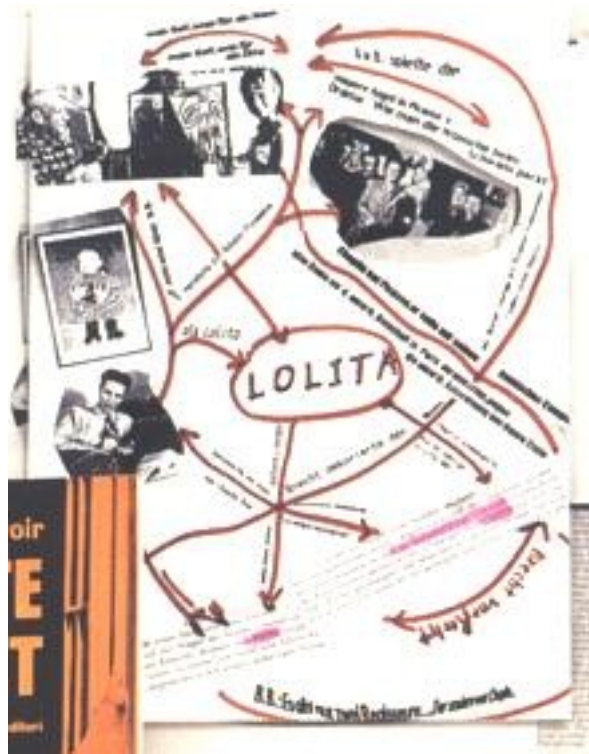


Figure 1.16. Rosemarie Trockel, Bardot Box Detail, 1993



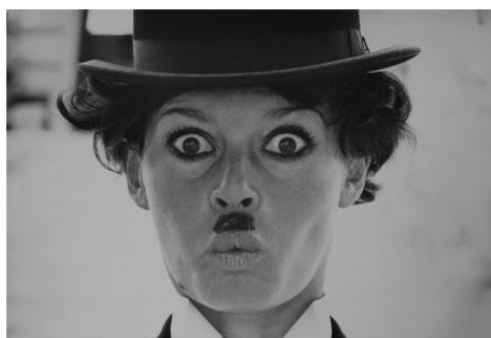
Figure 1.17. Rosemarie Trockel, *Living Means to Appreciate Your Mother Nude*, 2002



Figure 1.18. Rosemarie Trockel. *Living Means Appreciating Your Mother Nude* (Detail), 2002



Figure 1.19. Rosemarie Trockel, *Living Means Not Good Enough*, 2002



Figures 1.20-1.22. On-set photos of Brigitte Bardot dressed as Charlie Chaplin



Figure 1.23. Rosemarie Trockel, *Bardot Box Detail*, 1993

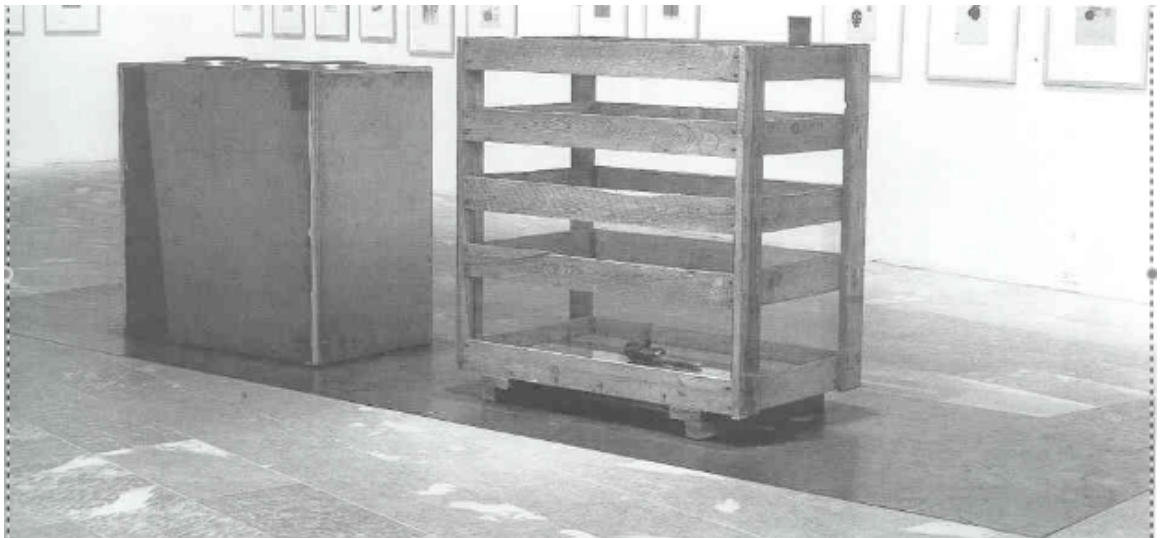


Figure 2.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Pennsylvania Station*, 1987



Figure 2.2. Donald Judd, *A Good Chair is a Good Chair*, 2010



Figure 2.3. Donald Judd, *Galvanized Iron 17*, 1973



Figure 2.4. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1988



Figure 2.5. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1992



Figure 2.6. Richard Serra, *Charlie Chaplin*, 1978



Figure 2.7. Rosemarie Trockel, *Pennsylvania Station* (detail), 1987

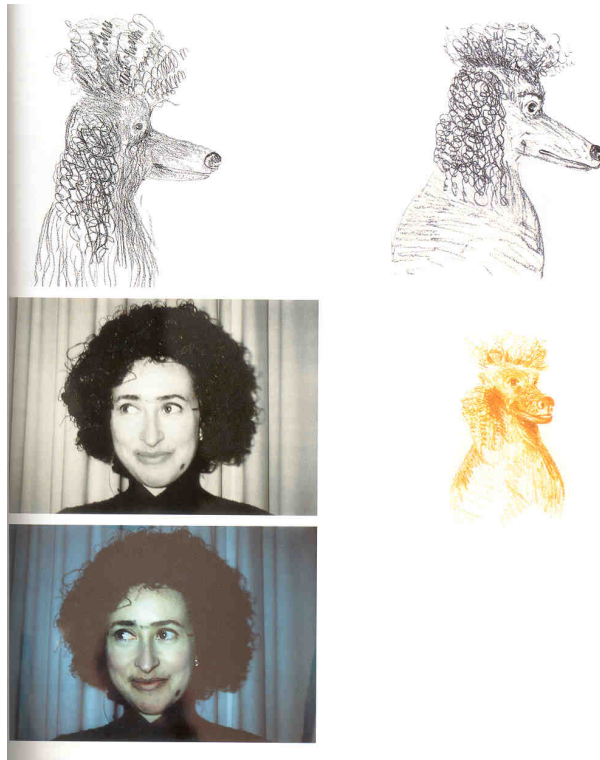


Figure 2.8. Rosemarie Trockel, *Ohne Titel (Pudel + Frau) (Untitled (Poodle + Woman))*, 1988-1996

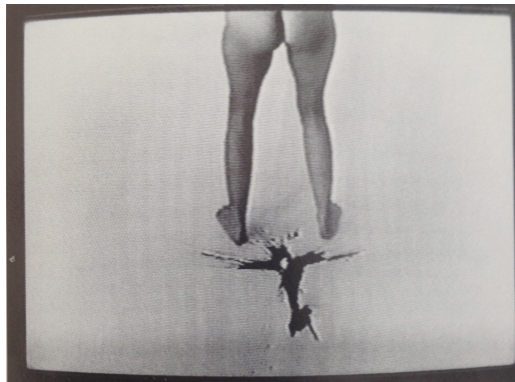


Figure 2.9. Rosemarie Trockel, *Out of the Kitchen, Into the Fire*, 1993



Figure 2.10. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1987



Figure 2.11. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1987

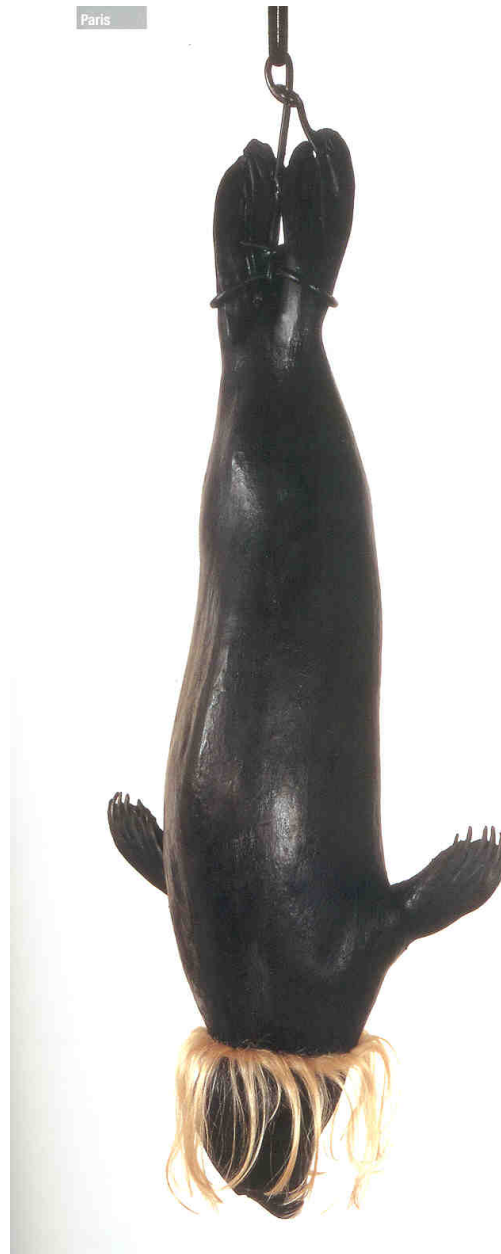


Figure 2.12. Rosemarie Trockel, *Es gibt kein unglücklicheres Wesen unter der Sonne, als einen Fetischisten, der sich nach einem Frauenschuh sehnt und mit dem ganzen Weib vorlieb nehmen mufs* K.K.:F. ("There is no unhappier being under the sun than a fetishist who longs for a woman's shoe and has to make due with the whole woman" K.K.:F.), 1991



Figure 2.13. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1995

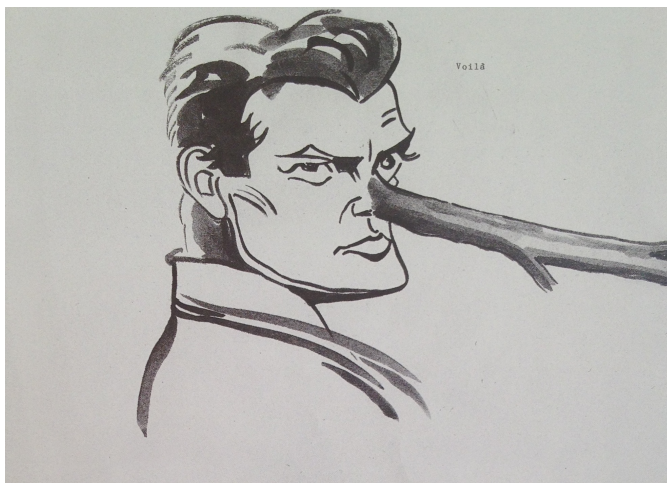


Figure 2.14. Rosemarie Trockel, *Voilà*, 1995



Figure 2.15. Rosemarie Trockel, *Hande hoch (hands up)*, 1997

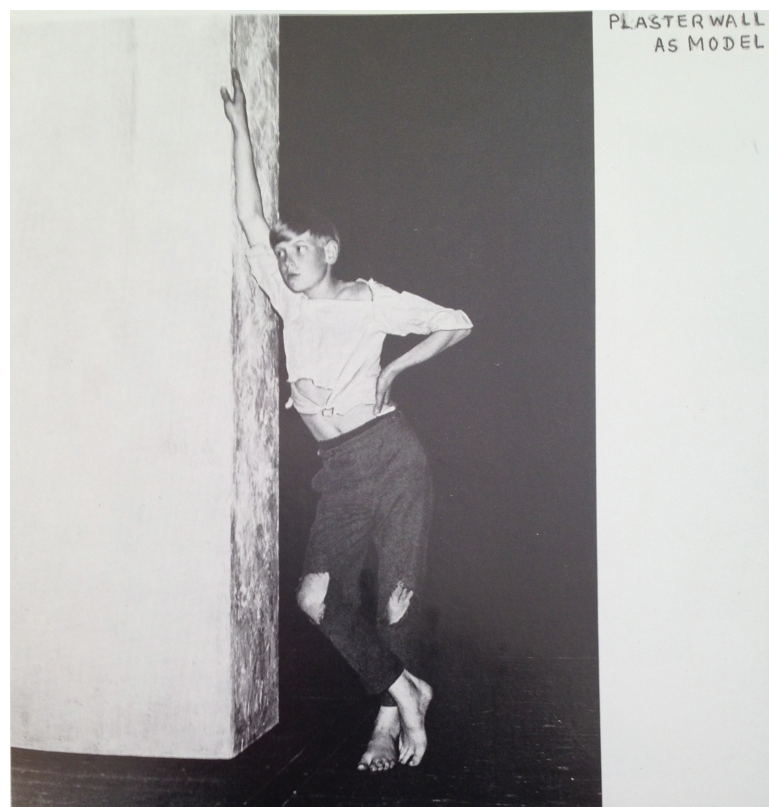


Figure 2.16. Rosemarie Trockel, *Plasterwall as Model*, 1982



Figure 2.17. Rosemarie Trockel, *Sleeping Beauty*, 2000

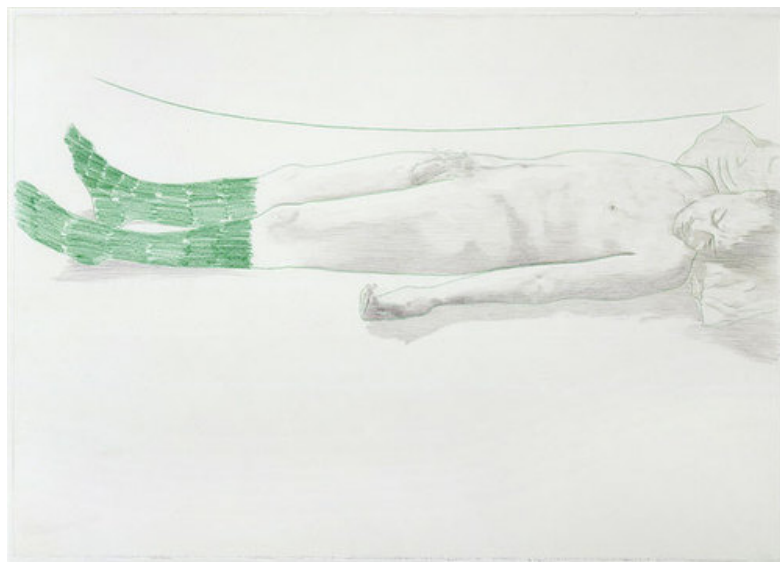


Figure 2.18. Rosemarie Trockel, *Dozing Nicolas*, 2000



Figure 2.19. Rosemarie Trockel, *Sea World*, 1998



Figure 2.20. Rosemarie Trockel, *Sea World*, 1998



Figure 2.21. Rosemarie Trockel, *Sea World*, 1998



Figure 2.22. Barnum's *Feejee Mermaid*



Figure 2.23, 2.24. Ads for Barnum's Feejee Mermaid



Figure 2.25. Renee Magritte, *Invention Collective*, 1934



Figure 2.26. Renee Magritte, *Representation*, 1937



Figure 2.27. Renee Magritte, *Le Viol*, 1934

ANDRÉ BRETON
**QU'EST-CE QUE LE
 SURRÉALISME?**



RENÉ HENRIQUEZ, FILLOU
 Rue d'Alsace, 12. BRUXELLES

Figure 2.28. Andre Breton, *Qu'est-ce que le surrealisme?*, 1934



Figure 2.29. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1984



Figure 2.30. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 2005

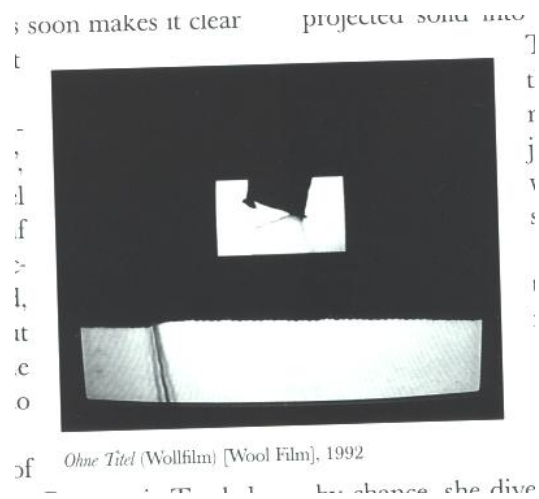


Figure 2.31. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Wool Film)*, 1992



Figure 2.32. Rosemarie Trockel, *Godforsaken Frame*, 1993

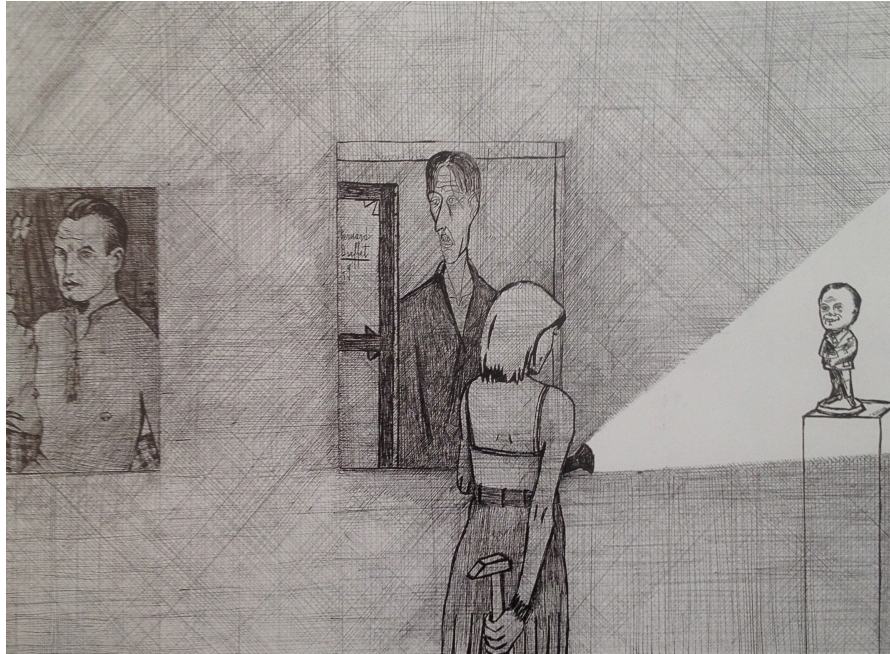


Figure 2.33. Rosemarie Trockel, *L'Amitié franco-allemande (the Franco-German Friendship)* 1993



Figure 2.34. Rosemarie Trockel, *Aus (From Yvonne)*, 1997



Rosemarie Trockel, Senza titolo, installazione, 2005

Figure 2.35. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 2005



Figure 2.36. Rosemarie Trockel, *Ohne Titel (Frau ohne Unterleib) (Untitled) (Woman Without a Lower Half)*, 1998



Figure 2.37. Georges de la Tour, *The Cheat with the Ace of Diamonds*, 1635



Figure 3.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Dress*, 1986

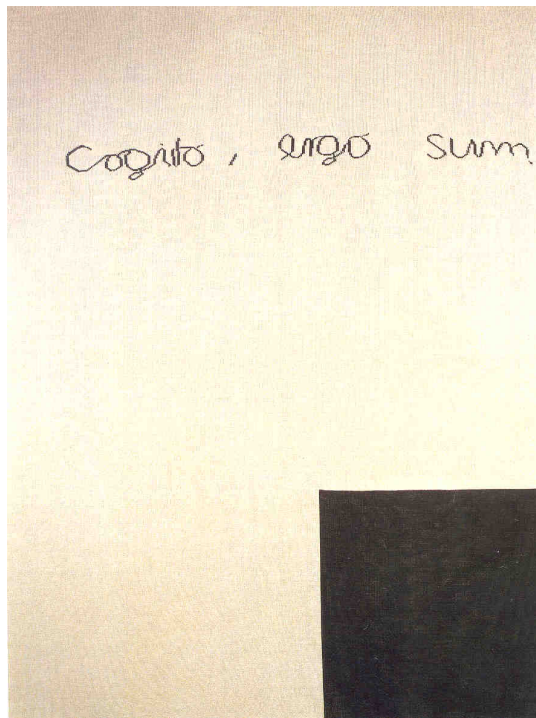


Figure 3.2. Rosemarie Trockel, *Cogito, ergo sum*, 1988



Figure 3.3. Rosemarie Trockel, *Balaklava*, 1986



Figure 3.4. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1988



Figure 3.5. Rosemarie Trockel, *Balaklava*, 1986

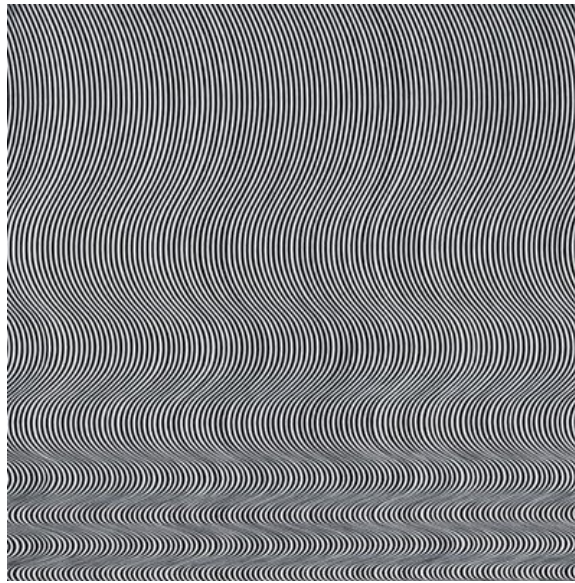
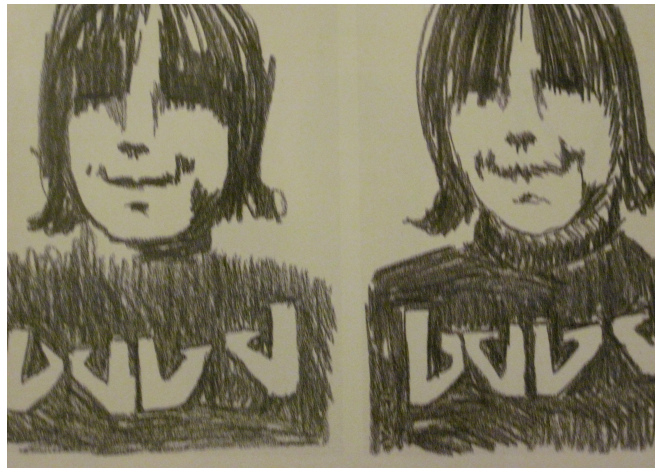


Figure 3.6 Bridget Riley, *Fall*, 1963



Figure 3.7. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Gudrun in 4-Pullover und Freundin)*, 1997



Figures 3.8, 3.9. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1997



Figure 3.10. Rosemarie Trockel *Untitled (Barbara Streisand and Che Guevera)*, 1997



Figure 3.11. Rosemarie Trockel, *Ohne Titel (Hasenpaar, forewarned is forearmed)* (*Untitled (Hare Couple, forewarned is forearmed)*), 1998



Figure 3.12. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1997



Figure 3.13. Kluge, et. al., *Film Still, Germany in Autumn*, 1978 (from actual video footage of Ensslin and Baader's burial)

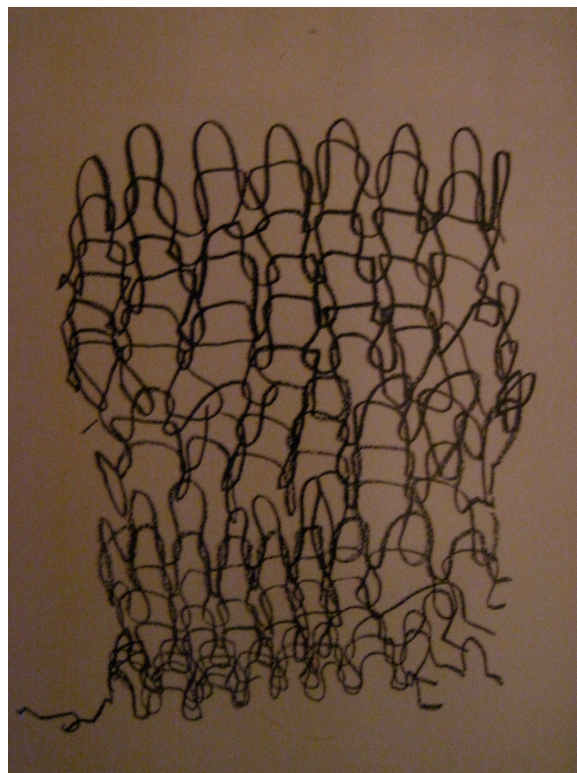


Figure 3.14. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Self Portrait)*, 1995



Figure 3.15. Gerhard Richter, *Hanged*, 1988



Figure 3.16. Gerhard Richter, *Man Shot Down*, 1988



Figure 3.17. Gerhard Richter, *Confrontation 2*, 1988

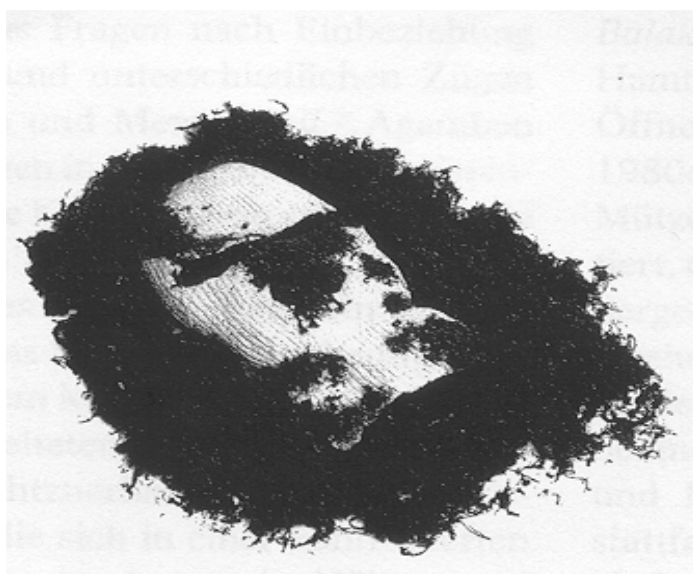


Figure 3.18. Rosemarie Trockel, *Burrow for Bats*, 1989



Figure 3.19. Rosemarie Trockel, *Mono Zustand*, 1987



Figure 4.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Painting Machine*, 1990



Figure 4.2. Rosemarie Trockel, *56 Brushstrokes*, 1990



Figure 4.3. Rosemarie Trockel, *A la Motte*, 1993



Figure 4.4. Rosemarie Trockel, *Less Sauvages Than the Others*, 2012



Figure 4.5. Rosemarie Trockel, *Haarzeichnungen (Hair Drawings)*, 1990



Figure 4.6. Man Ray, *Self Portrait*, 1916



Figure 4.7. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Eva in Trance with Ectoplasm)*, 1989

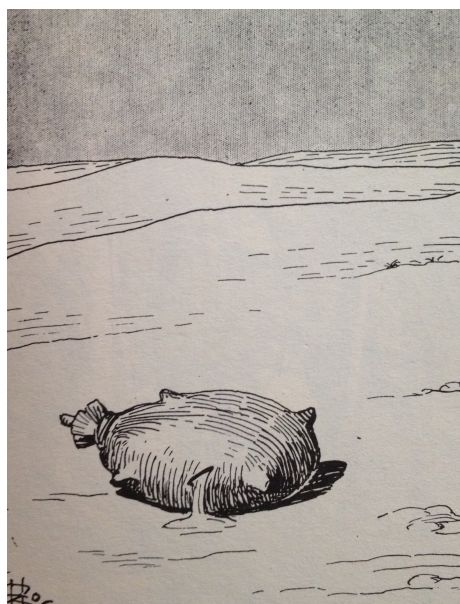


Figure 4.8. *Image from Roussel*



Figure 4.9, 4.10. Mediums emitting ectoplasm during séances, Getty Images.



Figure 4.11. Rosemarie Trockel, *Hydrocephalus II*, 1982

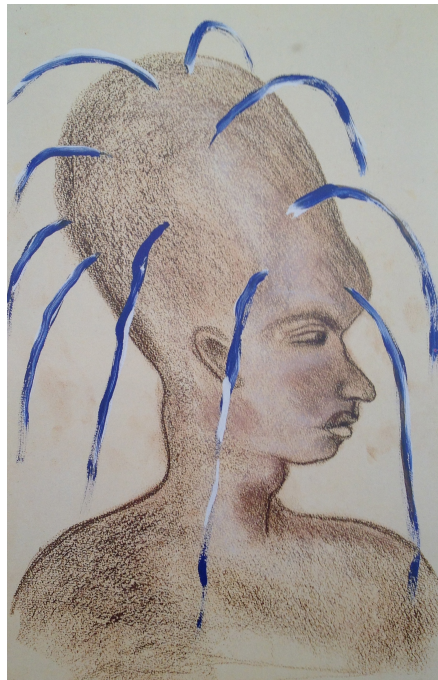


Figure 4.12. Rosemarie Trockel, *Hydrocephalus*, 1983



Figure 4.13. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1988

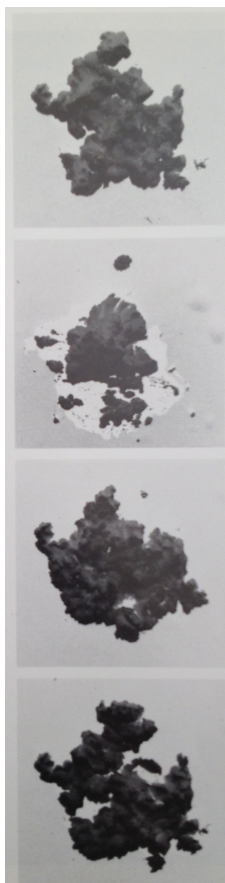


Figure 4.14. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Negative Egg White)*, 1993

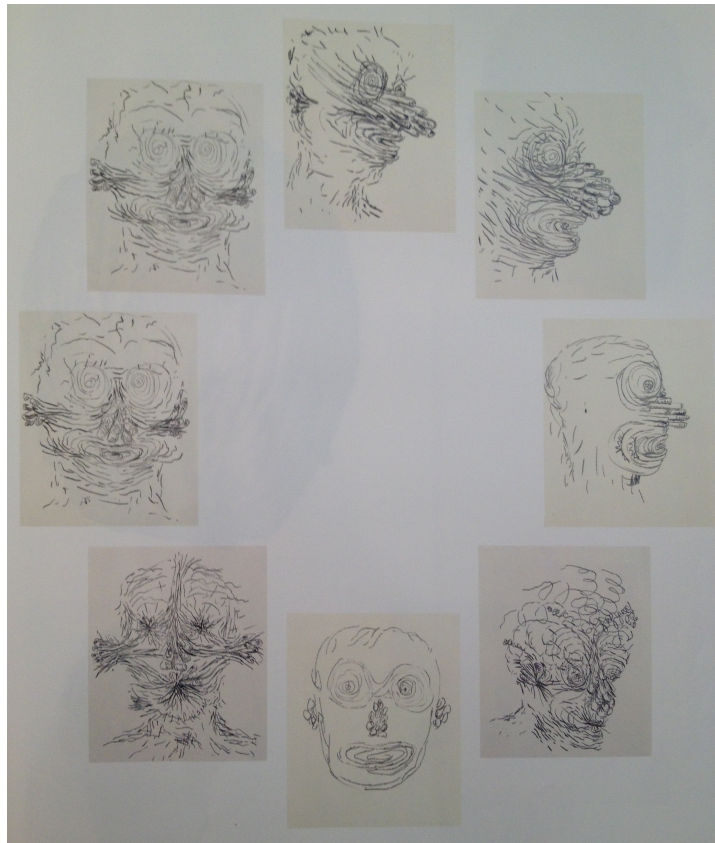


Figure 4.15. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Mother)*, 1995



Figure 4.16. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1991



Figure 5.1. Rosemarie Trockel, *Continental Divide*, 1994

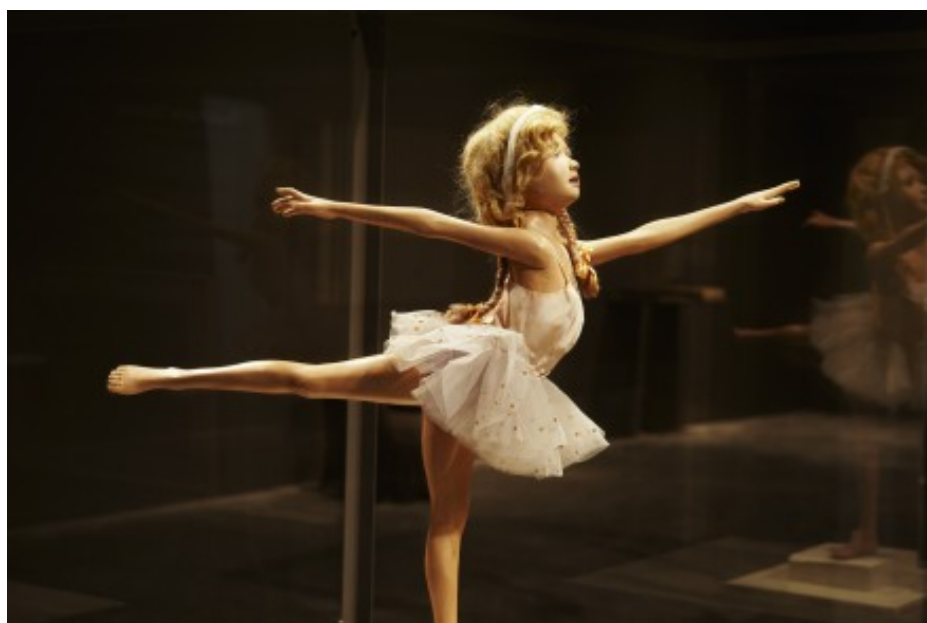


Figure 5.2. Morton Bartlett, *Untitled*, 1950-1960



Figure 5.3. Morton Bartlett, *Untitled* (photographs), 1950-1960



Figure 5.4. James Castle. *Exhibition view of untitled works in 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos'*



Figure 5.5. Salvador Dali, *Aphrodisiac Telephone*, 1936



Figure 5.6. *Exhibition view of work by Judith Scott and Rosemarie Trockel in 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos'*



Tiny dancer ... Rosemarie Trockel's *Untitled* (1950-60). Photograph: Benoit Pailley

Rosemarie Trockel, the shrewdest and most slippery artist to emerge

Figure 5.7. *Mislabelled photo (from the Guardian)*

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Figure 5.8. Rosemarie Trockel and Gunter Weseler, *Fly Me to the Moon*, 2012

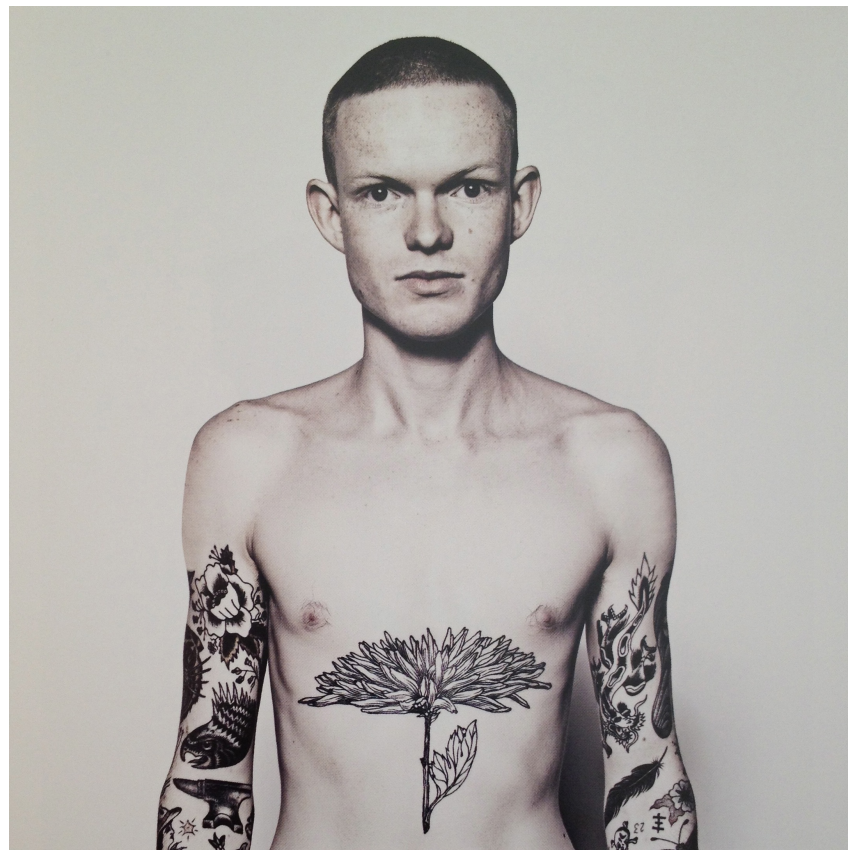


Figure 5.9. Rosemarie Trockel, *Prima-Age*, 2012

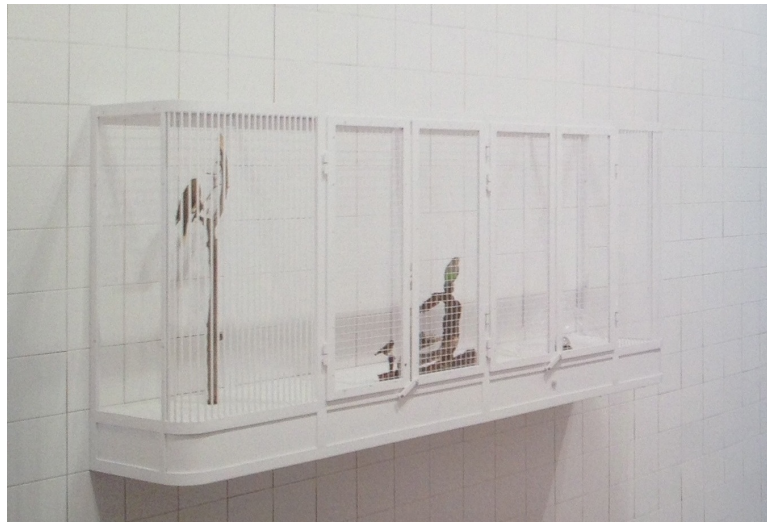


Figure 5.10. Rosemarie Trockel, *As Far As Possible*, 2012



Figure 5.11. Rosemarie Trockel, *Mechanical Reproduction*, 1995



Figure 5.12. Rosemarie Trockel, *Lucky Devil*, 2012