

## TWO INTERVENTIONS ON BODIES FOR A SYMPOSIUM (1989)

1. The Subject as a Limit-Zone of Collective Bodies (6,500 Words)
2. Why Body? What Body? And What Collapses? (1,320 Words)

Both texts came about in the occasion of the colloquium "Body Narratives: Collapsing Boundaries", organised by Brian Massumi for the Comparative Literature Program at McGill University in early February 1989.

# 1. THE SUBJECT AS A LIMIT-ZONE OF COLLECTIVE BODIES: BAKHTIN, HOBBS, FREUD, FOUCAULT, AND COUNTING (slightly redone in 2000, 6,500 words)

If I wrote a book called The World as I Found It, I should have to include in it a report on my body.... The subject does not belong to the world, it is a limit of the world.

Wittgenstein, Tractatus 5.631-32

The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the societal relations.

Marx, Theses on Feuerbach 6

0. In the lengthy debates on the subject of The Subject, one central point has to my mind emerged clearly: that on the one hand we cannot do without it, but that on the other we cannot do with the old (Cartesian) individualist or atomic Subject either. In this preliminary paper -- which aims to clear the ground for further work on what this non-Cartesian Subject might be, and in particular how are we to speak about its imagination -- I propose, first, to summarize and interpret the indications about body collective (popular) vs. body personal (private) in M.M. Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World book (further cited as R with the page of English translation) in order to see what general illumination for rethinking the subject may derive from them.

It should be obvious even on the basis of this single work that Bakhtin is not simply (possibly not even primarily) a literary critic. More precisely, any interpretation of literature was for him not only a part of linguistic dialogue within a sociohistorical semiotics -- this should be sufficiently proved by his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* -- but it was entirely immersed into the pragmatics of people's deeds (**postupok**). The continuity between actions and speech, mediated by such material events as gestures and, especially, laughter as well as by such generic categories as everyday oral genres and by the overarching polarization between official, normative, and serious vs. subversive, deviant or festive behavior, was for Bakhtin seamless.

I draw from Bakhtin's magisterial and deeply -- if rather idiosyncratically -- materialist approach two conclusions: 1/ that any discussion of subject is necessarily continuous with (and possibly in part causally dependent on) a discussion of the body; and 2/ of the body collective at least as much as the body personal. Further, the discussion of bodies has often (and the discussion of subjects has almost invariably) been associated with a discussion of societal order and human survival. I propose in the rest of the paper to look, from a somewhat modified Bakhtinian approach, at some prominent positions in discourses about the subject and the body by Hobbes and Freud. In that light, their individualistic position -- i.e. the assumption of a fragmented collective body and the resulting monadic individual subjectivities as the undisputed ontological horizon -- is correlative to a final horizon of Death, vainly staved off by the investments of outward energy to the State or to a privatized Eros. Some prospects of breaking out of this horizon of destruction are finally adumbrated, from Feuerbach through Marx and possible updatings of Marxism (mainly by materialist feminism) to what I see as the impasse of Foucault.

## Part 1. Bakhtin

Bakhtin focusses in a good part of his epoch-making book on "images of the human body" with its intake, digestion, and output of matter -- mainly nourishment, defecation, and sex -- (R 18), as well as with its "popular-festive" (R 196) behavior, best seen in laughter. In this respect Rabelais is for him only the

articulated culmination of a general Renaissance attitude and principle, based on plebeian humor (which Bakhtin calls "grotesque realism," a term due mostly to tactics necessary within the normative ideology of his moment and which will be cited here where unavoidable without adopting it as my own meta-language). Within this behavior and attitude, the material body has a plebeian "festive and utopian" aspect -- it is joyously open onto a fusion of personal with cosmic and social elements:

The grotesque body...is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed: it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world....[T]he essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, ...in which it conceives a new, second body....Next to the bowels and the genital organs is [the role of] the mouth, through which enters the world to be swallowed up....Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body -- all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body. In all these events the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven. (R 317)

Bakhtin opposes this "collective ancestral body of all the people, continually growing and renewed" to the "private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life," e.g. "the biological individual, the bourgeois ego" (R 19). The positive pole is associated with the themes of fertility, growth, abundance, and openness -- in sum, with a *dynamic circulation and renewal of living matter* against the horizon of "a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception" (R 318). The negative pole is the purely individual body, associated with isolation, fragmentation, closure, abstract idealism, and other forms of what we would today call alienation, in particular with "the 'economic man'" (R 19).

All forms of grotesque realism "turn their subject into flesh" (R 20); they link the characteristic collective laughter with a "downward" movement towards the lower body (in particular the belly and genitalia), which is opposed to the face or the head. However, already in *Don Quixote* an alienating split begins between the allegorically named Sancho Panza (the plebeian belly as servant) and Quixote the abstract idealist master -- even though their pairing is read by Bakhtin as "a bodily and popular corrective to individual idealistic and spiritual pretense" (R 22). Cervantes is thus a witness to the beginning of a historical phase in which "bodies and objects begin to acquire a private, individual nature; they [become] petty and homely..., immovable parts of private life, the goal of egotistic lust and possession" (R 23). Indeed, the whole "Renaissance realism" is a contradictory tension between two types of imagery belonging to different world-views: "the folk culture of humor,... the ever-growing, inexhaustible, ever-laughing principle which uncrowns and renews" vs. the bourgeois "[completely] atomized being...: the petty, inert 'material principle' of class society" (R 24). Subsequent European fiction witnesses "the breaking away of the body... from the collective, growing, and continually renewed body of the people...." (R 23). It forgets the "unfinished and open body... blended with the world, with animals, with objects... [that] represents the entire material bodily world in all its elements," a body that is (significantly) "an incarnation of this world...as the swallowing up and generating principle" (R 26-27). The image of the body is now one of "[an] individual, strictly limited mass, [an] impenetrable façade. The opaque surface and the body's 'valleys' acquire an essential meaning as the border of a closed individuality that does not merge with other bodies and the world....The verbal norms of official and literary language... prohibit all that is linked with fecundation, pregnancy, childbirth." (R 320)

I propose to identify as Bakhtin's central vision here the typological tension between two polar conceptions of the body. In these conceptions fact and value are indissolubly fused, since they are simultaneously an ideal synchronic morphological choice and a real diachronic sociohistorical sequence. I suggest that his dominant image is one of an upside-down (heretic or grotesque) *incarnation*. This "cosmic and universal" (R 318) plebeian variant of the world's body is continuous and in a feedback with the whole of external nature. From his characteristic and not yet adequately recognized Christian Communist angle,<sup>1/</sup> Bakhtin opposes this collective incarnation to a divided, atomized and privatized

*individualism*, which comports "the completed, self-sufficient individuality of the given [isolated, lone, fenced off] body" (R 29). The upshot of, and gravest accusation against, this split in the "contradictory unity" of the particular and the universal (R 23) is that "[t]he individual body was presented apart from its relation to the ancestral body of the people" (R 29). It is sundered from the immortality of mankind as a whole, from concern for those yet unborn (Rabelais's **qui ne sont encore nés**), from "[t]he downward movement... directed toward this joyous future" (R 378). If additional justification of the "make love not war" kind were necessary, Bakhtin quite pertinently cites the protest by Montaigne (which was formulated at a crucial historical juncture subtending what Freud will precisely call "repression"):

What harm has the genital act, so natural, so necessary, and so lawful, done to humanity, that we dare not speak of it without shame, and exclude it from serious and orderly conversation? We dare utter kill, rob, betray: and should we only dare utter the other under our breath?... [Yet t]here is no person of any age or morals but knows [these least written and most hushed up words] as well as he knows the word bread....(And the sex that does it most is charged with hushing it up.) (R 320 -- Montaigne III.5, II: 270)

## Part 2. Hobbes

The central pertinent hypothesis, then, flowing from the Bakhtinian positions is that the normative bourgeois discourse of the body, its sensations and desires, has been not only reductive but also dogmatically individualistic and atomized. In Bakhtin's terms, within a bourgeois image of the body (and of the subject) all of its functions, from eating through elimination and sex to laughter, have between the early Renaissance and the 18th Century diametrically shifted their meaning (just as the term "subject" has, which originally meant "object," cf. Suvin 1988: 687): "they have been transferred to the private and psychological level where their connotation becomes narrow and specific, torn away from the direct relation to the life of society and to the cosmic whole. In this new connotation they can no longer carry on their former philosophical functions." (R 321) Perhaps the clearest example (also possibly the historically crucial emergence) of where a consistent bourgeois episteme comes from, and how it has been set up, is in Hobbes. A lover of geometry who had been in personal contact with both Bacon and Descartes, Hobbes wrote his central text *Leviathan* (1651 -- further cited as L with page number) in between a work on the body politic (*De corpore politico*) and one on the body physical (*De corpore*):

The Word **Body**... signifieth that which filleth, or occupyeth some certain room, or imagined place; and dependeth not on the imagination, but is a real part of that we call the **Universe**. For the **Universe**, being the Aggregate of all Bodies, there is no real part thereof that is not also Body.... (L 210)

Correlatively to this mechanics, sensation and passions are from Hobbes on seen as a kind of kinetic energy. Thus his system begins with the discussion of "bodies natural" (i.e. motions of extensional bodies in space), continues with the "dispositions and manners of men" (i.e. psychology), and ends with "the civil duties of subjects" (cited in Turner 87). His *Leviathan* ranges from "natural persons" of individuals to the "feigned or artificial persons" entailed by the existence of civil society (L 83-85); from an inquiry into "Man" in Part 1 to the collective *Leviathan* of "Artificial Man." Both Freud's scientism -- e.g., his central submerged metaphor of bodily apparatus, which will by the 19th Century be updated from mechanics into thermodynamics -- and his technique of associations are prefigured by Hobbes's account of human sensation and imagination (cf. L 3-10) and then of reason and desire (passions). Building on the first thoroughgoing and disenchanting individualism (L 13), Hobbes defined the human condition as contention between people who are by nature, generically, "equal, in the faculties of body, and mind" (L 63) and thus -- characteristically -- able "to destroy, or subdue one another" (L 63). In a famous formula, society is "such a war, as is of every man, against every man" (L 64). To prevent "continual fear, and danger of

violent death" (L 65), i.e. universal destruction, a "body politic," the State, is created by a societal contract and defined as a multitude of men "united [into a real unity] in one person" (L 89), by a common power, for their common peace, defence, and benefit. The conclusion of *Leviathan* characterizes its endeavour as a "Discourse of... Government, occasioned by the disorders of the present time," with the only design "to set before men's eyes the mutuall Relation between Protection and Obedience" (L 391).

Obviously, Hobbes's body politic is an individualist laicization, following upon the assumptions of a capitalist market (cf. Macpherson 78-79) and upon the English Civil War, of earlier more numinous or indeed mystical politico-cosmological bodies, ubiquitous in class society from the *Rigveda* through Plato's *Timaeus* to the Middle Ages. Two of its best known European variants were the Christian Church and the absolute monarchy (whose heads were respectively Christ and the Monarch, the latter having therefore "two bodies," so to speak an extensional and an official one). The old vertical topology of both is most familiar to us from Dante's *Comedy* (the Thomist or religious variant) and from the 16th-17th Century playwrights of west Europe such as Lope, Corneille, and Shakespeare. Indeed, Shakespeare's *King Lear* persuasively signifies the collapse from within of this "organic monarchy" variant of corporativism, thus setting up Hobbes's problem. However, parallel to the vertical topologies of class society, tribal proto-communism transmitted to plebeian classes, and to philosophers, memories of different -- equally "organic" and value-laden, even more richly differentiated, yet non-hierarchical -- topology. This Epicurean or self-governing variant can be found in an archipelago of heterodox and heretical testimonies emerging from the ocean of State repression -- in literature, say, from Lucretius through Thomas More to Morris and beyond (cf. Suvin 1979). After Bakhtin, it is most familiar to us through Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Hobbes's major achievement is to have drawn from the revolutionary events around him the conclusion that "civil philosophy" is as "demonstrable" as geometry, for both are human products (Vico will remember this to great advantage): "because we make the commonwealth ourselves" (Hobbes 7: 184). In at the demonstrable remaking of the commonwealth by people and at the dethroning of the old collective bodies, so well symbolized by the beheading of Charles I, Hobbes still remembers in some way their quondam existence, but he is already unable to speak and conceive of any collective entity except as a forcibly fabricated mechanical artifice, necessary to ward off the major evil of unceasing, violent civil warfare between unbridled individuals. In his disjointed continuity between the natural and the artificial body, the topology is collapsed into a geometry, "a flat social landscape...without any visible contours of social distinction to bar [the atomic individual's] path or predetermine his line of motion" (Wolin 282). We are already in an almost fully quantified and highly reductionist world vision and practice, halfway between Descartes and Newton, or between Bacon and Adam Smith. We are thus also on the main road to Freud -- to whom I now come.

### Part 3. Freud

It is only after this evolution that it becomes possible (and possibly up to a significant point legitimate, i.e. for the social class of Freud's patients) to formulate the Freudian individualist discourses of orality, anality, narcissism, etc. In this clearly alienated "new canon", the dialectics of the particular and the universal is practically and semantically foreclosed. Most important, as Bakhtin points out:

[The body] is self-sufficient and speaks in its name alone. ... Therefore, all the events taking place within it acquire one single meaning: death is only death, it never coincides with birth; old age is torn away from youth; blows merely hurt, without assisting an act of birth. All actions and events are interpreted on the level of a single, individual life....In the grotesque body, on the contrary, death brings nothing to an end, for it does not concern the ancestral body, which is renewed in the next generation. (R 321-22)

It is not necessary to share fully Bakhtin's extreme populism (what I have elsewhere called his **muzhik-worship**) and distaste for the individual body to acknowledge that his ideal typology presents a serious, and I believe fundamental, challenge to all theories of the subject that ahistorically or indeed anti-historically assume the bourgeois individualist body as the exclusive or at least the methodologically central point of investigation into personality and subjectivity. I can here glance only at one of Freud's discursive foci, his final considered founding of the human psychic apparatus. However, this is to my mind quite sufficiently representative, since his whole final theory would seem to be based on it.

Freud's "doctrine of instincts" is entirely dependent upon two presuppositions. First, the instincts are not only asocial but also opposed to any socialization as the biological foundation of each individual; this opens the door to such frankly reactionary statics as Jung's. Second, they are split into two diametrically and mechanically opposed forces, the Eros instinct and the Destruction instinct. The goal of the Eros drive is "to connect into larger units and thus to preserve, the goal of the [Destruction drive] is on the contrary to dissolve connections and thus to destroy things; therefore we call it also the Death Drive." With his usual scrupulous scientificity, Freud loyally acknowledges that he immediately gets into methodological difficulties since he cannot find a symmetry between these two -- **ex hypothesi** equally basic -- drives or instincts. The Death drive obeys his "[presupposed] formula that a drive strives for the return to a former state"; the Eros drive does not obey this rule since "this would presuppose that the living substance was once a unity, which has subsequently been torn apart and now solicits (**ansteckt**) the reunion" (11). It is most interesting that Freud adds here a footnote to the effect that poets have fantasized such states of primordial living unity, but that "the history of living substance shows nothing that would correspond to it": for this is precisely the point where his individualism and scientism prevent him from envisaging a human collective more intimately united than a mere Hobbesian balance of terror (or mere protozoic blobness, not too far from the famous "ant-heap of socialism"). The same unexplained asymmetry arises when Freud can find no term for the energy of the Destruction drive which would be analogous to libido (the total energy of the Eros drive). Having briefly exposed this problem, Freud litotically notes that this entails psychoanalysis "will find it relatively easy to follow the fortunes of the libido, while this is more difficult with the Destruction drive" (12). Nonetheless, and just as characteristically, he then proceeds to more or less forget this -- to my mind debilitating -- crack in the very fundament of his whole psychoanalytic building.<sup>2/</sup>

Two conclusions are possible then: either Bakhtin's thesis of a collective body dialectically blending particular people with the universal people is what Freud would call a poetic fancy, on the order of Thales's and Plato's "androgynous"; or Freud's quite Newtonian talk about the two fundamental drives being analogous "to the oppositional pair of attraction and repulsion that rules the inorganic realm" (11), and the whole resulting combinatorics between these drives that for him explains all human biological functions, is sadly inadequate and hermeneutically inferior to an approach at least akin to or stimulated by Bakhtin's. Such an approach could easily avail itself of the insights from a more prudent and (literally) less narcissistic psychology. Some of Schilder's conclusions about the "social relations of the body-image" may serve as a pointer toward and testimony for that:

Body-images are never isolated. They are always encircled by the body-images of others....Body-images are on principle social. Our own body-image is never isolated but is always accompanied by the body-images of others....Our own body-image and the body-image of others are not primarily dependent upon each other; they are equal, and the one cannot be explained by the other....There is continuous interchange between parts of our own body-image and the body-images of others....The body-images of others and their parts can be integrated completely with our own body-image and can form a unit, or they can be simply added to our own body-image and then merely form a sum. (240-41)

To the contrary, in Freud's perspective eating is considered as "a destruction of the object with the goal of incorporation" and the sexual act as "an aggression with the goal of the most intimate union" (11).

This defining focusses on a Hobbesian outer destruction or aggression to which the only possible compensation is individual inner satisfaction. I do not see what in this approach cannot be subsumed into Bakhtin's scheme as a degenerate case. Now, alas, let me add that I doubt this scheme can be extrapolated from Rabelais's and similar writings to a millennia- long dominant popular reality without significant restrictions: all literature partakes of daydream and proceeds by way of what Freud most perspicaciously called **Verdichtung** (condensation) and **Verschiebung** (displacement). And furthermore, I do not think that Bakhtin's book *Freudianism*, published under the name of Medvedev, presents the strongest possible case against the limitations of Freud, so that it will not be considered here. Nonetheless and on the contrary, Bakhtin's optimal case, for which he and other investigators seem to have assembled impressive evidence (whether such an ideal type is historically locatable in a pure form or not), is not to be accounted for by Freud's scientific scheme. If one has to choose between these alternatives, Bakhtin would be my choice as the formally stronger hypothesis to begin with. Moreover, to go beyond formal hermeneutic syntactics and into the semantics of value and sense-making: in a nutshell, for Bakhtin Death in the collective body of the people is always interwoven with (Re)Birth; for Freud Death is the inexplicable but constant final horizon of a Schopenhauerian painful individuation, where each and every libido is, for all its desperate strife with others over the spoils of pleasure, doomed to a thermodynamic death of its microcosm (cf. Marcuse 25 and passim, Jaggar 151). In that sense, without denying Freud's important cognitive contribution as the Columbus of psychoanalysis, he is finally very much a heroic, stoic creative poet of the 19th Century, a kind of disenchanted Wagner of **Liebestod** psychology (as in *Tristan und Isolde*).

#### 4. Updating Marxism; also Foucault

The heyday of the historical episteme of individualism (say, from Machiavelli and Descartes to Newton) has here been discussed on the exemplary figure of Hobbes. In it, extensional bodies collide with each other in absolutely quantified space and time, driven by dimly understood forces. It was left first to poets such as Blake and Goethe, and then to 19th-Century anthropologists as well as to the socialist and feminist movements (e.g. Bachofen and Morgan as systematized by Engels) to rediscover the necessity of breaking down this nightmare of monochromatic planimetry in favor of a return, on a higher rung of the double helix of praxis and cognition, to a serious consideration of the interaction between collective and personal bodies. I feel that within the Marxian tradition itself at least three directions of thought would have much repressed material to offer our understanding, as a corrective to the absolutely indispensable but also insufficient emphasis dominant in "really existing" Marxism on the body as vehicle and site of merely politico-economical labour and production (cf. Suvin 1982). *First*, some Feuerbachian analyses of "sensuous human activity" (Marx 1967: 401) wherein people could mutually produce themselves and their social existence within a horizon of communal enjoyment and interchange with their "inorganic body" of nature, culminating in Marx's early works and his *Theses on Feuerbach* as foreshadowings of a dialectical praxis (cf. also the to my mind still too Freudian attempt of Marcuse, and the more sophisticated indications about love as productivity in Brecht). *Second*, some Marxian horizons of how to move toward non-antagonistic bodies politic with different relationships between class, people, and State, culminating in Lenin's *The State and Revolution* (an elder serious cousin of Bakhtin's developments about Rabelais) and in perspectives on hegemony which were opened up by Gramsci. This has so far been most stimulatingly sketched in by Raymond Williams's work on an overarching "structure of feeling." Parallel to and subtending many kinds of direct political control, social group and class control, and economic control, Williams argues, hegemony is a complex of interlocking forces that

[while not excluding] the articulate and formal meanings which a dominant class develops and propagates...sees the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living....It [hegemony] is a whole

body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values...which...constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society.... (109-10, emphasis added)

The third Marxian strand is constituted, by characteristic indirection, of Walter Benjamin's fragmentary but immensely stimulating essays and materials that develop the commodity fetishism thesis from *Das Kapital*, some further investigations of Sohn-Rethel, as well as the alienation thesis from Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* into a theory of psychological commodification of the whole **Lebenswelt**, sketched out in Benjamin's work on Baudelaire and 19th-Century Paris.

Furthermore, outside the classical Marxian tradition, it is by now clear that such a corrective would also have to absorb some carefully disentangled insights from, at least, Fourier and Nietzsche -- and, I am more and more coming to suspect, also from classical Buddhism and classical Daoism. Last but certainly not least, such an approach would accord due full weight to some strategic materialist insights of feminism. Two of them seem to me crucial. *First*, that bodies (and subjects) are gendered, and that this in class society translates into unhealthy linkages between sexuality and domination, into asymmetries of power and evaluation, finally reducing any power for action to domination and thus subjecting the body and sexuality to violence and death (cf. Hartsock 151 and passim). *Second*, that labour encompasses not only what is recognized by political economy but all creativity, including domestic work and procreation (cf. Hartsock and Jaggar) as well as love and sex. There are serious indications that in advanced capitalist societies women, who work more, are in more constant contact with many-qualified material processes in the reproduction of the species and of labour-power, and consequently find it more difficult to forego use-value (see Hartsock 235-36). In Bakhtinian terms, they have remained nearer to the open and unfinished body that traffics with the entire material world. Both physiologically and as overdetermined by socialization, "our culture...make[s] it difficult for women to maintain rigid separation from the object world. Menstruation, coitus, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation -- all represent challenges to bodily boundaries." (Hartsock 237) However, a coherent rethinking in view of reinvigorating and where need be reshaping the Marxist tradition should not be simply surfing (nor shock-wave riding). For a sample of how to attempt such Cinderella disentangling of peas from ashes, I shall here look with enforced brevity only at the well-known opus of Foucault, the most worthwhile Nietzschean in this connection.

Foucault started writing as an "archaeologist" of medicine, and a dialogue with both medicine and psychoanalysis went on throughout his opus. As to medicine, Foucault's *Birth of the Clinic* argued that the modern vision of the individual as subject is in science correlative to clinical medicine (and in arts to Romantic poetry from Hölderlin to Rilke). A **basso ostinato** in Foucault's approach is that this vision was defined by the crucial horizon and role of *death*. It is not simply that diseases potentially -- and **à la longue** unavoidably -- led to death: for the clinic, the individualized subject and his body were susceptible to diseases because the finite self is foreordained to die. Death (and disease) constitute in fact each body's individuality and unique intelligibility, they are essential for that individual's identity. Death is not only the end (**telos**) but also the quintessence (almost an Aristotelian entelechy) of human life conceptualized as an abstraction from and common denominator of all the individualities. Finally, Foucault saw Freud's originality in his mutual implication between sexuality, subjectivity, and truth: sexual desire reveals our truest selves (cf. Foucault 1963: 142-47, 156, 174, 200-201 et passim). But this also means that he acutely saw Freudian Man as being in the line of "clinical" vision which leads from Hölderlin's Empedokles through Nietzsche's Zarathustra (and I have added above Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* -- cf. Fergusson's compelling argument for it as the final horizon of 19th-Century theatre): Freud is also the scientist who has obstinately linked the experience of individuality to death (1963: 199).

In his late phase, Foucault's position seems to me both enriched in detail and impoverished in clarity. He now argues that within the European 18th-Century rise of population and productive forces, "the 'body' -- the body of individuals and the body of populations -- appears as the bearer of new variables...more or less amenable to profitable investment, those with greater or lesser prospects of survival, death and illness,

and with more or less capacity for being usefully trained" (1980: 172). The Hobbesian society (whether as an executive State bureaucracy or as a more decentralized "civil society") will therefore institutionalize the body in panopticism with its new cognitive and controlling tools of individualist statistics, criminology, sociology, clinical medicine -- and psychology. After the bourgeois revolution, individualization seeps downward into the subjects to whom a pervasive system of power pays increasing attention, "gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures, and all their daily actions" (1980: 152). The history of sexuality, e.g., is crucially inflected by the dissolution of older group-identities into the private individual experience and a policing of society that undertakes a "controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production" as "an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (1976: 141). So far, so good. Yet finally, in Foucault's stimulating but increasingly ambiguous and unsystematic aperçus, sexuality -- and indeed all pleasure and desire -- may no longer be seen as a rebellious energy: power has reduced desire to a fully pacified colony through the very discourse we hold on it (1976: 109, 200-02, 207-08, and *passim*). (So much for Orwell's romantic argument in *1984*, as opposed to Huxley's more insightful *Brave New World*.) In this dead end, sex (as well as the earlier concept or apparatus of "love") has for Foucault too, finally, been shaped by strictly historical forces into an equivalent to death: sex is today "intersected and penetrated (**travers**) by the Death instinct," it pretends to "a value high enough to render death acceptable" (1976: 206). Foucault, unpardonably, concedes Eros to Thanatos.

## 5. Toward a Conclusion

I am, of course, not arguing that Freud or Foucault were "influenced by" Hobbes into forgetting the Rabelaisian practice. I am arguing for a series of highly significant typological analogies, as a part of and parallel to the evolution of bourgeois societies, and thus lawfully grounded in the concomitant psychology of individualism. In this history, Freud adopts the individualist, passably Hobbesian, focus on monadic psychical apparatuses and the correlative discourse of "civilization," pointing out its terrible costs in bodily and subjective discontent. In his psychoanalysis the Eros instinct remains inexplicable in origin and the Destruction instinct unanalyzable. Most important for all of us today, Destruction is therefore a finally unstoppable and in some intimate ways even welcome "instinct." Foucault on the other hand follows the Hobbesian maxim that "All Passions may be reduced to the Desire of Power" and that "a general inclination of all mankind [is] a perpetual and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death" (L 49). The individual body and subject have been not only disciplined but indeed moulded by the institutional apparatus of individualist society: "[I]t is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals" (1980: 98); "Power includes sexuality into the body as a mode of specifying individuals" (1976: 64). In fact, the very present-day concept of "sex" is shaped by what is in Foucault's somewhat vague Freudianism called the "apparatus of power," and this co-optation is of major help to a spread of commodification: "Innumerable economic profits have, thanks to the mediation of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, pornography, branched out of this analytical multiplication of pleasure..." (1976: 66). Yet, again, Foucault does not seem to me to take up a coherent stance: on what Archimedean point can he himself stand, outside of a "subjectification" so fully infiltrated by the technologies of power, in order to found his analysis and thus defend the body and the subject even if only in micro-conflicts with power (cf. his evasiveness in 1980: 164)? Is the perverse end of so much genuine acumen that all the world is simply discourses (a proposition manifestly ludicrous when applied to the body)? The main cognitive force in Foucault's late opus is, alas, to be found in the intertext of his biography rather than in his findings.

Thus, in spite of all the insights from Feuerbach and Freud on, we seem still to lack a viable materialist but dialectical theory of the body (cf. the overview in Turner 187), and consequently a viable theory of the subject. Is this not so because we have first to estrange the whole doctrinally individualist

approach, to hold it at arm's length and eventually break it down, in order to break out of its epistemological and ontological horizon of Death? And how can this breakout happen if not by means of some updated notions of collectivity -- such a notion as would preserve the autonomy of people and of the people, so that there is brought about -- in the still classic formulation of Marx's -- "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx 53)? Furthermore, it might today be necessary to add to this Marxian condition also "the free development of each legitimate societal interest-group." This still begs many central questions, to begin with how do we not only affirm the overarching opposition of life vs. death, or vitality vs. necrophilia, but also locate precise social groups and actions with respect to this divide. Obviously however -- to give just one crucial example -- institutions whose ultimate horizon is private profit regardless of destructions of our senses and sensorium (whose nexus is the brain), are merchants of death in all the literal and metaphoric senses of that phrase. In this crucial respect all worthwhile discourse has a reference, however oblique and mediated, beyond itself -- else why hold forth?

If all of this holds, there is finally a clear choice: meaning and reason are to be grounded either in God or in human bodies: **tertium non datur**. It is here that Bakhtin can give us the perhaps essential pointer that the personal body (and thus the subject) should not be looked at as a monad. One way of formulating the dead end of what Fichte might call "the perfectly sinful" capitalist society is to say that in it "being human coincides with the physical individuality": "And this same principle: 'Me and therefore not the others,' each person in this society practices against each person, and this for each and all thing-tokens of any commodity which that person needs for its own existence, and therefore all around itself for all that its existence altogether *is*" (Sohn-Rethel 113 and 201). To the contrary, and refunctioning my epigraph from Wittgenstein, the personal body and physical individuality should be understood as a limit-zone of collective bodies -- and subjects.

### *Notes*

1/ But see for a path-breaking first approach to Russian kenoticism and cognate matters, Clark and Holquist 84-87, who among other indispensable insights offer a parallel between the early Renaissance and the Russian (Soviet) Revolution as "threshold ages" of radical change, 296-97. My thanks for ongoing discussions go to Mike Holquist and Marc Angenot; and for help, to Caryl Emerson who shared with me the newest discoveries of Bakhtin's texts as well as her unpublished positions (not always compatible with mine), to Marike Finlay and Richard Wasson who indicated some further secondary literature. All non-attributed quotes from titles in other languages have been translated by me; the Montaigne one modifies the Ivez translation.

2/ Fenichel, Freud's perhaps most determinedly scientific follower, pointed out that this glaring asymmetry destroys both the basic biological energetics of Freudianism, the "constancy principle" as a starting point for any instinct, and the Freudian definition of an instinct as a demand the body makes upon the psyche. But his attempt to do away with the Death instinct, while remaining within the individualistic biologism of the Freudian horizon and instinct doctrine by defining life as a course toward death, does not seem convincing (371).

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## 2. WHY BODY? WHAT BODY? AND WHAT COLLAPSES?: SOME RHETORICAL QUESTIONS ARISING FROM SOME PAPERS IN "BODY NARRATIVES: COLLAPSING BOUNDARIES" (1,320 words)

Well, since we have to group matters, there is no other way to talk, I am going to group my remarks and questions under two headings. One is about politics, that is "why body?", and the other is about epistemology, that is "what body?" And perhaps, if I have time, I shall properly come to, and end at, political-cum-epistemological ethics somewhere at the end.

1. Why do we talk about the body? Is it, in a way, a final rampart of materialism and causality, or even origin? Is it something like a limit on or boundary of pan-semioticism or discursive imperialism? This is where discourse and sign-system stop -- when you begin to suffer. It's not just words: "And Brutus is an honourable man," of course -- but there is a corpse behind the words. Is it a rampart if not to be offensively scaled, but at least to be defensively defended? Can we stop right here, at the last defensive ditch of the body in the retreat that began from, say, the Marxist project of collective salvation, went through Freud's analysis of individual salvation and to Foucault's micro-politics of power? Can we perhaps advance again to Judith Farquhar's "responsibility," or even go one better and say something like "selective collective solidarity, with a preferential option for the materially, somatically and psychically oppressed"? Or is the body the last perversely marketable commodity, as in Stephen King's novels or most horror movies, or in works of pornographic violence (which is not the same as erotic works)? This would be my first set of questions. I was much struck by Judith Farquhar's discussion of responsibility which flows out of interaction between collective action and sociohistorical knowledge, which is itself a relation between traditional masters and personal experience. No doubt this is an ideal type, as we heard her say, but can't we discuss all of these questions as a question of political (economic, ideological...) interests of given human groups?

2. My second set, then, asks "what body"? We heard from Angela Zito yesterday about some Chinese pointers, how to cover it with emblems, with silk. What do we substitute, as Judith Farquhar's paper I think implied, for the nasty, Western, authoritarian knowledge? Then we find out that the Chinese have several authoritarian knowledges. What do we substitute for the nasty Western abstract norm? But then, aren't all norms on some key levels abstract by definition? Only some are differently abstract in China; and just how is that? And then all we are left with is to blame Aristotelian analytics for the dismembered body, right?

Under this rubric of "what body?" I have two sections. One: it strikes me that we have been speaking mostly about space: the body in all of these papers is basically topological. We have had some brilliant discussions about spatial interaction both yesterday and today, of fluids, of interlocking territories. As Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier's paper suggests, the body is, however, also looked at and looking. It is subject and/or object of Argus's eye -- for, what we are dealing with here is a variant of Argus's eye, I assume. Or maybe Argus is a variant of the Chinese, I don't know, and we have since Lévi-Strauss learned that this doesn't matter. Now the gaze has been bad-mouthed by Foucault. You almost don't dare to speak about scopophilia today: it's become a kind of synonym of coprophilia. And truly there exists an incarcerating gaze, Bentham's gaze - -the hierarchical fixed stare from above downwards, patriarchal, upper-class, and imperial. But is this the only possibility of using our body's and mind's eyes? Cannot there be a motherly, brotherly, sisterly, loving, indeed comradely enabling (admiring, productively critical, etc.) look? And to cap it all, cannot we even imagine a nurturing fatherly glance, just as we have been able to imagine, obversely, a stepmotherly glance? Further, what if instead of the somewhat over-cerebral (or is it over-capital?) "look" we call it "bearing, stance, attitude or orientation" as Brecht did in his concept of **Haltung**: in other words, a gaze behind which there stands a whole body -- senses and sensorium whose nexus is the brain? Will that not lead us, then, to the age-old metaphor of illumination or insight; as in Michel Strickmann's Tantric Buddhism, is an opening of eyes not also, at least potentially, enlightenment? (Let us not forget that in all varieties of Buddhism "Buddha" means "the Enlightened"! ) May not in this rendition a stance or standpoint toward surfaces also become a possible diagram or map of image, that is to say, a specific, not fully verbal cognitive organon? You'll understand

that these are rhetorical questions with a potential for positive answers. So I don't think the gaze has been disposed of by Foucault. I'd go further: Foucault's occlusion and preclusion of the bad gaze or look has to be overcome today in favour of a full cognitive spectrum that includes Foucault's pole but also the whole array of longitudes, right up to the good or utopian pole of the enabling looks (plural and dialogical).

My second question would then be, is space really enough? What about historicity, or if you wish people's relationships in time? I proceed from, for example, Bakhtin's chronotope. After all, space and time after Einstein and Bakhtin are not quite separable. Is it, as we heard about traditional China, that time must always have a stop, as in Daoist and/or Tantric immortals? Or that time may only be a loss of vital energy, as in the story of Confucius's disciple? What happens when the technological advance doesn't happen, or advances, as Strickmann told us Tantric possession technology did, about once in 1,000 years? What happens when technology and other experiential life-rhythms -- the whole **Lebenswelt** -- accelerates a thousandfold, e.g. in Andrew Ross's new-age techno-culture or in Gregory Whitehead's cyber-punk raising of the dead voices? Do we then have the option of concentrating exclusively on space? Isn't history somehow included in this space? In my opinion it definitely is. Shouldn't we then find tools to verbalize this, to conceptualize this? Can we "temporalize" or translate into time terms Judith Farquhar's cause vs. root, or even Deleuze's reasonmatics?

3. And finally, don't we desperately need a simultaneously politically based, epistemologically centered yet also ethical intervention? And if so, mustn't we privilege the epistemology which could allot Farquhar's "responsibilities"? If it is not possible to allot them to pragmatically fixable agents which are somehow responsible for pragmatically delimited events, how could that project succeed? Therefore, we seem to need something suspiciously (if not indistinguishably) close to, first, agential bodies and eventual corpuses whose boundaries are not quite collapsed, so that we still may speak about them in view of a political and ethical intervention; and second, something suspiciously (if not indistinguishably) close to a perhaps redefined concept of causality. Can we -- as my last but perhaps crucial question -- salvage the general concept of causality, which seems to be indispensable for ethical intervention, for any intervening thinking and acting, by differentiating it from the discredited -- linear and singular -- monocausality (which by the way has been abandoned by science some while ago except as an impoverished limit-case for Newtonian theoretical constructions)?

I would therefore enter a sceptical demurral against the subtitle of this encounter or colloquium. It is well within its spirit to say that "Collapsing Boundaries" means our interest in, and indeed our capacity for, drawing boundaries is possibly collapsing. That is, of course, dangerous. No determinations are possible without boundaries: transgressed, redrawn, maybe even collapsing -- but still sufficiently clear boundaries. And we do all want to determine some matters, even as indeterminate?