PUNC.TUA.TIONS

HOW THE ARTS THINK THE POLITICAL

michael j. shapiro

PUNCTUATIONS

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for Sam.

Connie.

+ Hawi.

CON.TENT.S

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DEFERRALS, PUNCTUATIONS, MEDIA TEXTUALITIES

Deferrals and Breaks

Legacies of some of my earlier inquiries are among the conceptual perspectives framing the investigations in this book. In an analysis of the way Greek tragedies construct the politics of familial conflict, for example, I emphasized the way Aeschylus's tragedy *Seven Against Thebes* resists resolution. Rather than offering an unambiguous moral lesson, the play embraces a seemingly irreconcilable ontological divide. It cleaves to the tragic genre as it stages a struggle between two brothers, Eteocles, the King of Cadmus, and his rebelling brother, Polynices. As I put it, rather than issuing "a moral statement in behalf of particular, coherently developed Protagonists. . . . [*Seven*] dramatize[s] conflicting values and social practices, connected to different cosmologies, which yield different normative systems."[1]

At the end of the play, after it becomes apparent that the Greeks entertained "conflicting codes, those connected to the civic order and those connected to family and lineage," there is no attempt to reconcile them. In the final scene, the chorus, representing the *agon* in the midst of Greek life, divides "into two groups, one following Creon and the corpse of Eteocles (in support of civic justice), and the other following Antigone, who in defiance of civic law (but in accord with the law of lineage) is going to bury Polynices."[2] Rather than existing as *a* community of sense, the Greeks maintained a radically divided order. Reconciliation was perpetually *deferred*, an aspect of Greek civic life that many of the ancient tragedies thematize.

More recently, in a monograph concerned with the political significance of sublime experiences, I referred approvingly to another aspect of deferral, Jacques Rancière's concept of an "aesthetic break." I suggested that the political effects of such breaks or impositions on duration register themselves as encounters that disrupt usual sense-making practices. They "summon, shape, and render visible and voluble oppositional communities of sense" because the aesthetic breaks that intervene in durations "precipitate another duration, a negotiation process in which new interactions and alternative sense-making possibilities emerge."[3]

Still concerned with the critical political insights one can extract from such deferrals and breaks, my investigations in the chapters that follow treat them as immanent in the punctuation rhythms and structures of artistic texts. Analyzing diverse artistic practices, my focus is on the ways that systems and practices of intelligibility are contested in artistic media genres whose critical interventions inhere in the spatio-temporal (counter) rhythms that inhibit one's unreflective acceptance of the senses of experience that belong to consensual communities. Conventional narrative configurations, as they are composed in diverse artistic genres, facilitate what Paul Ricoeur refers to as a "grasping together" of disparate events, which fall into a consensual place through plots that create narrative wholes in which there is a progression with a beginning, middle, and end.[4]

Some writers, however, favor a destructive approach to such wholes, Marguerite Duras, for example, in whose works one finds "fragmented syntax" and an "inhibited flow of narration" in stories whose political effects result from semantic voids aimed not at "an encouragement of the reader's subjective agency . . . but exactly the opposite, . . . the inhibition of the process of reading." Duras referred to that way of writing as an aesthetic with a "potential for opening something entirely new."[5] Duras's approach to narrative accords with the view of the political potential of the arts that Rancière has repeatedly asserted, their ability to articulate arenas of nonclosural contention. They function as a "key locus where disagreement can be staged in order to produce new communities of sense."[6]

Punctuation

The investigations throughout this book favor the moments of inhibition to which Duras is committed, treated in my analyses as the grammatical concept/metaphor punctuation, which applied to artistic works involves "interruptions that disturb the tranquil integrity of a work,"[7] opening the work to alternative sensibilities. Punctuation-formed temporal structures in critical versions of the arts allow political initiatives to emerge by facilitating alternative or oppositional communities of sense. Although as Rancière suggests in a remark about visual representations, "There is no straightforward road from the fact of looking at a spectacle to the fact of understanding the state of the world; no direct road from intellectual awareness to political action," critical artistic practices nevertheless create a "dissociation: a break in a relationship between sense and sense," and therein lies the potential for the impact on thinking politically.[8]

Accordingly, when I refer to the compositional rhythms that deliver

moments of dissociation as punctuation, I am emphasizing the intervening spaces, subjects, and objects that operate in artistic texts to shape the way the composition of the text delivers its challenge to political sensibility. In the register of language, punctuation is simply the part of grammar (notably the syntax) involved in constructing the way micro moments of deferral participate in linguistic and other forms of intelligibility. The punctuation marks that shape intelligibility, however, create more than mere clarity of meaning. For example, the diacritical marks in Jacques Derrida's *The Truth in Painting*—"foreign, discarded, archaic marks of punctuation,"[9]—which mark out spaces that intervene to fragment the text, serve to identify the work's hybridity as a mixture of the discursive and the figural. That punctuation practice delivers a painting pedagogy: "painting [is] not just surrounded but 'invaded' by discourse."[10] It's a pedagogy delivered by Derrida's text, which because it's punctuated with blanks, mimes the very hybridity it attributes to painting.

Thus, while didactic approaches to punctuation focus on "proper use" under the assumption that the writer or artist wants to communicate within the reigning structures of intelligibility, those interested in creative (counter-) expression value punctuation "for its expressive, artistic use."[11] That latter orientation implies a need to expand the meaning of punctuation, so rather than restricting my analysis to the usual approach, which limits the perspective to punctuation *marks*, I am construing punctuation in an extended metaphorical sense as part of the way diverse, critically oriented artistic genres—in architecture, cinema, literature, music, painting, photography, and poetry—alternatively participate in and challenge practices of intelligibility with rhythmic pacing that defers definitive closure, encourages critical reflection, and enables a rethinking of community coherence.

My methodological perspective is inspired by three approaches that explicitly invoke punctuation. The first belongs to Theodor Adorno, who famously addressed himself to the critical value that punctuation marks provide when extended beyond grammar. Beginning by suggesting that they work "hieroglyphically [as] an interplay that takes place in the interior of language," he proceeds to compare them to musical cadences, suggesting that "only a person who can perceive the different weights of strong and weak phrasings in musical form can really feel the distinction between the comma and the semicolon."[12] Adorno's turn to a musical rendering of punctuation is aimed at showing how punctuation brings the text close to the voice and thus to the will to intelligibility behind the punctuation choices. His insights help me structure chapter 1 on popular music.

The second approach belongs to the writer/filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet, who referred to punctuation when asked how he translates literary forms into cinematic ones:

> [Question] As an innovator of both the New Novel and the New Cinema, do you perceive any similarity between these two art forms. [Answer] The New Novel and the new Cinema are rooted in phenomenology. . . . In my work I don't begin with a preconceived story line. Objects give rise to thoughts which become my novel or my film. A blue shoe, a broken bottle, and the sea inspired me, and became the point of departure and the evolutionary force for my film *Glissements progressifs du plaisir*. [Question] Objects then, are often your creative point of departure. How else do they function in our work? [Answer] As punctuation. Punctuation devices, which denote transition in novels, such as commas and periods, have its cinematic counterpart. For example, the objects around which I developed my *Glissements* scenario, recur throughout the film. They connect, by inference, and by their connotative power, one cinematic shot to the next.[13]

Thus, for example, in Robbe-Grillet's *Glissements* (a murder story), two built spaces that keep recurring serve as punctuations—the apartment shared by two young women, one of whom is found dead, and the prison cell of the one accused of the murder. A commentary on how the film's punctuation works points to Robbe-Grillet's innovative cinematic style: "The punctuation passages constitute a device rarely, if ever, used in narrative cinema, implying a double level in the film: on the one hand, the diegetic or fictional world of character and action . . . and on the other, elements of the literal dimension of the text,"[14] where the latter are the objects that punctuate that fictional world, shown in shots that slow the process of reception in order to direct attention to the nature of that world instead of animating the action sequence.

J.-F. Lyotard provides a similar insight, noting that the critical effect of images lies in their ability to "slow down the eye, and judgment, forcing the mind to take position in front of the sensory."[15] Robbe-Grillet exploits that critical effect. Rather than inserting a "fade" or a "dissolve" to punctuate the film (which are how transitions in the narrative of most commercial films are managed), "for the punctuation in this film, Robbe-Grillet uses singular images of objects that may or may not play into the narrative."[16] Robbe-Grillet's approach helps me shape the analyses in the chapters on images and literature (chapters 4 and 5, respectively).

The third belongs to Roland Barthes, who in his treatment of photography distinguishes a photograph's *punctum* from its *studium*. While the *studium* expresses the content that is recognizable for those familiar with the context of the photograph's referents, the *punctum*, a nonreferential aspect of the photograph (which Barthes calls "the second element"), "will break (or punctuate) the *studium*. . . . it is this element which arises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. . . . [it] is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole."[17] Significantly, and in contrast with André Bazin's well-known insistence that the photograph *punctuates* time by arresting it (capturing the image, he says, in a "convulsive catalepsy"), for Barthes, it functions as a "symptom of time";[18] the *punctum* lends the photograph an implicit duration (e.g., the way a scene, an object, or a portrait connotes a life's temporal trajectory for the viewer of the photograph). I adapt Barthes's notion of attention-getting, temporal punctuations not only to images but also to literary texts (in chapters 4 and 5, respectively).

For my purposes, a primary aspect of what makes punctuation critical and thus politically relevant are *re*-punctuations that reveal the contestability of institutionalized interpretive practices. The arrests and contrapuntal rhythms that some forms of re-punctuation engender, provoking moments of reflection, arise in the work of professionals—writers, musicians, architects, and cinema directors—but are also produced at times from the actions of people whose movements violate expected narrative trajectories, for example, skateboarders who (as I note in chapters 2 and 3) are involved in countermovements to the purposive flows of the people who etch the movement trajectories that constitute the patterns authoritatively designed for the expected traffic of the people, goods, and services in life worlds. Each of these chapters treats artistic interventions that challenge those authoritative designs.

Before providing a chapter-by-chapter synopsis, however, I want to exercise various dimensions of my conceptual approach by first commenting on the way diverse artistic genres testify to the vagaries of intelligibility, then providing examples from poetry and commemorative architecture of the critical effects of punctuation for the political thinking advertised in my title, and finally offering an elaboration of the relationship between the arts and communities of sense with a reading of a science fiction novel that imagines a radically different basis for the creation of communal coherence.

The Perils of Intelligibility

In order to introduce the critical aspects of my investigations, I want to elaborate on my presupposition that intelligibility is an ambiguous achievement. Learning to participate in the reigning structures of intelligibility enables one to share information, that is, to communicate effectively. Those who can merely communicate, however, are (in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) "functionaries" able only to manage "ready-made thought."[19] Dwelling in the realm of "opinions," they're locked within "the forces of recognition," unable to exercise an imagination of possibilities of "*terra incognita*."[20] Paradoxically, what has enabled some creative writers to avoid the "sluggishness of the brain" and the "facilitating paths . . . of dominant opinions"[21] have been circumstances that have made them linguistically ill-equipped. Thus, Jean-Paul Sartre attributes Gustave Flaubert's creativity to the deferral of his linguistic ability. Coming late into language, Flaubert (*The Family Idiot*) was not robbed early on of his "native poetry."[22]

Similarly, Samuel Beckett, alerted to the perils of falling back into "ready-made language," began writing in French in order to avoid English, which he knew "too well."[23] Like Kafka's "Great Swimmer" (and Kafka himself by implication), Beckett sought "to be a stranger *within* his own language."[24] In response to a request to say something about his approach to writing, Beckett makes evident the rationale for his choice of a less familiar language: "I will all the same give you one clue, *Le besoin d'être mal armé* ("the need to be ill-equipped"),[25] in other words, to be unfamiliar enough with the language of expression to be unable to use "ready-made" phrases. It is evident, however, that the remark is a *double entendre*; Beckett is also referring to the writing style of the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, a poetic innovator who (as I note in chapter 1) reordered the syntax of the poetic line. Influenced by musical punctuation, Mallarmé interspersed blank spaces in his poems, making his poetic punctuation mime musical rests. Leo Bersani captures its implications well: There is a "current in Mallarmé's thought [to] . . . displace our attention from the sense of words to those 'cadences' through which wordless impressions simultaneously structure and erase language."[26] The blank spaces in Mallarmé's poems are interruptions that momentarily suspend reception and render the reader a reflective accomplice in the poem's sense-making. Mallarmé's innovative poetic punctuation arrests anticipatory understandings and turns his poems into "event spaces."[27] The poems are open structures whose various meanings emerge through active

reading events, encouraged by the blanks or voids within the poetic lines. Like Duras's fragmented narratives, they perform a critical textuality that I want to illustrate here by resorting to another artistic genre, architecture, because such narrative styles are objects of investigation throughout my chapters.

Textualities

The critical effects of Mallarmé's textual practice are observable in a striking equivalence between his blanks and voids and the design of architect Daniel Libeskind's "Jewish Museum" in Berlin, which Libeskind explicitly likens to a text aimed at encouraging diverse readings. Invoking a venerable yet dynamic Jewish text dedicated to ongoing interpretation, Libeskind likens his museum to the Talmud: "The museum is open to many interpretations and many routes, just like the pages of the Talmud where the margins are often as important as what is being commented on in the center of the text. This experience is dependent on the engagement of the visitors with the implication of an ongoing history."[28] Invoking the textual concept of narrativity, Libeskind adds, "The spaces inside the museum are to be construed as 'open narratives.'" Resisting the concept of a museum as a "collection," Libeskind's design "seeks to estrange [the museum's contents and routes] from viewers' preconceptions. . . . to defamiliarize the all-too-familiar ritual objects and historical chronologies."[29]

With his emphasis on the way the museum is open to diverse readings by visitors, Libeskind has created an event space in which the historical experience of the Holocaust remains inert until activated by visitors attempting to manage a space that lacks a prescribed route. In Roland Barthes's terms, the museum-as-text is a "methodological field." It is a text that, through the interpretive trajectories to be inscribed by visitors/readers, harbors the "infinite deferment of the signified . . . [a text that] must not be conceived as 'the first stage of meaning' . . . [but] as its *deferred action*."[30] That deferral for Libeskind is based on his decision not to materialize a particular meaning of the Holocaust but to provide a space for "unmeaning and a search for meaning."[31]

In his description of how his design—a "series of complex trajectories, irregular linear structures, fragments and displacements,"[32] the Jewish Museum's configuration—should be approached, Libeskind says that it has to be read "between the lines . . . one is a straight line, but broken into many fragments; the other is a tortuous line, but continuing indefinitely. . . . They fall apart . . . become disengaged, and are seen as separated . . . they

expose a void that runs through the museum . . . a discontinuous void"[33] (see figure 1.1). Representationally, the void constitutes the way Libeskind acknowledges and incorporates Berlin's "void of Jewish life" after the Holocaust. Functionally, however, the void defers attempts to consummate what the history of Jewish life and its "erasure" can and will have meant. Most significantly for how the design engages the visitor, in contrast with traditional museum design, the walls of the museum play no important role. They are there to "lend shape to [the] spaces and define their borders." It is "the void 'between the lines' that Libeskind seeks to capture, a void so real, so palpable, and so elemental to Jewish history . . . a negative center of gravity around which Jewish memory now assembles."[34]

A visitor attuned to the usual memorial museum is confronted with six voids and must struggle with disorientation. Rather than an orienting path that would supply a narrative of how to remember Berlin's Jewish life, the design burdens the visitor with a singular reading task. The effect of the museum's void punctuations is thus like the effect of the blank spaces punctuating Mallarmé's poems; Libeskind's museum, like Mallarmé's poems, is an event space that does not offer guidance toward a shared, common sense. Rather than allowing visitors to rely on a rigidly curated narrative and be induced to recognize what they expect to see, the museum forces them to think. Architecture is thus one among a variety of media technologies that negotiate the conditions of possibility for common versus oppositional sensibilities.

Technologies of Common Sense

My heading opens up a historical trajectory too vast to attempt to cover comprehensively. Instead of providing a genealogy of the technology-community coherence relationship, I want to jump into one critical historical moment, Martin Luther's invention of a reading "congregation," which was a revolutionary displacement of religious authority from the church hierarchy to the assemblage of believers. As is well known, the rapid expansion of Luther's rebellion was enabled by the coincidence between the event of his religious dissidence and the development of printing. At the same time, his German-language Bible became a vehicle for the spread of German literature, an effect that ultimately participated in the development of Germany's consciousness of itself as a nation. Subsequently taking advantage of print media, Johann Gottlieb Fichte published his *Addresses to the German Nation*, in which he exaggerates the national community of sense that such a shared language can produce.

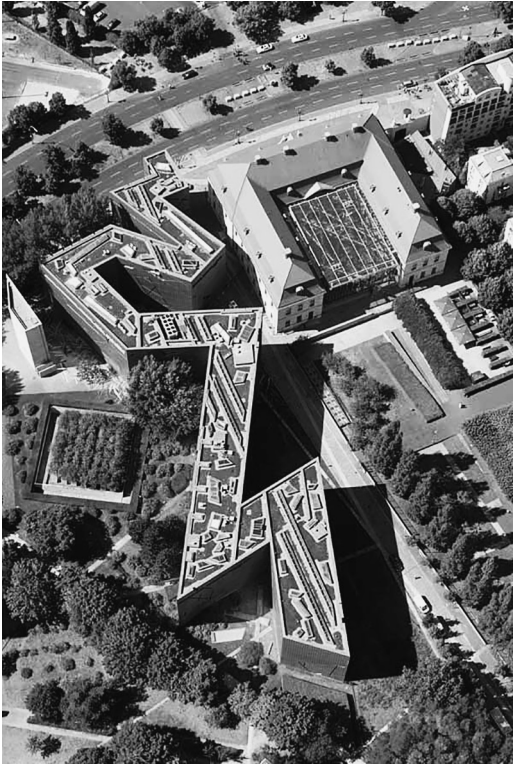

Figure I.1
Libeskind's Jewish Museum.

Its "supersensuous" aspect, he suggests, comprehends "the sum total of the sensuous mental life of the nation deposited in language . . . [which] proceeds from the whole previous life of the nation,"[35] and adds, "What an immeasurable influence on the whole human development of a people the character of its language may have—its language, which accompanies the individual into the most secret depths of his/[her] mind . . . united within its domain in the whole mass . . . who speak it into one common understanding."[36]

In a fictional commentary on another European venue, which emerged after the fallout associated with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Joseph Roth provides an antidote to Fichte's optimism about the effects of language on national coherence. Roth's story, "Rare and Ever Rarer in This World of Empirical Facts," reflects on the arbitrariness of "attempts to lend historical weight to a newly emerging Czech national identity."[37] His protagonist, Heinrich, a writer, is recruited to invent national coherence by "script[ing] a popular and widespread emotional depth" 'for the new so-called autonomous Czech people.'"[38]

Although languages within developing national cultures have had centrifugal as well as centripetal effects, the latter spurred by state practices of cultural governance (sponsorships of diverse arts aimed at producing shared communal sensibilities, e.g., France's Grand Opera and Britain's

National Theater),[39] national allegiance began competing effectively with religious sensibilities in a Europe in which, thanks to Luther, Christendom had developed a significant fault line. Without going into the vicissitudes of the religious ferment that transpired after Luther—its more extreme manifestations bathed the European continent in blood and at the same time shaped much of the pattern of European sovereignties (compellingly and artistically rendered in Aldous Huxley's *The Grey Eminence*)—I want to reference a consequence that Fredric Jameson suggests: "After Luther, religion comes in competing brands [at least as far as Christendom is concerned]."[40] It should be noted, however, that Luther's intervention into the church's orthodoxies was not a singular event. In relatively close historical proximity to Luther's assault on the "brand" were other challenges in cities all over Europe: Jan Hus in Prague, Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich, John Calvin in Geneva, and Erasmus in Rotterdam and Deventer, all preceded (and influenced to a degree) by John Wyclif in Oxford.[41]

Carrying on with his thumbnail historical sketch, Jameson delegates Christendom to the past, suggesting that as religion's hegemonic dominance has been attenuated by secular forces, "It is . . . plausible to assume that the end of religion is on us with secularization, and probably with Luther's revolution, which transformed a culture organized by religion into a space in which what is still called religion has become an essentially private matter and a form of subjectivity (among many others)."[42] Certainly, Jameson's restriction of religious subjectivity to the domain of privacy is belied by the many ways that the practices of religious rites and rituals find their way into public spaces and events.

As Émile Durkheim famously points out, "Religious phenomena are naturally arranged in two fundamental categories: beliefs and rites,"[43] making clear that together they generate the coherence of religious groups, as rites "translate common ideas ["beliefs"] into common practices."[44] Moreover, I hasten to add, "the "religious phenomena" to which Durkheim refers provide the interpretive frames through which adherents of diverse religious "brands" address themselves to public issues. Durkheim's analysis of the ideational and practical aspects of religious life occurred in a period that precedes the subsequent proliferation of the contemporary competing "forms"—for example, the contemporary films and television series that Jameson analyzes to address complex social and cultural enigmas. To take one instance: the importance of television as a competing form is evident in a *New York Times* editorial vignette by a Haitian comic who describes a mentoring relationship with an elderly Haitian woman he tutored in a program for high school volunteers teaching illiterate elders

from the community to read and write English. To describe the ultimate success of the endeavor, he draws on two characters from the popular television series *Game of Thrones*, assuming that his readers are sufficiently attuned to that media genre to get the reference: "She was my Davos Seaworth and I was her Shireen Baratheon."[45] Crucially, media history, like economic history, is (to use Fernand Braudel's term) *conjunctural*.[46]

Rather than being displaced, older forms remain to compete with newer ones. Although the enigmas treated in popular culture to which Jameson refers may not insinuate themselves into the perspectives of many of those absorbed in the beliefs and rituals of traditional religious life, the contemporary contention between an adherence to an ancient religious textuality (however various religious authorities may inflect it) and contemporary media genres (e.g., visual media and social media and artistic creations now disseminated in a proliferation of media platforms) constitutes an exemplary struggle over how individual and collective subjectivity is to be understood and practiced by the competing communities of sense that the alternative media help to create and assemble.

As is well known, Jameson's suggestion about the political triumph of secularism over religious commitment has considerable support among theorists of nationalism who have suggested that nationalism as the religion of modernity has largely displaced theological religion as a political force. The displacement model, however, neglects the way religion in some of its most intensely practiced modes (those that harbor commitments that color all aspects of one's life world, e.g., evangelical Christianity) is the basis for connecting believers to the extra-religious forces of capital formation and governance. As William Connolly points out, "In politics diverse elements *infiltrate* into the others, metabolizing into a moving complex," which he conceives as an "evangelical-capitalist resonance machine," consisting in a complex of affective and ideational attachments.[47] In the case of evangelical Christianity, Connolly detects a form of abjection of those with differing commitments, an antidemocratic, antipluralist political sensibility: "Given the intensity of the ethos binding the parties [a capitalist-friendly governance and evangelical Christianity] together amidst variations in religious doctrine, economic creed, and life conditions; any constituency or social movement that crosses them is subject to sharp castigation and accusations."[48]

That political sensibility articulates itself as a partitioning of worthy versus unworthy artistic initiatives. For example, evangelicals find affirmation in a series of novels: "The cutting edge of the evangelical Right is organized around a vision of the Second Coming, dramatized in the best-selling series

of novels, *Left Behind*" (50 million copies sold as of 2005). Moreover, "To embrace this vision is to place a series of defiled doctrines, institutions, and constituencies under daily suspicion: it is to foment a collective will to revenge against nonbelievers held to be responsible for the time of tribulation and obstacles to future bliss awaiting believers."[49] Castigating support for versions of the arts that are embraced by "unbelievers," a right-wing think tank that oils the gears of the "evangelical-capitalist resonance machine," the Heritage Foundation, continually attacks the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts), claiming that it funds art projects that are "offensive to most Americans."[50] In contrast to the Heritage Foundation's commitment to an "ethical regime"[51] of the arts (strictures on what can appropriately be represented), a critically oriented approach to the arts, which permits thinking as opposed to moralizing, is what Rancière refers to as the "aesthetic regime of the arts," which "frees it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter, and genres."[52]

Heeding Rancière's position on the contemporary aesthetic regime of the arts and endeavoring to illustrate the political significance of struggles in which various forms of belief orthodoxy are at stake, I turn to Philip Dick's prescient, fearlessly nonconformist (and likely offensive to believers) exploration of contention between that venerable textual community, Christianity, whose adherents find themselves in Dick's futuristic epoch as "Neo-Christians," supported by a venerable media platform (sacred texts), and a new community created by biosemiotic media that penetrate bodies rather than merely displaying signs aimed at inducing belief. The new media in Dick's novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* are shared mentalities induced by pharmaceuticals that generate an affective symbiosis among users, a shared sensuality that displaces a shared spirituality. Without requiring reinforcing rites and rituals to maintain adherents, the pharmaceutically induced communities of sense are maintained by the way the drugs grip mentality and impose affect. The novel articulates the way Dick sees the objects in his stories, "as clues to other universes, other societies."[53]

In this novel, the critical effect of Dick's textual intervention into contentious conditions of possibility for community—a text that doubtless belongs to the "aesthetic regime of the arts"—is owed in part to the temporal structure of the media genre in which his story is situated. As Steven Shaviro points out, science fiction derives its critical effects by operating "(conceptually if not grammatically) in the future tense." As a genre, it is a form of "discognition," which he describes as "a kind of thought experiment, a way of entertaining odd ideas . . . of asking *what if* questions. . . .

Science fiction . . . proposes counterintuitive scenarios. . . . its effort is . . . to work through the weirdest and most extreme ramifications of these scenarios and to imagine *what it would be like* if they were true."[54]

I want to add that the conceptual attachment to the future that characterizes science fiction has critical implications for other temporalities. Its speculations render the entire historical trajectory of shared temporal experience radically contingent. As Bernard Stiegler's corpus of work on technics and time shows, the bases of communities of sense are fragile. Over time, they form and reform as a result of the continual "adoption" of a new technology, which "constructs communities" as it connects people in new ways.[55] To cite one of his examples: "cinema is a temporal object,"[56] and its emergence as "cinematic time" reveals the radical contingency of past and present versions of the life world, each shaped by a different temporally situated technology whose adoption "constructs and reformulates communities."[57]

A relevant instance that speaks to Stiegler's example is the small and rather "static . . . college educated, well-traveled group" that was introduced to "European filmmaking" in the art theaters developed by Dan Talbot in Manhattan. That "group" also developed a shared sensibility about postwar Germany's life world after watching the films of Werner Rainer Fassbender in his theaters.[58] Similarly, the temporal structure of science fiction attracts another relatively small community of sense among those who want to escape the conceptual strictures of the present in order to speculate on what might be. Like traditional religion, which, as Durkheim notes, introduces "speculation upon all that which evades science or distinct thought in general,"[59] science fiction introduces speculation rather than scientifically based investigation, not to create communities of believers (the quest of religious speculation) but rather to suggest "new lines of inquiry that analytic reasoning and inductive generalization would never stumble upon by themselves."[60] Challenging all the technology-assisted communities of believers, Dick's science fiction novel is a critical intervention that I want to engage and amplify because it encourages thinking about the possibilities of alternative, nondogmatic communities of sense.

Philip Dick's Drug-Induced Community of Sense

Drawing on the sociability clichés of the social contexts evoked in the Mattel toy company's Barbie and Ken doll variations and articulating those avatars with a drug-induced communal bonding, Dick's novel in-

vents a drug-imposed fusion/translation experience that forges a community among a group of colonists on Mars. They achieve their communal connection by taking the drug Can-D, which projects them into the Barbie and Ken–type dolls Perky Pat and her boyfriend, Walt. As a result, the Mars community they inhabit becomes a surrogate of Earth's most banal version of U.S. West Coast culture. A main protagonist, an aspirational tyrant, the eponymous Palmer Eldritch, intervenes in that community with a competing pharmaceutical, Chew-Z, which produces a psychosis-like reaction that intensifies the Can-D fantasy. In contrast with the "consensual hallucinations" that Can-D induces, Eldritch's product enslaves the minds of the colonists, placing their shared hallucinations under his domination.

Mimicking religious communities, the drug-taking colonists (whether on either Can-D or Chew-Z) identify themselves in pseudo-religious terms as believers and evoke a Pauline commitment to the spirit over the flesh.[61] As they put it, "We lose our fleshly bodies, our corporeality. . . . And put on imperishable bodies instead, for a time. . . . Or forever, if you believe as some do that it's outside of time and space, that it's eternal."[62]

Introduced into that narco-created community is Anne Hawthorne, a "Neo-Christian" and thus a carrier of an older media platform, Christianity's religious texts that technologies of writing have made available. Her appearance stages an encounter between two belief-creating technologies, Christianity's sacred texts and a drug that induces mind fusion in the settler community. In reaction to her attempts at proselytizing among the mind-fused community members, an adherent of the latter, Fran Schein, says to Barney Mayerson (an executive in the Can-D pharmaceutical enterprise who arrived on Mars with Anne), "You don't want that Neo-Christian nut to live with you. We've had experience with that; we ejected a couple of them last year. They can cause terrible trouble here on Mars. Remember, *we shared her mind*. . . . she's a dedicated member of some high church or other, all the sacraments and the rituals, all that old outdated junk; she actually believes in it."[63]

In contrast with Christianity's promises about inhabiting eternal time, the eponymous protagonist Palmer Eldritch claims to have delivered what Christianity's purveyor of the "good news" only promised: "Well you got what St. Paul promises, as Anne Hawthorne was blabbing about; you're no longer clothed in a perishable, fleshly body—you've put on an ethereal body in its place. . . . You can't die; you don't eat or drink or breathe air . . . you'll learn in time. Evidently on the road to Damascus, Paul experienced a vision related to this phenomenon."[64]

Dick's text sides with neither of the communities of shared beliefs/hallucinations. It operates at the level of meta belief, inquiring into the way alternative technologies activate belief structures and pointing to their political consequences, the power and authority effects acquired by belief or hallucination wizards. It reveals the functioning of two kinds of enterprise that control or manage the technologies that engender consensual communities: religious authorities who disseminate textual interpretation and pharmaceutical entrepreneurs who control pharmaceutical distributions and the interpretation of the drugs collective ontological consequences. To pursue those political consequences, I want to shift the conversation back from Dick's Mars to earthly geopolitics and contrast the historical role of social science's approach to beliefs with a politics of aesthetics that sets up the inquiries in my various chapters.

The Historical Contingency of Beliefs

Philip Dick's artistic intervention suggests that the belief systems consolidating communities enfranchise various versions of political authority. In order to appreciate that political pedagogy, we need to recognize the historical contingency of beliefs and the political resources deployed by those who operate as the knowledge agents on behalf of their validity. For that purpose, I evoke a historical moment I have analyzed elsewhere, inspired by a conversation that took place in the Arctic region in 1924 between a Danish anthropologist and an Inuit shaman. Describing that conversation in his ethnography of the arctic region, Barry Lopez writes, "A central Eskimo shaman Aua, queried by Knud Rasmussen, a Danish anthropologist, about Eskimo beliefs, answered, 'We do not have beliefs, we fear.'"[65] In response to that encounter, I suggested: "Instead of attributing the shaman's answer to a misunderstanding, Lopez's discussion encourages inquiry into the genealogy of our concern with such cognitive concepts as beliefs. Rather than being concerned with the validity and reliability of statements about beliefs, the question that would direct such an inquiry would pursue the forces that have made the concept of belief so central to a social science such as anthropology."[66]

Continuing in that pursuit, I distinguished the contexts of Inuit security practices from those in contemporary nation states: "Aua's response reflects the Inuit way of [managing] security. In their everyday lives they practice an epistemology of fear in order to protect themselves [because] . . . to feel fear is to be constantly alert to imminent danger. By contrast 'we,' [in advanced industrial societies] . . . practice an epistemology of belief

because for us security is mediated by various agencies—insurance companies, the Defense Department, the police, the army, and so on."[67] To put the implications of where politically relevant beliefs are usually situated: they are part of a legitimation apparatus (a *dispositif*) in which the social sciences have participated. Whereas Inuits, as they must, use their personal experiences to assess immediate danger (practicing their epistemology of fear), modernity's belief systems are commodities for agencies involved in indirect influence. They traffic in an epistemology of belief and market their security products to those who must rely on their reports on what constitutes danger.

For example, during the Vietnam War, social scientists working at Oak Ridge National Laboratories carried out investigations of "defense beliefs," funded by the U.S. security agencies concerned with how to sell their approach to the war to the U.S. public. As I put it, "the sponsoring agencies were interested in the reception of security policy."[68] The researchers therefore functioned as part of a legitimation structure. Oakridge Laboratory's "social science staff, focused on 'public opinion on national security matters' . . . reported on the American public's support for various kinds of military hardware."[69]

From Beliefs to Witnessing: Alternative Media Genres

Social scientists employing the technologies of survey instruments or the protocols of ethnographic investigations to assess beliefs are involved in a practice of what Rancière calls "unavowed fiction," for as he puts it, "Fiction is a structure of rationality which is required whenever a sense of reality must be produced. It is . . . a form of presentation of things that cuts out a frame and places elements within it to compose a situation and make it perceptible."[70] Rancière adds, "Politicians, journalists or social scientists must use fictions as well as novelists, whenever they have to say: this is the situation, these are the elements that compose it."[71] Heeding Rancière's blurring of the boundary between fiction and nonfiction, I want to suggest that rather than wondering about the extent to which an artistic text or a social science study is fiction, the critical questions to ask are about the political resources deployed by the text. As Michel Foucault insists, "to analyze a discursive formation," one must ask for whom it is an "asset."[72] My claim here is that there are more politically astute fictions than those that summon the beliefs that buttress structures of power and authority. They are those that challenge entrenched knowledge agents

and thereby redistribute assets. Accordingly, the artistic texts that attract my attention throughout this investigation are those that intervene in the structures of recognition from which beliefs emerge. They access realities that official approaches reinforcing institutionalized forms of intelligibility obscure.

Briefly, for purposes of illustration, among such approaches that open access to an alternative, politically relevant sense of reality is Claude Lanzmann's documentary film *Shoah* (1985), which he describes as "fictions of the real." Composing his *Shoah* with scenes of witnessing based on personal memory, Lanzmann's text effects an "aesthetic transformation"[73] as it blends cinematic time with historical time, creating scenes of how the past exists in the present for the film's characters. As both a work of art and a documentary, Lanzmann's witnesses—those who survived the concentration camps—are best thought of as "actors," "playing out what they lived through."[74] Rather than merely presenting memories, they are reexperiencing what they went through as Lanzmann stages the past (for those he asked to reexperience it—for example, using a borrowed railway car to have them and the viewer experience a train ride with the old Polish locomotive engineer, Henrik Gawkowski, who drove the train more than forty years earlier, when its passengers were headed for extermination in the Treblinka camp).

By filming the testimonies of those still alive that experienced the Holocaust, Lanzmann's film creates a realist temporality articulated with camera movements that affect both his protagonists and viewers. The grammar of his *Shoah* displaces static memory governed by the past tense, with the future anterior, how it will have been after the past is repeated. As his witnesses reexperience what was past, they participate in Lanzmann's aesthetic transformation, which makes the event endure rather than recede.[75]

In contrast with the competing belief systems within which the event of the Holocaust is alternatively understood as something now surpassed—for example, the current revisionism of "state-builders" in Poland who promote a version of the event that preserves "the nation's honor"[76]—Lanzmann's text delivers what André Bazin famously calls "image facts," "fragment[s] extracted from the world which resist our attempts [at explication] . . . or to deplete [their] force through an act of naming or making sense,"[77] while at the same time submitting that facticity to a repetition that activates imagination.

He brings back an event that is "temporally removed," reinserting it into the spaces in which it occurred. Noting the temporal structure of the film, Gertrud Koch points to the film's "complex montage . . . [which]

plays on multiple levels with real and filmic time [for example, bringing the viewer on] a walk through the forested terrain of a death camp [to provide] a realistic sense of the spatiotemporal certainty: the presence of an absence in the imagination of the past. . . . Past and present intertwine; the past is made present and the present is drawn into the spell of the past."[78]

Similarly, if we heed the increasingly available sets of image facts that bear on the military's use of "military hardware" (about which the Oakridge social scientists solicited "beliefs" to help legitimate war strategy), we are positioned to rethink such security issues by examining visually oriented texts that testify to the enduring effects of that hardware, which static belief protocols cannot capture. For example, it was the cinematic event known as Italian neorealism that made such effects palpable to large audiences in the immediate post–World War II period. Bazin describes the effect of the new film genre, neorealism, while referring to Roberto Rossellini's *Paisa* (1946) as "An Aesthetic of Reality" that provides "a fragment of concrete reality in itself multiple and full of ambiguity."[79] Describing that reality effect, a commentator elaborates: "This ambiguity is lessened to a degree when one image-fact is placed alongside another but they regain a certain autonomy and ambiguity regardless of this arrangement. They retain a materiality and weight beyond the use they are supposed to serve in regards [to] the narrative and the meaning the filmmaker wishes to elicit from the image. In neorealism, there is a density to objects that allows them to retain an independence or integrity beyond their manipulation or use by the filmmakers."[80]

In his *Paisa*, Rossellini shifts the focus of warring violence from weapons and strategies, the war genre most familiar to film viewers, to the social realities affected by the war. Sandro Bernardi captures the innovative aspect of Rossellini's films: "Rossellini's work . . . consisted above all of a 'cleansing of the eyes,' an attempt to free cinema, vision, and therefore knowledge from the stereotypes accumulated over time . . . over centuries . . . [he] used cinema to think."[81]

A more recent technological event that also provides "an aesthetic of reality" (applied to contemporary militarized violence) is the democratizing event of video, a technology that makes everyone a potential filmmaker capable of producing citizen documentaries. The effect of that technology is similar to the effect of the earlier technology print (treated above), which, as Condorcet famously remarked, had the capacity to "unmask and dethrone" hierarchal authority, as "men found themselves possessed of a means of communication with people all over the world [yielding] . . .

a new tribunal . . . which no longer allowed the same tyrannical empire to be exercised over men's passions."[82] As Rune Saugmann Andersen points out, in the case of the new visual medium, "the authority granted video as a faithful witness means that the spread of video entails a transformation of the authority with which politics is spoken—and, crucially, who can speak effectively."[83]

A recent intervention by "civilian investigators" testifies dramatically to Saugmann Andersen's remark. On February 20, 2014, after a "paramilitary police force loyal to President Viktor Yanukovych killed forty-eight protestors demonstrating against the government's Russia-favoring policy," the young civilian investigators "used cellphone videos, autopsy reports and surveillance footage" to renarrativize the event with evidence that proved Yanukovych's denials false.[84] They mounted a forensic intervention that accords with Eyal Weizman's observations about the forensic opportunities afforded by civilian access to now privatized satellite imagery (once exclusively a resource of governments).[85]

Human rights groups have now been able to make use of citizen-produced images to provide video testimony that contests governmental accounts of events.[86] Importantly, the aesthetic transformation of authority that video technology makes possible is also spatial. It is a technology that has migrated from private space, where its main function was as a "registrar of the private sphere," to public space, where its users could bear witness to events and make them continually repeatable.[87]

The transformation effected by video technology therefore turns citizen-subjects from passive viewers of violent events (whose beliefs and opinions, based only on official and mainstream media sources, can be solicited) into political actors who bear witness in ways that challenge official accounts. The development of that citizen-controlled technology testifies to the way media genres can intervene in the politics of subjectivity. They can create and activate oppositional communities of sense by disturbing the matrix of subject positions that is otherwise anchored by institutionalized structures of power and authority, served by knowledge agents attuned to authoritative and static information frames.

Accordingly, the diverse investigations in the chapters of this book provide a politics of aesthetics that is articulated by artistic texts. The critically oriented media genres on which I focus in each chapter provoke thinking outside of the conventional modes of recognition that serve entrenched modes of authority. Specifically, the chapters that I summarize in this introduction treat critical, subjectivity-making punctuation effects

in popular music, urban soundscapes, architecture, images (photography, painting, cinema), and Holocaust literature, respectively.

Chapter 1: How Popular Music Thinks the Political

I begin with this chapter because it's the place where I elaborate what I have termed challenges to reigning structures of intelligibility and because it is where I develop the concept of alternative communities of sense. After beginning the chapter with a review of Adorno's extension of punctuation from language to music, I figure challenges to musical intelligibility by turning to David Michael Hertz's analysis of the expressive freedom exacted in the French symbolist movement in musical and literary composition, in which he elaborates the parallel challenges to traditional forms of intelligibility of Richard Wagner and Stéphane Mallarmé (who (re)punctuated music and poetry, respectively). Noting Hertz's emphasis on the ways that symbolist language and music create startling, arresting effects, I illustrate that mode of critical innovation and note its political implications by analyzing the compositional style of the jazz composer/musician Thelonious Monk, whose musical innovations exemplify the ways in which the African American oppositional community is articulated in modes of distinctive aural intelligibility.

After distinguishing the way Monk's music articulates the counterintelligibility involved in African American *sociolects* (M. M. Bakhtin's term), I turn to films within which the musical scores feature engagements between alternative intelligibilities, belonging to alternative communities of sense. The bookends of that part of the analysis are Spike Lee's *He Got Game* (1998), in which the musical score is a virtual duel between the symphonic music of Aaron Copland and the rap music of Pubic Enemy, and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), in which sound as well as image articulates the colonial division during the Battle of Algiers. Pontecorvo and his cowriter, Franco Solinas, solicited a soundtrack (from composer Ennio Morricone) that features a clash of the incommensurate musical cultures of Algiers's French and Arab populations.

The chapter ends on a note of musical reconciliation, an example of what Gregory Clark calls "civic jazz." It's a moment involving the fashioning of an intercultural acoustical community of sense at "the Moab music Festival," where the Marcus Roberts Trio was joined by a bluegrass musician, the banjoist Béla Fleck (at the Utah stop of the of the trio's tour). I

conclude by noting that the musical hybridity achieved in the encounter succeeds in uniting elements of African American and Euro American communities of sense (where, for example, the labor coalition and the possibility of "interracial sympathy" during "the Reconstruction" that W. E. B. Du Bois had famously hoped for had failed).[88] While my emphasis throughout most of the chapter is on how popular music *thinks* the political, this is an instance in which the music *does* the political by reaching across a divide to initiate a thinking together that becomes a moment of being together.

Chapter 2: Urban Punctuations: Symphonic and Dialectic

The focus in this chapter is on urban interventions that reveal (and at times disrupt) the rhythms of the urban life world and on their micropolitical implications. Emphasizing a musical metaphor for those rhythms, the symphonic, the textual bookends of the chapter's investigation are two films: Walther Ruttmann's 1927 documentary, *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, which films the daily movements of bodies in the various parts of Berlin's life world during one day, and Ola Simonsson and Johannes Stjärne Nilsson's 2007 feature film, *Sound of Noise*, in which an anarchic group of musicians perform a musical score that is represented dialectically against the city's professional symphony. They play the city of Stockholm, using medical equipment (and the body of a hospital patient), a bank's shredding machine, the city's electrical wires, and heavy construction equipment (whose clanging and banging disrupts an event at a symphony hall) to realize that score. The Ruttmann documentary is viewed with attention to Beethoven's tonality (as articulated by Adorno), and the Simonsson-Nilsson feature film is read with reference to John Cage's theory of music and the interarticulation of aesthetic and ludic practices.

In between those readings, the chapter treats not only soundscape interventions but a variety of others—for example, by the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko, who invented "critical vehicles," technological prostheses worn by immigrants to re-punctuate the network of interactions in public space (between 1993 and 1997), and by circuses, for example, "Circus Amok," an assemblage that usually operates in the street, making an "'inappropriate' use of preordained urban zones. . . ." [Like other interventionist artistic performances], they "eat away at the rigid urban grid."[89] It's

a circus that introduces a "ludic city"[90] in which urban space is reoriented in a conjunction of laughter and serious reflection.

With such ludic practices in mind, I end the chapter by asking how the ludic articulates with the aesthetic and suggest that like the intervention of the aesthetic, play introduces moments of indeterminacy in situations and domains that are taken as fixed. Clowning and other playful moments of urban intervention reorient the "'psychogeographic' potential of the urban grid."[91] Such disruptions derail people's usual utilitarian, goal-oriented fulfillment-seeking and encourage new ways of thinking about identities and space and thereby new ways of moving/acting together. I argue that an aesthetic of play operates "against the normative, the rational, and the ideal [while signifying] . . . the absence of essence [and] . . . excess beyond binary opposition."[92]

Chapter 3: Architectural Punctuation: The Politics of "Event Spaces"

This chapter's primary conceptualizations are based on Bernard Tschumi's understanding of architecture as dynamic such that buildings are not to be understood merely structurally but rather as "event spaces" that result from human intrusion and Eyal Weizman's perspective on "forensic architecture . . . a critical field of practice [whose aim is] to disseminate evidence of war crimes in [an] urban context." The chapter begins with a discussion of an exhibition that contained a facsimile of the bullet-punctuated door to Fred Hampton's Chicago apartment, testifying to his assassination (along with Mark Clark's) by the FBI and Chicago police in a predawn raid on December 4, 1969,[93] and ends with an analysis, based on two texts, of the architectural barriers separating Israel and Palestine (the "separation wall" and series of check points that punctuate the landscape).

The first text is by Palestinian architect Yara Sharif, whose construal of the design problem is considered from the Palestinians' perspective, which involves the creation of a more "elastic space born from the will to connect—a space of resistance that keeps on changing with the . . . interventions [that] respond to [an imposed] instability through the tactics of an emergent architecture, which in its nature might seem ephemeral, yet is quick in its effects."[94]

The second text is Hany Abu-Assad's film *Omar* (2013), in which the Separation Wall is one of the film's primary protagonists. I argue that through the way the film interarticulates action and setting—as it mobilizes an aesthetic subject involved in the microevents to which Sharif

refers—we can better appreciate Sharif's descriptions of the dynamics of architectural resistance (which are enacted by Abu-Assad's eponymous protagonist, Omar).

In between the analyses of these "event spaces"—Fred Hampton's apartment and the Israel-Palestine border region—I review a variety of architectural projects and provide illustrations of architecture as a protagonist in artistic texts in five films: John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), Paul Mazursky's *Scenes from a Mall* (1991), the Wachowski Brothers' *Bound* (1996), Stephen Frears's *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002), and Tomas Alfredson's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (2011), and in three novels: Colin Harrison's *Bodies Electric*, Joe Gores's *32 Cadillacs*, and Qui Xiaolong's *When Red Is Black*.

I end the chapter with a return to a discussion of what Eyal Weizman's practice of forensic architecture is about, noting that in response to the technologies of the occupation, which sequester and immobilize people and impede the sharing of information and access, are the techniques of forensics. In accord with how Weizman construes forensics, the chapter's aim throughout is to interrogate the built environment in order to (in Weizman's words) "make objects reveal information by subjecting them to additional force."

Chapter 4: Image Punctuations: From the Photographic to the Cinematic

The initiating focus of this chapter is an analysis of the photographs of the South African Santu Mofokeng, whose compositional work abounds in "deep shadow and blur" (as Teju Cole puts it). That style, which renders the details difficult to comprehend articulates an intimacy with a historical experience—South Africa's history of apartheid—the details of which are elusive to uninitiated outsiders. The political resonances of the apartheid world that his art conveys, as he intervenes in the history of South Africa's historiography to shed light on an unjust political reality, have methodological implications for other image-oriented texts that seek to intervene critically into historical events. Theorizing such interventions with resort to Roland Barthes's concept of the "punctum" noted earlier—points and aspects of disruption in images that have the effect of arresting one's ability to impose traditional modes of intelligibility—I discuss the way such arrests open the image to innovative political reception. After pursuing a variety of photographic, art historical, and cinematic examples to illustrate the critical method, I return in my conclusion to

Mofokeng's photographic practice to move the analysis from the singular case of South Africa's apartheid to a more general concern with how images can engage and activate what Deleuze and Guattari famously refer to as "assemblages," collectives with shared experiences that have hitherto failed to rise above the level of public recognition.

In the body of the chapter, I turn to art history, with a main focus on Paul Cézanne's color punctuation and the way his canvasses decenter the viewer. As I put it, the absence of a stable center in Cézanne's paintings displaces the viewing subject from a single viewing focal point and thus accords with one of Gilles Deleuze's insights about the way cinema resists the stability of perceptual centering: "cinema does *not* have subjective perception as its model because [in accord with the "continuous movement through space and time" in a Cézanne canvas] the mobility of its centers and the variability of its framings always lead it to restore vast acentered and deframed zones."[95] Cézanne therefore provides a threshold to analyze cinematic punctuation, which I do with readings of two of Michelangelo Antonioni's films, *Red Desert* (1964) and *The Passenger* (1975).

In the conclusion, in which I return to the politically pregnant photographs of Santu Mofokeng, whose details are glossed in the Teju Cole commentary from which I quoted, I focus on one of Cole's words that stands out, intimacy: "The spaciousness and blur of Mofokeng's pictures come ultimately with this intimacy with this 'gossamer' world'"[96] (where *gossamer* is Mofokeng's word for the spirituality imminent in the black South African life world, manifested in church services).

To ascend to a more theoretical level, the "intimacy" to which Cole refers—and elaborates by noting that it's a world "that is elusive to the uninitiated or outsiders"—can be captured with the concept of assemblage, which Deleuze and Guattari use to conceive the way bodies form collective attachments through their shared capacity to affect each other. Mofokeng references that capacity and its effect on black South African self-recognition when he remarks that his intended viewers are black South Africans who can recognize the violence of apartheid in the photographs. To end the analysis, I reflect on the implications for a micropolitics of subjectivity of the textual hopscotch of image practices I have treated throughout this chapter (with a special emphasis on chromatic shifts).

Chapter 5: Holocaust Punctuations

Beginning with the observation that the Holocaust stands as an alarming punctuation mark in modern history, in this chapter, inspired by the survivor/Nobel Prize–winning writer Imre Kertész's insistence that fiction's "creation is a path to remembrance," I analyze the fiction of the Austrian Peter Handke, struggling with his national patrimony of "death-cult masters" (in his novella, *The Long Way Around*), the Hungarian Kertész, who wrote to "become the name-giver instead of the named" (in *Fatelessness* and other novels), and the German W. G. Sebald, who wrote a journey of detection through a fictional character (in *Austerlitz*), all of whom have distinctive styles that continually defer closural interpretations of events.

I point out that Handke's, Kertész's, and Sebald's compositional styles, deployed with durational (i.e., becoming) subjects, punctuate their texts in ways that impose on their readers the need to reflect on their own temporal trajectories, to "live through" what is in the pages. Moreover, because their readers, like Bakhtin's authors, are "axiological yet to be," their approaches to the Holocaust articulate, in each of the texts, an influential ethics of the event. As a result, the experiences of their protagonists impose on readers a task of sense making that encourages not only a rethinking of the Holocaust—seen through lenses that articulate biography with history—but also parallel phenomenological reflections in which they confront the comportment toward events of their own durational selves.

I go on to suggest that what is fundamentally shared in their texts are the observations and acts through which Holocaust-affected individuals seek to reclaim what Cathy Caruth calls "unclaimed experience." Apart from the cleansing that the writing of all three accomplished for them, what I also stress is what their texts can do for readers and for the event, beyond the suggestion that readers are encouraged to reflect on their own durational trajectories (the entanglement between biographical time with historical time). Their texts encourage an ethico-political attunement derived through an incessant temporalization of encounters with persons and things in one's every day experience.

Throughout the chapter, I focus on how the writers accomplish such effects, suggesting that what should draw our analytic attention are their aesthetic strategies, especially the textual vehicles to which they turn to formulate what must be thought anew. Emphasizing *how* the texts think the political, I conclude by picking up key encounters that testify to the ways the three writers enact *time*, which [to quote Rancière] "means the

form of coexistence of facts that defines a situation and the mode of connection between events that defines a story,"[97] because the ways they tell the stories serve to counteractualize the Holocaust by amplifying it from a passing and now abstract historical moment to a series of concrete, experiential, and enduring effects that must be continually engaged. Finally, and important, are *my* engagements, in which (borrowing from Foucault's remarks on his approach to his lectures on *The Will to Know*) I "alternate concrete investigations and theoretical punctuations, but in an irregular way according to requirements"[98] that each chapter shapes.

Introduction: Deferrals, Punctuations, Media Textualities

1. Michael J. Shapiro, *For Moral Ambiguity: National Culture and the Politics of the Family* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 18–19.

2. Shapiro, *For Moral Ambiguity*, 22.

3. The quotations are from the "Afterword," in Michael J. Shapiro, *The Political Sublime* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 169.

4. See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38.

5. Daniel Just, "Aesthetics of Blankness: Political Imagination in Marguerite Duras's Hybrid Narratives," *The Romantic Review* 101, no. 3 (May 2010): 360–61. For Duras's explication of that aesthetic, see "La Destruction La Parole: Entretien avec Marguerite Duras par Jean Narboni et Jacques Rivette," *Cahiers de cinéma* 217 (Novmeber 1969): 45–69, at http://derives.tv/la-destruction-la-parole/.

6. Beth Hinderliter et al., eds. "Introduction," in *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 19.

7. I am borrowing a phrase applied to Jacques Derrida's text, *Glas*. See David Wills, "Derrida and Aesthetics: Lemming (reframing) the Abyss," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities*, ed. Tom Cohen, 117 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

8. See Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2009), 75.

9. See Wills, "Derrida and Aesthetics," 113.

10. Wills, "Derrida and Aesthetics."

11. Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 12. Although her study is a thorough and very creative treatment of punctuation, it sticks closely to punctuation as "marks," while my approach takes punctuation as a concept/metaphor that ranges beyond marks to a wide variety of pauses and deferrals in diverse artistic media genres.

12. Theodor W. Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," *The Antioch Review* 48, no. 3 (summer 1990): 300–301.

13. Godelieve Mercken-Spaas, "An Interview with Alain Robbe-Grillet and Lillian Dumont," *The French Review* 50, no. 4 (March 1977): 653.

14. Roy Armes, *The Films of Alain Robbe-Grillet* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin B. V., 1981), 141.

15. J.-F. Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, trans. Antony Hudek and Mary Lyndon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 212.

16. The quotations are from a reading of the film by Mike Kitchell,

"Slow Slidings of Pleasure," http://eostiakefilm.com/reviews/slowslidingsofpleasure.hmtl.

17. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 26–27.

18. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (summer 1960): 8, 163.

19. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 51.

20. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 145; the latter quotations are from Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 136.

21. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 49.

22. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert 1821–1857*, trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 25.

23. Quoted in George Craig et al., eds., *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, Volume 2, 1941–1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

24. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 26. Deleuze and Guattari note, "'The Great Swimmer' is undoubtedly one of the most Beckett-like of Kafka's texts" (94, n25).

25. I'm quoting here from a reference to the conversation in the *New York Times Book Review*, Sunday, November 13, 2011, 6.

26. Leo Bersani, *The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 4.

27. The concept of an event space belongs to the architectural theorist Bernard Tschumi. See his *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

28. Daniel Libeskind, "Between the Lines," in *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 28.

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31. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 163.

32. Young, *At Memory's Edge*.

33. Libeskind, "Between the Lines," 23.

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40. Fredric Jameson, *The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms* (New York: Verso, 2017), 3.

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44. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 59.

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48. Connolly, "The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine," 872.

49. Connolly, "The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine," 874.

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59. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 39.

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Chapter One: How "Popular" Music Thinks the Political

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17. I am borrowing the word from David Wills, who attributes that figural effect to both Jacques Derrida and Mallarmé: "Derrida and Aesthetics: Lemming (reframing the abyss)," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humani-*