

Stuart Brisley – Performing the Political Body and Eating Shit

Michael Newman



Breath, 7pm, 29.10.2014, Royal Academy Schools Life Room, London



10 Days, 1973, Editions Paramedia, Berlin



Artist as Whore, 1972, Gallery House, London

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collect, *kəl-, kol-ekt'*, *v.t.* to assemble or bring together: to infer: to put (one's thoughts) in order: to receive payment of: to call for and remove. – *v.i.* to run together: to accumulate. – *n.* **collect** (*kol'*), a short prayer, peculiar to the liturgies of the Western Church, consisting of one sentence, conveying one main petition. – *adj.* **collect'able**, **-ible**. – *n.pl.* **collectā'nea**, a collection of passages: a miscellany. – *adj.* **collect'ed**, gathered together: having unscattered wits: cool: firm. – *adv.* **collect'edly**. – *ns.* **collect'edness**, self-possession: coolness. – *n.* and *adj.* **collect'ing**. – *n.* **collect'ion**, act of collecting: gathering of contributions, esp. of money: the money collected: an assemblage: a book of selections: inference (*Shak.*): composure: an examination at the end of the terms in certain colleges: range of new fashion clothes shown by a couturier; regular uplifting of mail by a postal official. – *adj.* **collect'ive**, considered as forming one mass or sum: congregated: common: inferential (*Milt.*): expressing a number or multitude (*gram.*). – *n.* a gathering, assemblage: a unit of organisation in a collectivist system. – *adv.* **collect'ively**. – *v.t.* **collect'-ivise**, **-ize**, to give a collectivist organisation to. – *ns.* **collect'ivism**, the economic theory that industry should be carried on with a collective capital – a form of socialism: a system embodying this; **collect'ivist** – Also *adj.* – *ns.* **collect'or**, one who collects or takes up, as tickets, taxes, etc.: one who sets himself to acquire and set together examples or specimens, as of books, minerals, curiosities: in India, the chief official of a district, collecting revenue and acting as a magistrate; **collect'orate**, **collect'orship**. – **collect'ing-box**, a field-naturalist's box for specimens: a box for receiving money contributions; collective agreement, one reached by collective bargaining; **collective bargaining**, negotiation on conditions of service between an organised body of workers on one side and an employer or association of employers on the other; **collective farm**, a state-controlled farm consisting of a number of small-holdings operated on a cooperative basis; **collective fruit** (*bot.*), a multiple fruit – one derived from several flowers, as fig, mulberry; **collective security**, general security among nations to be achieved through guarantee of each nation's security by all. [L. *colligĕre*, *collĕctum* – *legĕre*, to gather.]¹

Most, but not all, of Stuart Brisley's performances have involved the presentation of his body. In many of his performance works since the late 1960s, the body endures difficult or extremely unpleasant conditions, or performs actions that sometimes involve extremes of endurance, to the point of exhaustion. Some of the performances have employed marking and painting, including painting his own body and using his own body as an instrument to make marks. Where objects feature, they have been furniture, things to make constructions, rubbish, waste, discarded things, organic matter that decays and facsimiles of shit. What does it mean to present a body? What is a 'body' such that it may be presented? How does the way Brisley presents his body relate to the body as it has been determined in the West? Are there ways in which he displaces this self-understanding of the body? How are these displacements related to ways in which the sense of the body has changed in modernity? When does the modernity of the body begin?

Jean-Luc Nancy has argued that 'the' body is an invention of the West, figured in Plato's Socrates, who sacrificed himself for philosophy, and of Christ, who sacrificed himself – or in whom God sacrificed Himself – to redeem the sins of mankind. It is the body that incarnates Spirit, or more generally, a 'this' that is 'that', 'as his body'.² This conception of the body, as incarnation and as sacrifice, has determined the representation of the body in Western art, and the very conception of the 'medium' of art: art's materials as means of embodiment, and the medium, literally, as a conveyance. Arguably there is continuity in the West from the Jewish and Christian body to the body according to a certain interpretation of psychoanalysis, where the subject has to give up a bit of itself to enter the Symbolic order, and, indeed, will have already done so, whether this is acknowledged, repressed or disavowed.

Brisley's performances, despite the extremity of the situations to which he has subjected himself, do not convey a sense of sacrifice. However much he makes himself endure, the point does not seem to be the elevation of his body through suffering. His body is presented in its subjection, to the extreme of a desubjectification, without

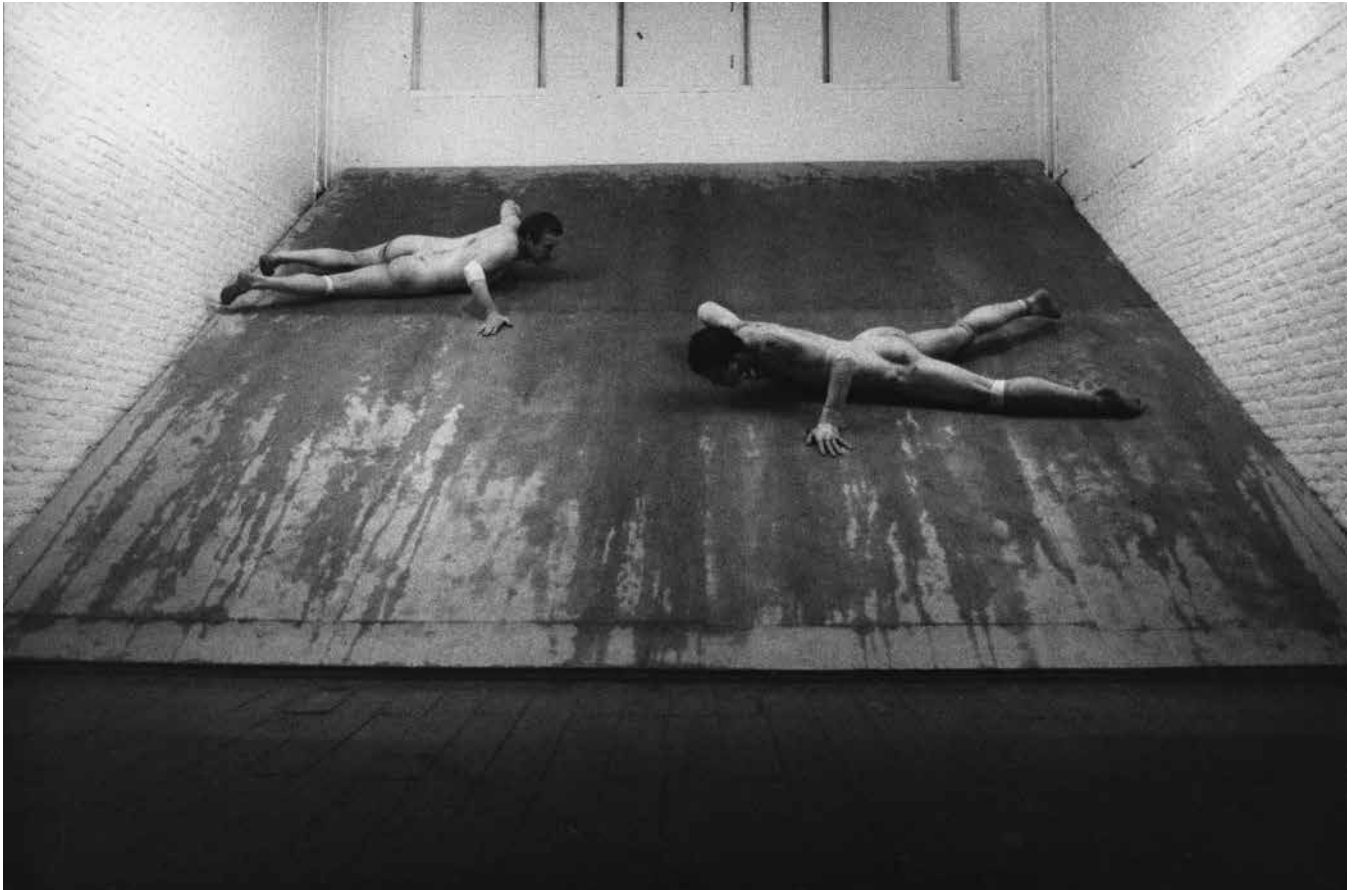
this process being redeemed according to a sacrificial logic. For example, talk is involved in many of the performances. Either the performance itself is silent and then gives rise to discussion with whomever happens to be there as it comes to an end, or, in some of the performances, storytelling forms a part of the presentation, and in a certain sense determines the action. However, there is no sense of a continuity or simple conversion between the two, of the body being sublimated into language. Rather, the performances remain affecting and enigmatic in the memory precisely because of a break between the two, without that break or gap reifying the body into a spectacle. The performance is not an illustration of a proposition that can be extracted from it; nor is it a *passage à l'acte* that ought to be converted into speech, although the relation of the body, its utterance and speech will be in question.

The actions seem to take place on a tightrope between ritual and dissolution: fragmentation, liquidity and rot are maintained not despite but because of the formal parameters or framework of the performance (the way the place is delimited, the length of time it is supposed to take and the way in which the intervals of time are marked) and the ritualised aspect of the movement. However, these are not 'performances' in the sense implied by dance and theatre. For an audience with such expectations, Brisley's performances would mostly seem to be too casual and under-rehearsed; they are, in fact, not rehearsed at all, and constantly collapsing into contingency. It is this last quality that seems to be crucial, and it is where the *inward* character of the more ritualistic aspect breaks down, where the relation to an outside occurs.

I would like to describe these moments as moments of *exposition* in the sense that Nancy uses the word, where exposition is always already exposure to the plural others.³ I will come back to this. The presentation or exposition of the body in Brisley's performances is doubled, and consequently can be understood in two ways. If one of these is exposition in Nancy's sense, the other is as being under or provoking the gaze. What is the relation, then, between being for the others and being for the gaze? Or, to

put the question another way, what is the relation between the presentation of the body to the others who are there and also present, and the presentation of the body in such a way that it is for the sake of, or for the incitement of or resistance to, a gaze that is associated with power? In order to approach this question, we need to articulate Nancy's account of the body with that associated with what has been called the theologico-political, the body politic understood according to a theological model. Brisley's performances indicate the way in which the break with this model in modernity may be understood. For this reason, my approach to his work will be inflected through the thought of not only Jean-Luc Nancy but also Michel Foucault, Claude Lefort and Jacques Lacan, all of whom, in one way or another, approach the break of modernity through a certain theologico-political conception of the body, a 'this' that is for the sake of 'that'. I will then go on to consider how Brisley's performances engage with the collapse of the sacrificial model. This collapse points in two directions: towards another, non-sacrificial way of thinking about the body (it is here that I take to be the weight of Nancy's thought, instanced in his sympathetic critique of Georges Bataille); and towards the underside of modernity, towards what the body has been reduced to in its utmost suffering, including in the camps (here I will take up Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'bare life'). The importance of Brisley's performance art, it seems to me, lies in the way that it connects up these two aspects: the possibility of another way of bodily being, absolutely here and now, together with other people; and the worst to which human life has been reduced and continues to be reduced.

First, let us consider the question of the relation of the body to power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault evokes, in two images, the difference between punishment under the Ancien Régime and the invisible workings of power in the disciplinary society. The first image is that of the punishment in 1757 of the regicide Damiens, who was tortured with hot sulphur, had his flesh ripped away, had his limbs torn off by horses and cutting, and was finally burnt at the stake.⁴ The public spectacle of the body being



Between, 1979 (with Iain Robertson), De Appel, Amsterdam

tortured rendered power visible. This contrasts with the invisibility of power in the panopticon designed by Jeremy Bentham, a prison in which the prisoners can be seen at all times without themselves seeing the one who spies on them. The transition from the Ancien Régime to modernity is from the corporeal visibility of power in punishment to its invisibility when it functions through the gaze in disciplinary society. That the prisoners in the panopticon cannot see whether or not a guard is watching them in the end does not matter, since the subjectifying gaze of power is thoroughly internalised.⁵ It could be argued that a subsequent recourse to the public presentation of self-punishment or exorbitant physical suffering by the performer is an attempt to make

this invisible power apparent once again: that it is addressed to an Other that it seeks to incite or make itself manifest.

Brisley's performances are concerned with structures of power, in effect re-externalising and corporealising effects of power that have become internalised in modernity. This is evident in *180 Hours Work for Two People* (Acme Gallery, London, 1978), where the space was divided between two personae – A, the anarchist who lives downstairs, and B, the bureaucrat who lives upstairs – both performed by Brisley himself. These performances are specific in their situations and references to kinds of work, such as mining, and to the ways of being of people who fall out of the economy, such as people who live rough; but they

are not didactic, nor are they representational, neither in the sense of presenting an imitation of something else, nor of speaking for others. That said, the specific references to labour and class politics distinguish Brisley's work from the more universalising self-presentation of the artist's body in American performance art of the 1960s and 70s, for example, in the work of Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, Robert Morris or Bruce Nauman.⁶ The political presentation of the body to explore issues of gender and spectatorship has been a concern of many women artists internationally since the mid-1960s, and in relation to Brisley's way of working, one might think of Carolee Schneemann, VALIE EXPORT, Gina Pane or Ana Mendieta. While there are implications concerning the representation of masculinity in certain of Brisley's performances – for example, in the male rivalry of *Between* (De Appel, Amsterdam, 1979), performed with a younger man (Iain Robertson) – this tends to remain implicit. Where Brisley's work has specific political references, they are most often towards class politics, modes of labour and the economy of art, rather than to gender. The kinds of actions Brisley performs in subjecting himself to extremes of hunger, discomfort and pain – painting himself to the point of rendering himself blind (*Moments of Decision/Indecision*, Galeria Teatra Studio, Palac Kultury i Nauki, Warsaw, 1975) and using materials like blood (*Incidents in Transit*, Barcelona, 1992) – might remind the reader of the performances of Otto Mühl (abjection and breaking taboos), Günter Brus (self-painting of the face and body) and Hermann Nitsch (blood ritual). Yet his strategy with respect to the *incorporation* of power is distinct from how the Vienna Actionists have pushed the corporeal logic of incarnation, transgression and sacrifice to an extreme.⁷ Brisley's relation to the law is perhaps more subtle; his actions can be extreme – and even seem so when they are not – without being transgressive. Rather than appealing to, invoking or transgressing a law that is supposed to be transcendent, his performances seem more concerned with the way in which conflicts and contradictions with respect to power and institutions work themselves through the body immanently. Nonetheless, as

is becoming increasingly apparent, Brisley's work has as its subject the same historical moment as that which affects the Vienna Actionists, even if, given his different situation, he approaches it in a very different way. His presentation of the body as a political body also has affinities with post-war Polish performance and theatre, notably the work of Tadeusz Kantor,⁸ which is concerned with memories of the war and the Holocaust.⁹

Presentation can no longer imply the supposed self-identical presentness of presence to self as the origin of expression, but rather to a non-identity, absence or outside. A non-identity, first, with the status quo: the 'ordeal' introduces a distance with respect to the everyday. In addition, the performance becomes a trace of itself – whether or not it leaves a trace in the form of marks or objects. This *becoming-trace* of the presentation connects it with memory, both intimate and historical. The historical memory, I would argue, points in two directions: towards the memory of revolution and towards the memory of atrocity. The future of the political will depend on whether, and how, we are able to think – to commemorate – the two together. It is in the light – or darkness – of atrocity that it ceases to be possible to think of the body in terms of sacrifice. Suffering is disjoined from redemption. To ascribe to it a purpose is obscenity.

What implication does this have for the presentation of the body as a political body? If the Western model of the body is based on incarnation (suspending for the moment the parting of the ways that would be entailed by the different Catholic and Protestant interpretations of the incarnation), and if the execution of the Absolute Monarch who incarnates power creates an empty space of power, as Claude Lefort argues,¹⁰ does this also imply the end of the model of the political body based on incarnation and sacrifice? That is to say, would the alternative be that body or no body at all, or would there be another kind of presentation of the body that would be a political body (not the metaphor of the 'body politic', which suggests the people-as-one)¹¹ without that body presenting itself as an incarnation (a 'this' that incarnates a 'that'), and without



180 Hours Work for Two People, 1978, Acme Gallery, London

that body offering itself, or a part of itself, for sublimating sacrifice? A further question arises, of the relation of the political presentation of the body in the relation to the empty place of power to the ideological imaginary form of the representations that rush in to fill the void. Brisley's performance must undo this kind of representation through the presentation of his body in such a way that he does not offer himself as incarnation and sacrifice in the name of some kind of sublimating transcendence. But the imaginary cannot be simply excluded, not only because the work takes a material and physical form, even when it is time-bound, but also because of the necessary role of the imaginary in both the motivation and the continuing existence of the instituting in the instituted. So his work also needs to establish a relation to a potential radical social imaginary that would be involved in the institution – the opening *and* sustaining – of a political space rather than offering itself as compensation or premature satisfaction.¹² At the same time it needs to reflect, whether explicitly or implicitly, on the vicissitudes, history and incompleteness of previous attempts at political instituting. For all these reasons, combined with the sense of agency – of doing and undergoing by an act of will – an element of the *unworking* of the work, and even failure, needs to be built into the performance, as we shall see.

The resemblance of Brisley's 1972 performance *And for today ... nothing* (Gallery House, London) to Jacques-Louis David's painting *The Death of Marat* – he sat for two hours a day for two weeks in an old bathtub filled with water and rotting meat – perhaps accounts for its emblematic status.¹³ It is the performance that people remember and associate with the artist Stuart Brisley, whether they saw it or not (I did not). But what does this association with the *Marat* painting, which was part of an attempt to construct an 'imaginary' for the French Revolution, tell us about Brisley's work? And, conversely, how does Brisley's presentation of the body as a political body relate to a problem faced, perhaps for the first time given the unprecedented modernity of the French Revolution, by David as a history painter? What operation did David



French revolutionary cartoon of the severed head of Louis XVI

perform on the Western 'corpus'? How does Brisley displace or transform this operation? What happens to the idea of the political body when it is no longer possible to think of the body in terms of sacrifice? David's *Marat* seems to hang between these two senses of the body: a body that may be sublimated (he suffered for us) and a body that remains in its contingent facticity of rotting flesh, in a relation to a defiguration that takes place elsewhere.

The art historian T.J. Clark captures something of this aporia in his discussion of the painting in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*. Clark dates the inauguration of modernism to the day David's painting *Marat à son dernier soupir* (literally 'Marat at his last breath')



Bath Works, 1974, Berlin, Black-and-white photograph, Private Collection

'was released into the public realm'.¹⁴ On 25 Vendémiaire Year II, according to the Revolutionary Calendar (16 October 1793), a few hours after Marie-Antoinette was guillotined, having been sketched on her way by David, it was presented in the Louvre's courtyard on a sarcophagus, past which there was a parade bearing flowers to deck Marat's tomb. The original plan had been to stage a tableau vivant using the revolutionary martyr's embalmed body, but, as David, who was responsible for the staging of Revolutionary festivals, pointed out in a speech to the Convention:

On the evening of Marat's death, the Jacobin Society sent us, Maure and myself, to gather news about him. I found him in an attitude that struck me deeply. He had a

block of wood next to him, on which were placed paper and ink, and his hand, sticking out of the bathtub, was writing his last thoughts for the salvation of the people. Yesterday, the surgeon who embalmed his corpse sent to ask me how we should display it to the people in the church of the Cordeliers. Some parts of this body could not be uncovered, for you know he suffered from leprosy and his blood was inflamed. But I thought it would be interesting to offer him in the attitude I first found him in, 'writing for the happiness of the people'.¹⁵

The next day David, as Clark puts it, 'admitted defeat': 'It has been decided that his body be put on show covered with a damp sheet, which will represent the bathtub, and which,



And for today ... nothing, 1972, Gallery House, London

sprinkled with water from time to time, will prevent the effects of putrefaction.¹⁶

Clark draws attention to the effects of literalness and contingency in these scenarios. The *Marat* is a turning point for him because with it 'contingency enters the process of picturing. It invades it. There is no other substance out of which paintings can now be made – no givens, no matters and subject-matters, no forms, no usable pasts. Or none that a possible public could be taken to agree on any more.' He writes that modernism 'is the art of these new circumstances. It can revel in the contingency or mourn the desuetude. Sometimes it does both. But only that art can be called modernist that takes one or other fact as

determinant.'¹⁷ Through the contingency that enters picture-making, modernism in art is linked with the experience of the 'disenchantment of the world' in modernity.

An art that involves the presentation of the body, or a substitute for it – and that is irredeemably situated, such that its circumstances provide its very substance – surely has its legacy today not so much in painting as in performance. Indeed, from Clark's citations of the circumstances of its genesis and first uses, it is clear that the *Marat* painting's mode of being was performative – it was meant to do something, to act on the people in a certain way in particular circumstances – rather than being primarily a representation to be contemplated.¹⁸

There is a further factor that links the *Marat* as an inaugural moment to performance art understood as a presentation of the body. The moment of the French Revolution involved 'the People's entry onto the stage of power',¹⁹ which posed a question of representation. Clark quotes Edgar Quinet: the Revolution was a kind of 'annunciation' that 'was supposed to put the People in place of the King'.²⁰ Clark specifies: 'That is to say, it tried to put one kind of sovereign body in place of another. And the body had somehow to be represented without its either congealing into a new monarch or splitting into an array of vital functions, with only an instrumental reason to bind them together.' The meaning of contingency is thereby determined in relation to a problem of the representation of the people as a body: "Contingency" is just a way of describing the fact that putting the people in place of the king cannot ultimately be done. The forms of the social outrun their various incarnations,' Clark writes. Therefore, 'from the point of view of those trying to represent it, that is, the body of the people was always sick. It needed some radical purging. And ultimately there was only one way to do this. It had to be killed in order to be represented, or represented in order to be killed. Either formulation will do. Marat is the figure of both.'

Clark identifies the figuration of the people in the *Marat* not with representation of the body of the revolutionary himself, but with the unusually large area of empty scumbling above. 'It embodies the concept's emptiness, so to speak. It happens upon representation as technique. It sets the seal on Marat's unsuitability for the work of incarnation.'²¹ Modernism as the pure presentation of technique emerges, for Clark, from the impossibility of incarnating the people in a body.²² If incarnation fails, there is an ambiguity here, which is deliberately left open with respect to sacrifice: is it Marat or the people that is sacrificed? Marat killed to represent the people; the people sacrificed in the representation of Marat; the body as an image of the people sacrificed in order to represent their (sublime?) unrepresentability? It is worth remembering that at this historical moment, from 1892 to 1894, the exposition

of the body – the corpse of the revolutionary hero or its facsimile – was linked to the Terror, which began between Marat's funeral and the completion of the painting – the display of the wounds functioned as a call for vengeance. Indeed, Antoine de Baecque suggests that Marat was presented as having been twice murdered: by his wounds, symbolising the external attack on the Revolution, and by his disease, which caused a rapid and visible putrefaction, symbolising the internal threat to the Revolution.²³ Thus sacrifice itself was doubled: the martyr sacrificed himself for the revolution and the real presence of his remains was at once converted into symbolic meaning. The issue would then be whether painting – art – as well as abetting it, can resist this sublimation, which in turn depends upon a sacrificial logic.

It would seem that, despite the presentation of the limits of a possible incarnation of the people, a logic of sacrifice entirely governs not only David's picture but also Clark's schema.²⁴ The unrepresentability of the people is being associated with disincarnation and pure technique, providing a strictly political interpretation of the modernist turn to technique that is lost or repressed in later formalist theories of modernism, such as Clement Greenberg's. However, there is a complication. Unrepresentability may be understood differently according to the two senses of representation, as copy and as delegation. A 'pictorial' theory of representation as imitation conceals the difference involved in all representation. In the alternative, representation as delegation, the delegate is independent of that which she, he or it represents. The possibility of representing the unrepresentable depends on representation being understood as delegation, as is the case not only with democratic politics²⁵ but also with the phantasmatic representatives of the drive in psychoanalysis, as well as with the very possibility of witness to atrocity.

It is clear that David's *Marat* is a key work in the transition from a religious-political discourse of sacrifice, which was Marat's martyrdom as presented in the funeral organised by David, to a sacrificial logic governing the work of art and the artist's relation to it, a role which has

something to do with the ambivalent status of the painting itself, which involved both its use-value as funerary replica (connected both with Clark's 'contingency' and the Real of the corpse's putrefaction) and the aesthetic transfiguration of its (abject) subject. The fascination of David's painting lies in part in the way these two dimensions are brought into disturbing proximity in the stasis of this moment between life and death (the death that will have been a condition of Marat's assuming the symbolic status of martyr for the Revolution as David represented him). Performance art could be understood as having the potential to reverse the sublimating trajectory that David secularised and left in suspense: what Brisley seems to understand is that such a reversal must also engage with the logic of sacrifice that made the movement possible in the first place.

Brisley's performances could be understood, in relation to Clark's argument, as a retrieval of this repressed dimension of modernism, which we could describe as the defiguration of the body (even, and perhaps especially, where no body is represented). If *dis*figuration is to be understood as distortion in relation an ideal of the body, *def*iguration involves a relation of the body to that which cannot be embodied. This makes it possible to understand why, trained as a painter in the context of formalist modernism, Brisley turned to performances involving the presentation of his own body, and why, in turn, a number of his performances have taken up painting, including painting his own head and body as well as other forms of mark-making that are not representational, or not directly so. Rather than being a break with modernism, Brisley's performances return to modernism its contingency, and could be seen at least in part as a mourning of its lost revolutionary possibility (and perhaps the suggestion for its revivification). If, as Clark argues, modernism is, as well as being the anticipation of the possibilities of immanence, already a (failed) attempt to mourn contingency as a failure of representation – of lost transcendence – then this could be seen as a doubled mourning.

However, there is more to be said. Clark leaves unresolved – indeed, he doesn't even raise it as a question

– the relation of contingency to the symbolic dimension of representation, which is so clearly apparent in traditional representations of the sovereign, from the late-medieval period to that of absolute monarchy. Without an understanding of the relation between the Symbolic and the Real, it is not possible to appreciate what is at stake in the problem of the visual and bodily representation of the people in the dimension of the Imaginary. Is it that the people cannot be represented as a bodily form, or that they must not be so represented; or a doubling, such that what cannot be must not be, so that a necessity becomes an imperative? Conversely, what happens when, after this break with the theologico-political body politic, the people is once again embodied? Is this embodiment to be still understood as a form of incarnation? In which case, what are its implications for an understanding of the corpus of the West? And what would a bodily practice of disincarnation involve? Could we say that re-embodiment is an attempt to occlude or disavow disincarnation? Would it be an assertion of contingency as non-transcendence and disenchantment? Or is there a way of thinking about what we remain forced to call disincarnation in non-negative terms, in terms that would not be determined by that from which it breaks away? Could we think in terms of a 'carnation', to borrow Nancy's term,²⁶ that is not a 'that' *in* 'this', the body in its radical immanence?

Perhaps the real problem is not incarnation but sacrifice. Could it be that the task is not so much that of rejecting incarnation, whether in the name of the unfigurability of the people, or the empty place of power, as that of a carnation that is not sacrificable? What this would mean is that the body is not the medium of a logic of trans-appropriation, whereby the outside and the other are internalised in the subject which expands – totalises – itself in this process.²⁷ Incarnation becomes, according to this model, at the same time the sacrifice of the corporeal in its finitude, as the equiprimordial exposure to the others and to death. There is a hint of this in Clark's assertion of contingency, but it is not related to the transformation of the symbolic status of the body as political body.

The inaugural force of the French Revolution, according to Lefort, is that by decapitating the king it reinstalled the political sphere in a way that makes empty – or should – the place of power.²⁸ It is the emptiness of this ‘empty place’ that both destroys the illusion of society’s self-immanence – that it can form a complete, enclosed and exclusive totality that is present to itself – and introduces a spacing or differentiation that allows for a self-representation of society without that representation either incarnating power in the transcendent unity of an Other (divine sovereign) or an immanent One (the people as a fusional unity). The historical contingency of the Revolution, and the execution of the monarch, figures the condition of the Symbolic order of democracy. ‘The reference to an empty place’, Lefort writes,

implies a reference to a society without any positive determination, which cannot be represented by the figure of a community. It is because the division of power does not, in a modern democracy, refer to an outside that can be assigned to the Gods, the city or holy ground; because it does not refer to an inside that can be assigned to the substance of the community. Or, to put it another way, it is because there is no materialisation of the Other – which would allow power to function as a mediator, no matter how it were defined – that there is no materialisation of the One – which would allow power to emerge as an incarnation. Nor can power be divorced from the work of division by which society is instituted; a society can therefore relate to itself only through the experience of an internal division which proves to be not a de facto division, but a division which generates its constitution.²⁹

Totalitarian and religious fundamentalist movements then become ways of refusing this emptiness and filling it with a figure of the source of power and the law, whether God, leader or people-as-one. The constitutive division between actual and symbolic power (held together in their difference in pre-modernity by the doctrine of the king’s two bodies, mortal and immortal)³⁰ is collapsed into the idea of a social division that may be overcome. It is notable that

Lefort identifies the operation involved in this overcoming as being that of ‘incarnation’: power is embodied in a being of some kind.³¹ Communism and fascism, Lefort argues, for all their differences, both seek ‘to deny social division in its forms, and to give society a body once more’.³² The achievement of democratic modernity would thus be conceived as a disincarnation, or a movement away from the model of incarnation altogether. The significance of incarnation needs to be understood in relation to sacrifice as a retroactive movement relating the Symbolic and the Real. To push the Lacanian argument further than perhaps is the case in Lefort, a piece of the Real is sacrificed for the sake of entry into the Symbolic; the Symbolic is incarnated in a piece of the Real (the temporality of this is not the linear one of cause and effect). The monarch’s body is a stupid piece of the Real that embodies the Symbolic order, as the penis is a stupid piece of flesh that embodies the Symbolic Phallus.³³

It would be hard to deny that the model for the art of the West is that of incarnation. Indeed, David draws on Caravaggio’s *Deposition of Christ* (1602–1604) for his presentation of Marat as the people’s martyr. The artwork in general consists of matter that embodies Spirit. The subjective turn of Cartesian modernity doesn’t change this structure even if it alters its ground: the formed matter becomes the embodiment of subjectivity, the ‘inner life’ of the artist is ‘expressed’. What, then, would be an art of disincarnation, or non-incarnation, if it is still an art at all? It is not difficult to conceive, or point to, practices of art that distance themselves from the body, by means, for example, of a turn to language. It is much harder to understand – given the enormous pull of the paradigm of incarnation – an art that is largely devoted to the presentation of the artist’s body as an art that involves a rejection of incarnation and an attempt to develop an alternative mode of bodily being and communication. The distinction that needs to be made here is between the body politic and the political presentation of the body. If T.J. Clark’s analysis is right – and on this point I think that it is – already in 1793 the political can no longer be embodied (so we do not have to wait for the

taking over of the political sphere by the economy or for the hegemony of the network society of globalisation for that to be the case). Thereafter, the embodiment, specifically in the form of incarnation, of the political sphere will be a disavowing response to the social divisions of modernity. What I would say that Brisley's performances play on is precisely the failure of the body to incarnate the body politic that is presented.

Presentation here needs to be distinguished from representation, or at least needs to be understood as opening up the double sense of the *re* in representation: the *re* can be understood both as it commonly is, as a repetition such that the representation is a kind of image that substitutes for an absent object; and also as an intensifier, such that representation represents, intensifies or brings to consciousness the presentness in presentation.³⁴ What is at stake here is the difference in representation of presence and representation. This difference – difference and not distinction because both different and the same – has implications for the relation of political representation and the presentation of the political as that which affects or takes place around a body. It is perfectly possible, and probably accurate, to argue that political representation has been colonised by the economic sphere, which would no longer be a sphere if it were totalised. The art in which this would be reflected would be an art that takes place at the level of representation, where the *re* is understood purely as repetition. The non-identity of that art with the sphere that it represents would be apprehended in the difference of its minimal repetition or doubling of that sphere. In relation to such an art, presence would function purely as illusion, intensification as the intensification of the simulacrum.

It would be tempting in the face of this to argue for a political sphere, distinct from the economic, in the mode of a Kantian regulative Idea. Such an evocation, however, maintains its purity at the price of its infinite deferral. What I want to hold open is the possibility of a presentation of the body in performance such that this presentation invokes not just the possibility but also the reality of a political sphere distinct from yet critically related to the economic.

I would argue that Brisley's performances do just that: the presentation of the body is both an intensification of its presence and a doubling, whereby the performance becomes a representation of itself.³⁵ This doubling is the condition of the relation – which is also a non-relation – of presence, or 'life', or the Real of the body, to language and to exchange. It is in the movement between language and carnation, to return to a term of Nancy,³⁶ that the political takes place. What is the form of this *taking place*?

To try to answer this question, I want to return to the idea of the 'unsacrificable' ('L'insacrifiable' is the title of an essay by Nancy on Bataille, which will ultimately help us to get a sense of what is at stake here).³⁷ What does it mean to present a body as unsacrificable, and how does this relate to the performative opening in art of the sphere of the political? Sacrifice operates according to a double logic. On the one hand, it is a link with the wholly other, with the gods or with God, and therefore opens an impossible relation between incommensurable spheres or dimensions. On the other hand, sacrifice makes that relation a matter of exchange – the sacrificed animal, for example, is exchanged for the favour of the god. So sacrifice economises that which is *aneconomic*. Bataille's wager was that it could work in the other direction as well: that it could render the economic *aneconomic* as 'dépense', as excess or waste.³⁸ It could be argued that the transgressive possibility of Bataillan sacrifice is closed off by the generalisation of the restricted economy: dépense, otherwise expenditure without return, is resorbed into exchange. Lacan effectively covers both bases: the economising sacrifice produces the possibility of waste; the sacrifice of the piece of the body for the sake of entry into the Symbolic order retroactively produces the Real as that which falls away from the Symbolic. His account does not rely on an empirical distinction between restricted and general economies. Lefort's account, surely, follows a similar structure: the king's body – the actual body that also stands for the body politic – is displaced by the empty place of power, which in effect makes possible the opening up of a political Imaginary to a political Symbolic. This process is homologous to the structure of sublimation

in Lacan's *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* seminar: the image falls away to reveal an emptiness circumscribed by signifiers.³⁹ Hence the importance, in Brisley's performances, of the relation of the defiguration of the body to speech.

We may approach the notion of the unsacrificable through another performance of 1972 at Gallery House, which took place before *And for today ... nothing*. The title of this performance, *ZL656395C*, has a triple function: as well as being the title of the work, it is Brisley's National Insurance number, and for the duration of the performance he changed his name to that number by deed poll. The performance took place in a small room off a corridor, which visitors could look into through a slit in the wall. Outside there was a sign that read: 'a man may occupy this room for 17 days'; 'the outcome of this is to be seen'; 'this is a proposition that may or may not occur'. The grammar of these statements places the emphasis on contingency, the possibility not to be. The room contained a wheelchair, in which the artist sat much of the time; the wall and window beside were smeared with paint. Apart from using the toilet, Brisley stayed in the room the whole time, or almost, since he decided, on the spur of the moment, to end the performance fifty-five minutes before the scheduled end, at which point he wrote on the wall 'not achieved' and the time, and then pulled down the partition, opening up the room and freeing himself. A discussion with the visitors who were present at the time ensued. 'It had to be a failure,' Brisley has said. That it was a work at all needed to be thrown into question: 'I didn't want to fulfill it in that sense.'⁴⁰ Effectively, Brisley wanted to unwork the work.⁴¹ How are we to understand this emphasis on contingency and unworking, specifically in relation to a presentation of the body?

By placing himself in view of a slit, such that he was aware of being looked at (and he could also hear people approaching down the corridor), Brisley evoked both the prison, the disciplinary gaze of Bentham's panopticon, and the pornographic performance. Both serve to objectify the body, and the second reflects on the condition of art – the artist becoming a prostitute, the absolute commodity as subject (as discussed by Walter Benjamin writing on Charles



ZL656395C, 1972, Gallery House, London, Collection: Tate

Baudelaire). We need also to consider the implications of Brisley's turning his NI number into his name. To interpret this as a critique of bureaucratic society would be too simple. It is not an assertion of individuality against anonymity; rather, Brisley has said that this association of the presentation of his body with a number was to emphasise 'being a human being but not a specific person'.⁴² To this end, he painted his face and hands grey. He also attempted to do as little as possible, to move as little as possible. As the 'director' of his own performance, he was at once subject and object, but rather than this relation reabsorbing the moment of passivity to produce the free autonomous subject, it resulted in a desubjectification. The 'failing' of the work at

the end was an attempt to prevent this desubjectified being from being reappropriated in the name of art as good form, where the moment of closure asserted its autonomy. But like any attempt to produce an 'open work', the result can be seen as paradoxical, since the non-closure of the work remains a willed failure: the unworked work becomes a work of unworking.

The replacement of the name by a number cannot but recall the concentration camps. Brisley's description of the performance, which is otherwise documented only in photographs, is strongly reminiscent of the so-called *Muselmänner*, the prisoners of Auschwitz suffering the physical and mental effects of near starvation, reduced to the lowest ebb, to nothing but survival close to the end. Agamben has taken up the *Muselmann* as a figure of what he calls 'bare life'.⁴³ I propose to take two ideas from Agamben's books *Homo Sacer* and *Remnants of Auschwitz* in order to focus on what could be understood as a second break, or rupture, in the political presentation of the body after the French Revolution. The first is that of 'bare life' as life that may be killed but not sacrificed: life that is neither what the Greeks called *zōē*, mere life or animal life, nor *bíos*, the form of life proper to an individual or group, whether this is political or religious life.⁴⁴ According to Agamben, this is the life that is subject to a sovereign decision or 'ban'; the life of the state of exception, outside the law (it may be killed without the killer being punished) and religion (it may not be sacrificed). Agamben argues that with the camp the exception becomes the norm.⁴⁵

Agamben is taking up the theme of Nancy's essay on the unsacrificable, although his conclusion is rather different. Nancy's thesis is broad: the West rests on the foundation of a renouncement of sacrifice that has the paradoxical structure of a sacrifice of sacrifice. What is renounced is sacrifice understood as economic, as a barter or exchange with higher powers. This renouncement takes the form of a mimetic rupture, a 'sacrifice of sacrifice' for the sake of a new sacrifice, an *auto-sacrifice*, the name of which is nothing other than the 'subject'. The subject is the sublation, the raising and preserving, of sacrifice

which takes the form of an infinite 'transappropriation': 'an appropriation, through the transgression of the finite, of the infinite truth of this very finitude'.⁴⁶ The structure of sacrifice is that of the appropriation of exteriority by the subject. The Kantian sublime, for example, is the reappropriation of the subject's own disappropriation (the sublime as the sacrifice of imagination, and therefore of sensibility, for the sake of reason and man's moral destiny).⁴⁷

There is a problem from the start, however, as revealed by Bataille's return to sacrifice. The economic idea of sacrifice is a phantasm of the West – we do not know what in fact sacrifice means to the other, what its lived experience might be. This phantasm acts as a defence against a fascination with the cruelty of sacrifice, an excess unsublated in the sacrifice of sacrifice. The photographs of *lingchi*, of the Chinese prisoner being tortured by having portions of his flesh cut away that Bataille published in *Les larmes d'Eros* in 1961, after having first seen them in 1925, represent for him the enigma of sacrifice, since the face appears to have an expression that can be read as ecstasy as well as extreme pain – the point being the fascination the image holds for the viewer as an image of the ambivalence of sacrifice.⁴⁸

What are the implications of this idea of sacrifice for art? Art, as the 'transgressive presentation of the subject' who by that means 'appropriates himself and allows himself to be appropriated', according to Nancy, 'supplements, takes over, or sublates the impasse of sacrifice'. Art – according to Bataille's model – is suspended between 'the representation of ancient sacrifice, and the postulation of auto-sacrifice', that is, between the expropriating spectacle of cruelty – in the form of appearance – and the subjective appropriation of the other or the outside.⁴⁹ This places art in a double bind with respect to the gaze. The spectacle of cruelty is ambiguous: on the one hand, it restricts itself to the simulacrum or mimesis of cruelty; on the other, the cruelty that it makes appear only has value and meaning if it is not simulated (and is this not the structure and double bind of all mimesis?). For Nancy, this means that art is caught between mimesis and *methexis*, between imitation and

participation. He writes that art 'can only sacrifice sacrifice by continuing to sacrifice it to sacrifice'.⁵⁰ The expropriation, as aesthetic presentation, cannot but be reappropriated.

This describes very accurately the dilemma of performance art, and why performance art must differentiate itself from theatre, above all from tragedy. The presentation of expropriation depends on the failure of mimesis, but if that failure is anything other than contingent, it would amount to a mimetic reappropriation. Stuart Brisley's performances very precisely live out this condition. He doesn't act the situations like an actor. He didn't pretend to vomit in the film-performance *Arbeit Macht Frei* (1972), which was based on the performance *And for today ... nothing*, he really vomited for an unbearably long time. He didn't act the part of a hungry person in *10 Days* (1973), he really didn't eat for ten days, as meals were laid out before him and eaten by those passing through, in the run-up to Christmas. And his performances are constantly teetering on the edge of failure; nothing is rehearsed, nothing can be predicted – as if to forestall the inevitable reappropriation. This does not mean that the unrehearsed art performance is more 'authentic' or more fully 'present' than an actor's performance: it is equally affected by the structure of mimetic representation, internally divided from itself. The issue here is not the degree of authenticity, but the appropriation of the body's presentation by a logic that would sublimate a meaning from it.

To attempt to forestall reappropriation is to try to block the workings of the sacrificial logic as it applies to art, even if this confronts a double bind and inevitable failure. There are enough clues in Brisley's work of the 1970s – the replacement of the name by the number; the title *Arbeit Macht Frei* after the slogan inscribed over the gates to the camps – to suggest that this worry about closure, and, in the case of extreme performances, about its being taken up into a sacrificial logic, is connected with the impact of evidence of the camps. On how the camps transformed fundamentally the relation of the West to the sacrificial logic that constitutes it, Nancy writes: 'Here, sacrifice would silently fall headlong into an antithesis

that is also its culmination: a revelation of horror with no accompanying means of access, no appropriation, save that of this infinite or indefinite revelation itself.'⁵¹ He goes on to argue that sacrifice does not in fact disappear; rather, it migrates to one side: the Nazis understood the Aryan as being essentially sacrifice, the sacrifice of blood to the community, to the race – 'he is by essence sacrifice, he is the sacrifice' – whereas for them the Jew 'may not be sacrificed'. First, because there is nothing of him that may be appropriated, for he is entirely vermin; and second, because sacrifice is entirely invested and accomplished by the Aryan race. These two reasons make up a single movement of appropriation and exclusion (a movement that Agamben will go on to complicate by placing the zone of exclusion within the space of appropriation, to the point that it takes it over altogether, whereupon the exception becomes the rule). Referring to a statement by Heinrich Himmler to the SS, Nancy shows that for the Nazis it is not the Jews that are sacrificed; instead, they, the SS, are sacrificing themselves by the mass killing of the Jews – a sacrifice that must remain secret.⁵² Thus, the SS man absorbs into himself 'the power and fruit of the sacrifice, of its secret; he is already, in his very being, the sacrificial secret itself'.⁵³

This marks the end of 'sacrificial trans-appropriation' for Nancy – of the Subject that, to echo Hegel, 'penetrates into negativity, who keeps himself there, enduring his own dismemberment, and who returns sovereign';⁵⁴ existence henceforth has to be thought of as apart from sacrifice, and this requires, for him, a rethinking of Martin Heidegger, such that 'finitude', thought rigorously and thought according to its *Ereignis* (event of appropriation), signifies that existence is not sacrificable.⁵⁵ Based on the idea that if the essence of the *Dasein*, the human being as 'being-there', is its existence, then it has no fixed essence, essentially having been thrown into a situation and being outside itself as anticipation, and it 'cannot be referred back to the transappropriation of an essence'. Effectively, there is nothing in this human being that 'is not' to be sacrificed, and 'this negation confirms "inappropriation" as its most appropriate mode of appropriation, as, in fact,

the only mode of all appropriation'.⁵⁶ For others, of course, this will require a break with ontology as such.⁵⁷ Nancy, however, chooses to remain with a philosophy of existence as exposure, and, in a rereading of Heideggerian *Mitsein*, of 'being-with', where being is 'singular plural'.

While Nancy in his discussion of the camps opposes the sacrificial structure of sovereignty to the unsacrificable, Agamben argues for their most intimate connection. If for Nancy the unsacrificable refers to an existence that may not be raised up by a logic of sacrifice but remains exposed, for Agamben it is a category of life that exists in Roman law as an exception – an exception bound to the exceptional status of the sovereign power of the emperor – and that becomes the norm in modernity. Drawing on Carl Schmitt,⁵⁸ he suggests that the topography of the camps in relation to political space is that of the state of exception. 'Bare life', life that may be killed but not sacrificed, is life that is subject to the ban of the sovereign, the counterpart to sovereign power. When the exception becomes the norm, 'bare life' becomes the invisible presupposition of what life is for us – the concern of medicine, charities and NGOs.⁵⁹

My claim is that Brisley's performances 'produce' or bring to light 'bare life', and they do so, paradoxically, in a form – art – that has been traditionally governed by a logic of sacrifice, of incarnation and trans-appropriation. This accounts, I think, for the aporia of performance art as he practices it: as a mimesis that must undo its mimetic character. How, in such performance, does the body become a political body? We have suggested that the problem of the political body in modernity is evidenced in David's *Marat*, as explicated by T.J. Clark: as the tension between the body as incarnation and sacrifice in the lower half of the canvas, and the defiguration of the scumbling which fills the top half, which Clark argues represents the impossibility of figuring the people as a body. If we take Lefort's account as adding an explanation, in terms of the emergence of the political Symbolic as an empty space of power that must not, in a democracy, be occupied by a body, then the problem is posed as one of the return of the body into this space. Fascism and totalitarianism are not just aberrations, but

indications of the difficulty of living with this empty space, reactions against the absence opened in the political space of modernity – as are, in various distinct ways, the religious fundamentalisms of the present. To return to the distinction between the idea of the *body politic* – which modernity brings to an end – and the *political body*, could there be a return to the presentation of the body in relation to political space without a restoration of the body of incarnation and sacrifice? Nor could such a body be 'representative' or 'exemplary', given the impossibility of representing or exemplifying the multiplicity of bodies in configurations of gender, class and race that multiply to infinity. The passage from figure to figuration, which for Clark is a passage to the pure technique of modernism as the acknowledgement of contingency, disenchantment and immanence, would need to be reconceived as a passage to the defiguration of the body itself. This defiguration is not a simple erasure. Rather, it is simultaneously the reconfiguration of the body in relation to a certain topographic relation between outside and inside.

The topological structure at work here is that of what has been called *extimacy*: an outside on the inside, an intimate alterity. The concept occurs in Lacan's seminar *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, which is concerned with both ethical and artistic sublimation.⁶⁰ Sublimation is, effectively, sacrifice that sidesteps repression, or more accurately, a second-degree reappropriation of sacrifice. We have considered two historical moments in which a problem has been posed for the logic of sacrifice as a determining structure in and of the self-relation of the West. Both of these may be articulated in terms of a relation with the body. The first is the moment of the French Revolution: this results in the disarticulation of sacrifice and incarnation. The second is the moment of Auschwitz: here the model of sacrifice collapses, whether what emerges as unsacrificable is singular plural existence (Nancy) or 'bare life' (Agamben). The question specifically posed by bringing together Nancy and Agamben is whether a relation with the extimate is possible that is not one of sacrifice and reappropriation. Agamben calls such a relation either



10 Days, 1973, Editions Paramedia, Berlin

poetry or testimony, and considers it in terms of enunciation as the place of the impossible relation of *langue* to life. His account of testimony, which considers the relation between inside and outside of *langue*⁶¹ in terms of the relation of the sayable and the unsayable, is an attempt to use a theory of language – specifically of enunciation as the ‘performing’ of language, the instantiation of a contingent relation of inside to outside – to overcome the problem posed by the swallowing up of the norm by the exception – when the exception becomes the norm. In effect, the outside that is on the inside in the structure of extimity, which in the generalisation of the ‘state of exception’ occupies the whole field, had effaced the very distinction between inside and outside and become everything. In relation to this, the enunciation of testimony has a double role: it must create a relation to that to which testimony must be born that is not an appropriation, that is, that does not become a sublimating sacrifice, that remains a ‘relation without relation’;⁶² but in order to do this it must first materialise the topography of the extimate which has been effaced by the generalisation of ‘bare life’. It is up to the enunciation itself – or the poem – to establish the limits in relation and non-relation to which it might take place.

We can rephrase this question with respect to performance art: can the extimate be produced in and by a body without it collapsing back into the model of sacrifice? The problem is acute if art is characterised as the appropriation of the inappropriable, which is perhaps to say nothing other than that art is the subject and the subject is art. We can take this question in two directions. We could say that art is aporetic, and leave it at that. Or we could say that the locus of art is itself extimate, which is also to claim that it is much more than a subsystem of the social or the economic, though it is not an entirely separate or ‘autonomous’ space. However, what if the topological space of the extimate had indeed collapsed? The role of art would be to re-produce the extimate, to make the structure possible as a delimited structure. In relation to the category of ‘bare life’, a possible role for performance art would be to de-generalise it, to specify it as the life of this

body exposed to the others. ‘Bare life’ would come to be localised. The question for us has become not so much that of globalisation as of localisation. An empty space is only an empty space if it is circumscribed.

In *circumscription* there is *scription*. When we inscribe something, we write it down in a material form, in this or that script on a determinate surface. *Inscription* therefore suggests a form of embodiment, of putting a ‘this’ into a ‘that’. Illegible or indecipherable scripts are then understood as inscriptions where we do not have the key to unlock and thereby extract the meanings contained in them. The circumscription of extimity suggests a turning inside out of this model: instead of the material inscription embodying a meaning, the signifiers (which may or may not be meaningful) surround an emptiness, a non-meaning. What, then, of a body that re-enters that space but without representing either itself, the people, or that emptiness itself? How would such a body extrude itself? How would it mark – indeed constitute – its territory? What would its ‘object relations’ be like?

To accompany the idea of the unsacrificable, Nancy coined the term *l'excrit* (the exscribed): ‘Writing, reading, I exscribe the ‘thing itself’ – ‘existence,’ the ‘real’ – which *is* only when it is exscribed.’ *Exscription* produces an ‘outside’ that is not the outside of the referent:

The referent does not present itself as such except in signification. But this ‘outside’ – wholly *exscribed within* the text – is the infinite withdrawal of meaning [*retrait de sens*] by which each existence exists. Not the raw, material, concrete datum, supposed to be outside meaning [*sens*], which meaning represents, but the ‘empty freedom’ by which existence comes into presence – and absence.

And a little later:

By inscribing significations, we exscribe the presence of what withdraws from all significations, being itself (life, passion, matter...). The being of existence is not unrepresentable: it presents itself exscribed.⁶³

For Nancy, communication is impossible without touching the limit where meaning reverses itself out of itself – playing

on *sens* in the double sense of meaning and sensation ('touching the limit where all meaning [*sens*] spills out of itself, like a simple ink stain on a word, and on the word "meaning"'⁶⁴). While inscription is the mode of writing of the subject that appropriates its outside, exscription is the scription of exposure, where the subject is turned inside out to the extent of no longer being a subject. This withdrawal of meaning is not in the name of the incommunicable, but is the very condition of communication, which, however, can no longer model itself on the incarnation of meaning in a material medium, but is, rather, concerned with exposure and touch, the carnal sense of sense.

It seems to me that exscription perfectly describes the relation to materials that takes – or makes – place in Brisley's performances. Take *Beneath Dignity* (Bregenz, Austria, 1977).⁶⁵ The artist passed through five wooden 'frames' on the floor, larger than the span of his arms and legs when lying down (in a kind of perversion of the Renaissance 'ideal man' who combines square and circle). The first contained nothing; then chalk, flour, black paint and white paint; the last three were crossed with cords, under which he had to pass. He moved from delineating the circling of his arms with chalk; to tracing around his feet as he passed from one frame to the next; to movements in the substances (passing through the heap of flour, plunging his face into the paint). As he marked the floor, he too was marked. To exscribe is to be touched by the outside. The specificity of the action here is that when Brisley was 'town artist' at Peterlee New Town, in the northeast of England (working on a project on the history and memory of previous mining villages), he was inspired by hearing miners talk of hewing narrow seams of coal.⁶⁶ The outcome, however, was not a representation of miners at the coalface, but a highly formal, yet at the same time deformalising, presentation of ways of being in circumscribed space. In no way were the materials transformed into elements that signified, in the sense of being impregnated with meaning by the artist (which is why Brisley's approach is entirely different from Joseph Beuys's, where fat, for example, via a personal 'myth' comes to signify regeneration). Nor did the materials of the



Beneath Dignity, 1977, Englische Kunst der Gegenwart, Bregenz, Collection: Tate

performance gain an allegorical function as dead husks of lost meaning. Brisley's materials have no status outside the performance itself.

This has applied not only to materials used up in a performance, from the paint in *ZL656395C* to the blood in *Incidents in Transit* in Barcelona (Brisley put his head in a bucket of it, poured it on precariously balanced tables and mopped it up off the floor),⁶⁷ but also to mark-making, such as the drawing produced during *Sweating the Hole* (New York, 1996). Brisley introduced that performance with a story of killing a mouse; later, smearing medium on paper with his hands, it was as if he had become a mouse making a hole; eventually the paper itself was scrunched up and used to make further smears. Materials have at other times led a life of their own, becoming quasi-performers for the duration and space of an exhibition, with Brisley acting as a kind of curator as they rot and decay. The collected refuse in *Georgiana Collection* (1979–86), which travelled and was shown at the Serpentine Gallery, London in 1986, continues to resonate to this day in the minds of those who have seen or read about the work. This reluctance to allow the materials used in the performance and the traces that have been left to circulate independently is not in pursuit of presence in the name of authenticity.⁶⁸ Nor, however, is presence abandoned to a critique of authenticity. Rather,

presence is accentuated as exposure. The exhibition becomes an exposition: the exposure of an existence in the process of exscribing itself before others. But also the exposition of speech, because it calls for speech: the performance is a manifestation, a coming into presence, that calls for speaking; it is itself communication and demands an extension into the communication of speech, without linguistic meaning becoming the destination of its telos (as would be the case with incarnation and inscription). This is a communication without community, insofar as the community-as-one is based on sacrifice and incorporation; or else as art it is a measure of the absence of another possibility of community. If those gathered around or by the performance are to form a community, it will have been a community of waste.

In 2000, Brisley started working under the title the Collection of Ordure, and two years later founded the Museum of Ordure with two collaborators, Geoff Cox and Adrian Ward.⁶⁹ In subsequent performances, exhibitions, activities and an extended text, Brisley has come to concern himself with ordure and its collection by a character named Rosse Yael Sirb. In his book *Beyond Reason: Ordure*, Brisley claims to have first met R.Y. Sirb during his national service, when he was a corporal in charge of stores and Sirb was a member, along with many displaced persons, of the Mixed Services Organisation and employed as a guard. The Collection of Ordure is the counterpart to a Museum of Hygiene in Dresden, started in the 1920s and continued during the War, where the artist-narrator of *Beyond Reason* recounts having found neo-Nazi graffiti in the lavatory.⁷⁰ Sirb is contrasted with another figure, Bertrand Vollieme, a collector of junk and detritus. The two have somewhat different approaches to the Collection. In Vollieme's view, it 'is made up of objects which could be assimilated into configurations as artworks, taking into account those already in the mix. This is in marked contrast to R.Y. Sirb's position, I think, where the collection in its entirety would be considered to be an artwork. I think Bertrand would be distressed by this notion.'⁷¹ The relation between part and whole takes on a political and ethical valence. For Vollieme,



Georgiana Collection, 1979–86

found objects are artworks in potentia, and the collection is their actualisation. For Sirb, objects, including the abject (even shit), become artworks in, and only in, the enactment of the collection as a kind of performance, which is 'site specific, or site sensitive'. Vollieme collects things from the street, whereas Sirb collects ordure;⁷² the difference lies between that which is discarded or becomes obsolete in the march of progress, and needs to be rescued, and that which is subject to transformation into an 'absolute commodity', 'a social product that has rejected every semblance of existing



Collection of Ordure, 2008, Graphite on paper, 57.5 x 76 cm

for society',⁷³ which is the work of art. Desublimation meets rescue: once the residue of the model of sacrifice, and the logic of the internalisation of the outside, is removed from Bataille's aesthetic of waste and expenditure, it is able to be allied with the 'rescuing critique' of the ragpicker.⁷⁴ This turn to desublimation could be understood as another way of approaching the break with the model of sacrifice in the earlier performances.⁷⁵

In art, however, exposition becomes incorporation. Brisley's performances have always worked to create a gap,

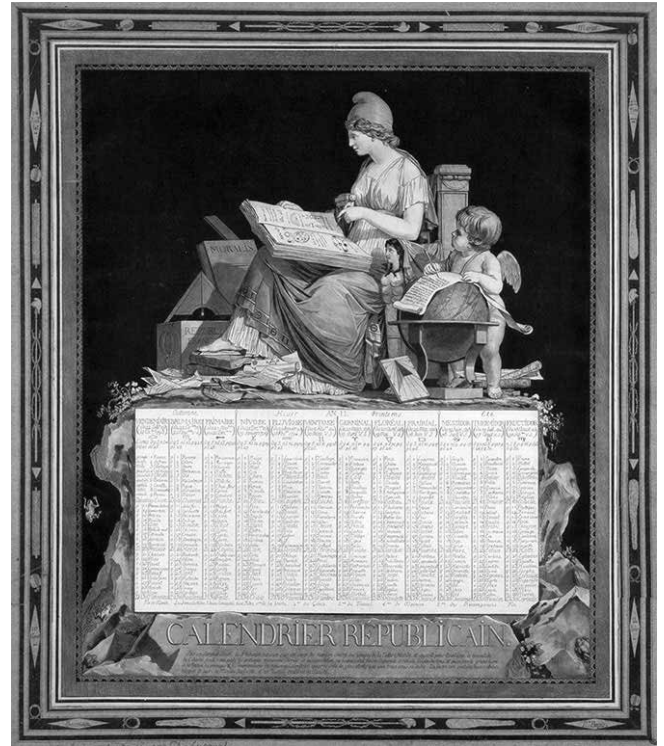
a delay – however temporary – between the two. One way has been to use failure, even if this itself must necessarily fail, insofar as it is the presentation of failure as work. (There may, though, be a moment of uncertainty.) Another way is to remind us that we are eating shit.



Before the Mast, 2013, domobaal, London

The audience could view Stuart Brisley's *Before the Mast* (2013) from a cramped space through a partly open door to the ground-floor front room of an eighteenth-century house on John Street in London, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. The walls of the room were stripped, revealing plaster and *eau de nile* paint. There was a fireplace, a mirror, a chair, a table, string, a stick and scattered papers. We watched Brisley explore the room, scratching the plaster, climbing up on the dado, crawling on all fours amid crumpled newspapers. Then, standing up and moving things around with the stick; next attempting to build something with trestle table, chair and string, only to have it collapse. At other points, he seemed to be attempting to measure the walls. Wearing whitewashed glasses and a prosthetic Roman nose, he held up a mirror to the room. He did not speak, but made choking and wheezing noises, contorting his body to bring out sound. He rolled on the floor. The sense of struggle against external entropy and disintegration was matched by Brisley's ageing body. The contents of this room alternated between construction and ruin.

His choice of a rather prominent Roman nose was intended to emulate the profile of Sylvain Maréchal, who devised the French Republican Calendar based on a ten-day week, or *décade*, made up of ten-hour days.⁷⁶ The performances of *Before the Mast* were timed to last for that calendar's one-hundred-minute hour, announced as 'one revolutionary hour'. Beginning at 14.00 on 21 November, the performance began half an hour later each consecutive day, except for the last day, 30 November, when it started an hour later, at 19.00. The month corresponded with Frimaire, the third month of the Republican Calendar; the revolutionary months were named to reflect the weather, and this one is characterised by hoary fog. Displayed in the entrance hall of the house on John Street was an announcement for the Festival of Reason, the 'civic and philosophical festival in honour of our brothers who died in the defence of the fatherland, in the commune of Brutus ... on the 10th day of the second *décade* of Frimaire'. The Festival of Reason took place in Year II (1793) – Year I being that



French Republican Calendar, drawn by Philibert-Louis Debucourt, 1794

of the execution of Louis XVI – to celebrate the first anniversary of the founding of the Republic. In line with the atheism of the revolutionaries, the revolutionary festivals replaced Christian ones. The decimal division of the week was intended to break from the seven-day week based on the biblical account of Creation, with all days rendered equal, reflecting the principle of equality upheld by the revolutionaries. The very timing of Brisley's performances respected the interconnected principles of atheism, anti-monarchy and equality that informed the French Revolution.

In pondering the 'dialectical image' as a conjunction of a present moment with a past one in a time of emergency, Walter Benjamin, in the fourteenth thesis of 'On the Concept of History' (1940), turned to consider the French revolutionaries:



Peterlee Project 1976–77, Victor Pasmore's Apollo Pavilion

History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled full by the now-time [*Jetztzeit*]. Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the now-time, a past which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate. It cited Rome exactly the way fashion cites a bygone mode of dress. Fashion has a nose for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of long ago; it is the tiger's leap into the past. Such a leap, however, takes place in an arena where the ruling class gives the commands. The same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical leap Marx understood as revolution.⁷⁷

It would be possible to see Brisley's performance as just such a 'tiger's leap', where the past of the revolutionary Maréchal is brought into conjunction with the present as a time of crisis. Indeed, the framing of the performance by the idea of the Republican or Revolutionary Calendar invites us to pose the question of what is the relation of the different dimensions of time: the time of history and of nature, linear time and cyclical time. The idea of revolution implies a relation, tense and unresolved, between each side of the two pairs. What Brisley – through what is in effect a re-enactment of something that never happened, a unique first time that is also presented as a repetition – offers to this configuration is his body as the site of the



The Missing Text, Interregnum 2 (6 May–12 May 2010), 2012–13, Oil on linen, 135 x 196 cm

articulation of these different modes of time. Moreover, far from being a public festival in the street, the performance took place in the interior of a room that was part of an art gallery. And if an identification with Maréchal was involved in the donning of his nose and the assumption of his calendar, to which moment of his life did this refer: the pre-Revolutionary journalist who followed the generation of the high Enlightenment, and who already had an anti-monarchist almanac of his devising censored in 1788; the Maréchal who participated in the heroic phase of the revolutionary events leading up to Year I, and whose calendar was adopted as that of the Republic; or the Maréchal who withdrew to misanthropic retirement in

the countryside after Napoleon took over, continuing to publish and inventing the modern artist's manifesto, which, arising out of the failure of the Revolution to achieve the equality that it promised, and its transformation into the Terror, projects change into a future redemption? There is, in *Before the Mast*, a sense of retrospect. Was Brisley drawing an analogy between, on the one hand, Maréchal's relation to the Revolution after he had withdrawn into a mode of life that presaged aesthetic autonomy and, on the other, the relation of his own work in the twenty-first century to the political radicalism of the 1960s and 70s?

Brisley's exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in 2014, 'State of Denmark', titled after Marcellus's statement

to Horatio in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* but leaving out as understood 'Something is rotten...', provides a hint about how his work might relate to the situation and history in which it has arisen and to which it refers. Coming up the stairs into the main gallery of the museum, one saw stacked metal chair frames, without their seats and backs, lying in a circle on the floor, creating an empty and inaccessible space, and behind it what appeared to be a royal blue panel on a plywood base. On the wall above was a blue quadrilateral panel, anamorphically angled so that it took on a right-angled appearance when seen from a single point of view, inducing a self-consciousness of position that might be extended to politics; hanging from the ceiling directly in front of the panel was a large crown of laser-cut steel. The arrangement looked entirely different when observed from positions elsewhere in the room. On closer inspection, the free-standing panel revealed itself to be a triangular enclosure; through gaps in the construction, a pencil drawing of a boy, recognisably a portrait of the infant prince George, could be seen. Nearby were two blank whiteboards with pens, whereon visitors could write comments. A series of resonances were created: the content tended to query the form. The crown was echoed by the circle of 212 Robin Day chairs, titled *Hille Fellowship Poly Wheel* and dated 1970/2014; this was an adapted configuration of an outdoor work Brisley had made on an Artist Placement Group contract at the Hille furniture factory at Haverhill in Suffolk. The whiteboards recalled the moving notice boards Brisley had introduced at the factory to facilitate workers' communication with one another. Seen from one side, the crown was part of a spectacle of royal display; but we were reminded of the 'toppled' and occluded labour on which it depends and the oppression it serves. The room's affinity, when seen from that side, to a Minimalist art installation was striking, especially since the artists in that group, notably Donald Judd, depended on fabricators to make their pristine, geometric objects, and to conceal the very labour that produced them. Their 'clean' objects left no place for 'ordure'.

The half-open wall of the triangular enclosure represented another standpoint, of greater transparency than that of the royal blue spectacle. Following the title of the exhibition, 'State of Denmark', the depicted figure within might have represented an infant Hamlet, hanging on the 'royal' wall, looking towards a republican future. In the exhibition's physical layout, he faced the display in the next room of documentation of *Artist Project Peterlee/History Within Living Memory* (1976–77), for which Brisley created an archive with the inhabitants of a new town built to house people from the surrounding mining communities. If we consider that work in relation to the drawing of the boy prince, we can infer that the notion of sovereignty is in question here: whether sovereignty derives from a monarch or similar figure, working top-down, as from the crown suspended over the main exhibition space; or whether sovereignty, and with it agency, may be redistributed to the people. If this question was posed in the French Revolution, and again in the 1960s and 70s, what does it mean at a time when the industries with whom Brisley and the Artists Placement Group sought to collaborate have been eviscerated and replaced by hedge funds, shady banking and celebrity spectacle in a globalised economy?

Additional references to the effects of this political process were to be found in a third space at Modern Art Oxford, wherein one encountered *Chair* (1996/2011), a wooden chair on a base that looked as if it had been smeared and slathered with ordure, effectively a defiled throne; the encrusted framed painting *Royal Ordure* (1996); and a group of large paintings from 2012 that refer in their imagery to the debris left behind by bankrupt businesses in a space in London's Hoxton district, wherein Brisley made the performance *Next Door (the missing subject)* for PEER Gallery in 2010. The ruins of past enterprise conjured for Brisley the Conservative Party's general election slogan that year: 'Broken Britain'. The paintings are part of *The Missing Text*, which comprises a diary written at the time of the original actions at PEER, a set of photographs of those actions, a film and the three paintings. The *Chair* and *Royal Ordure* recall Georges Bataille's 'base materialism', in

which the celebration of shit is linked to the *acéphale*,⁷⁸ the headless one to whom sovereignty has been redistributed as a result of the execution of the king. But Brisley's 'State of Denmark' installation seemed to imply that such a dramatic outcome has not yet occurred. History was shown as a pile-up of the debris of failure. The exhibition was curated by David Thorp with the virtual Museum of Ordure, the mission of which, under the direction of the fictional persona R.Y. Sirb, is to examine the cultural value of shit and the waste of human resources under current social conditions. Brisley's scatological throne shows the function of the spectacle of monarchy to repress this waste, while at the same time the work reveals and celebrates the base.

The full title of the paintings includes the word 'interregnum', as in *The Missing Text, Interregnum 1 (6 May–12 May 2010)*, and thus they reflect on the historical moment in which the action at PEER took place. The time of *Next Door (the missing subject)* was a period of 'hung parliament', while the coalition government was being formed by the Conservative and Liberal-Democrat parties, and the beginning of a change in the configuration of British politics; the word *interregnum* (Latin *inter-*, 'between', and *rēgnum*, 'reign' [from *rex*, *rēgis*, 'king']) refers to the period between two reigns. According to Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), the interregnum was once the time between two 'mortal' bodies, when an effigy in wax would carry the kingly or corporate body.⁷⁹ Its contemporary usage shows the shadow of monarchy overhanging British democracy. *Before the Mast* lasted ten days in order to point to the Revolutionary Calendar, implying that the political events taking place should be interpreted according to a horizon of failure to achieve a republic in the UK, which remains besotted with a monarchy that acts as the ideological support for massive inequality in society.

Before the Mast and 'State of Denmark' were followed by a performance titled *Breath* at the Royal Academy Schools in London on 29 October 2014. *Breath* took place in the Life Room of the Academy, which dates back to the eighteenth century, where a silent video of part of *Before*

the Mast was simultaneously being projected – making a connection between the French Revolution and the Life Room of the Academy under a monarchy opposed to the Revolution, and suggesting this question: what kind of turning point in the understanding of what is the life and human occurred in the period of the conflict over sovereignty that followed the Enlightenment? Through Brisley's performance in this specific location with its architecture and objects, we were asked to reflect on 'life' and the ageing body in relation to a history that is understood in terms of its political achievements and failures. The members of the audience were presented with a scroll of the 'Manifesto of Equals', written by Gracchus Babeuf and Sylvain Maréchal in 1796 as part of a conspiracy against the Directory for the sake of a transition to pure democracy and an egalitarian society. The performance was thus placed in the context of a revolution that is still incomplete, in that equality has not been achieved. We might remember that it was this very incompleteness that gave rise to the literary form of the manifesto, of which the most famous example is the 1848 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.⁸⁰ On 19 February 2014, at the Kunsthal Aarhus in Denmark, Brisley donned the Maréchal nose again, this time in the persona of R.Y. Sirb, to perform *Workers of the World* on the occasion of the publication of a book presenting over a hundred covers of 'The Communist Manifesto' from the collection of the Museum of Ordure.⁸¹ Dressed in black, holding a cane, which he at one point pressed up to his chin, he inhaled and exhaled noisily, almost as if he were being choked. What came out were sounds between a breath and a shout, constricted by the disciplinary cane, until finally he managed to call out: 'Workers of the world unite! Unite!'

The Life Room at the Royal Academy still contains the plaster casts that were copied by students over two hundred years ago. Brisley was accompanied in his performance by a white plaster flayed horse and a human skeleton whose hand, at one point, he held up. He also used a large mirror on a trolley, which reflected the audience back to themselves, and recalled Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* (1656).

Foucault noted the use of a mirror in that masterwork to indicate that the painter of the painting (rather than in the painting) and the viewer both occupy the position where the mirror indicates the sovereign would stand, initiating the period of the history of the sovereignty of the subject.⁸² The Life Room is the place in which the sovereign gaze has been educated. What Brisley enacted in his performance was the inversion and ending of this history, the replacement of the pure visibility of the sovereign gaze with vulnerable and mortal flesh. In addition, if we think also of the performance at Aarhus and of *Before the Mast*, which both involved a struggle of the body to find a voice, we can see that in *Breath* the silent gaze of the Life Room – associated by Brisley with the advent of the modern subject whereby artist and viewer take the place of the king – is being associated with a suppression of speech.

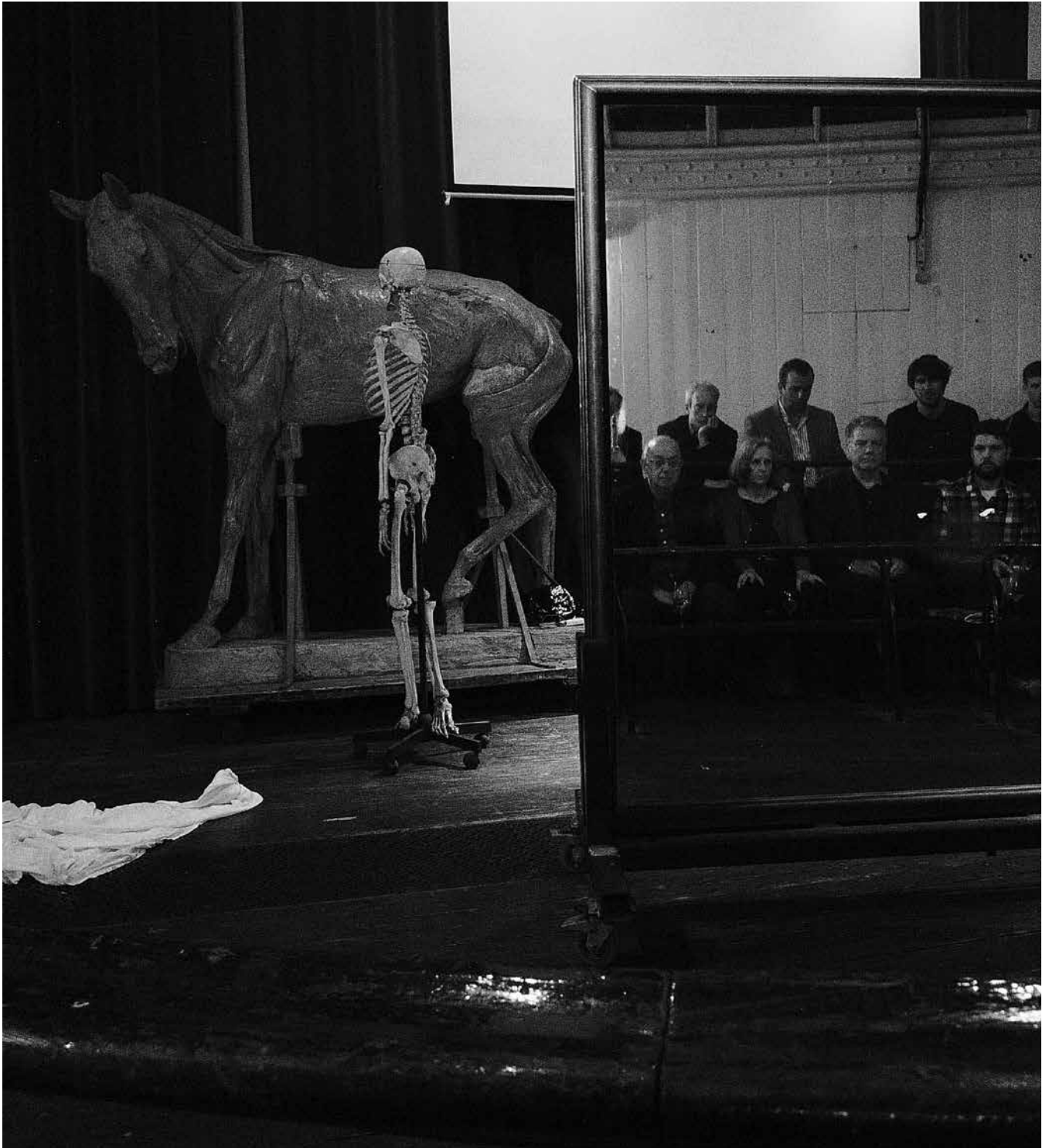
Brisley crawled into the Life Room, his wet hair creating a distance from the audience, suggesting some kind of ordeal. He toyed with the mirror, moving it so that the audience could see themselves. The mirror combined with the skeleton evoked the idea of vanitas, a reminder of death. Printed on the invitation to the performance – to summon the public – was Brisley's *Selfportrait* from 1979, a photo-etching based on an X-ray of his skull made after a car crash, represented as a negative image. This implied that Brisley and the skeleton in the life room were 'equal partners', and that we all carry our deaths within ourselves. Moreover, if the skeleton is, in a sense, still alive, this suggests that the life in question is something other than the biological life of all living, sentient beings. To return to the question of sovereignty and the 'king's two bodies', we could see this life as what Eric Santner calls 'creaturely life', which is the exposure of that which cannot be contained within the system of symbolic legitimation.⁸³

According to the philosopher and psychoanalyst Jonathan Lear, on whom Santner draws, this creaturely life is related to an 'ontological vulnerability' that comes to the fore when forms of life break down.⁸⁴ Putting himself in a state of ontological vulnerability well describes Brisley's approach to performance. The idea of

ontological exposure suggests a lack of mediation, since such exposure is concerned precisely with the failure of the symbolic to mediate the excess of life. To present such exposure is to propose a relation, but an 'impossible' one, a relation that is a non-relation. This raises the question of how the performance as an event is related to the situation in which it takes place, and to which it might refer, if it precisely exposes something that exceeds or escapes mediating relations, if it concerns a matter of life or death.

A hint of how a performance or installation relates to its situation is provided by a brief statement concerning the term *mise en abyme* on Brisley's website, in reference to *Breath*.⁸⁵ Brisley notes the origin of its application to works of art in the writings of André Gide (who borrowed the term from heraldry, where it describes how a shield might contain a replica of itself), and his citation of Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, with its inclusion of a mirror to reflect the royal couple, and the play-within-the-play in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.⁸⁶ This, in turn, hints at a connection between the performance *Breath* and the installation 'State of Denmark'. The performance included a mirror to create a virtual space within the Life Room, reflecting both Brisley and the audience. 'State of Denmark' included a room-within-the-room, with its semi-open republican and closed monarchical walls. The video projection of *Before the Mast* during *Breath* manifested a performance-at-the-performance.

I propose that the *mise en abyme* structure be extended to the relation of Brisley's works – performances, installations, paintings, photo-documentation – to their situation, or, to be more precise, to their situations as these have changed since the 1960s. The works are *misés en abyme* of their situations, which are also abyssal in the other, existential sense, in that they do not simply repeat the symbolic blazon of their society but expose the life that exceeds its limits as the basis of the call for an atheistic and equal society. In that sense, the inset – the play-within-the-play – becomes inverted into a *mise en relief*. As Johannes Türk writes of Carl Schmitt's claim that the relation of the play-within-the-play to *Hamlet* is the opposite of the actor's play:



Breath, 7pm, 29.10.2014, Royal Academy Schools Life Room, London

In contrast to the actor's play, which reveals the fabrication of art, it would have to demonstrate the non-fabrication of existential life. Instead of representing the process of representation, it would show that this process is an existential dimension of life. In the place of the *mise en abîme* of reflection with its mirror-effect, art is a *mise en relief* that intensifies rather than weakens the existential conflict. The surface of the play becomes opaque and pastose. For us, this is only readable in the stains on the mirror, the spots where the reflection of the familiar image is distorted.⁸⁷

Schmitt takes it as crucial that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* during the time of the succession of Elizabeth I by James, whose father, Lord Darnley, was supposed to have been killed by his mother Mary Stuart's lover, the Earl of Bothwell, whom she married only three months later. This reality intrudes on the play not as something that is explicitly represented, but as a taboo around the possible guilt of Hamlet's mother, and therefore as the presence of an absence or an outside that causes something like a topological deformation that appears as an opacity. Written before the Romantic idea of aesthetic illusion, and modernist autonomy, the play is not considered to be a separate sphere from the political but rather 'an intensification of its immanent existential reality': 'The direction of the traditional concept of mimesis is inverted: the imitation is not a minor representation of something that precedes it but a part of the real itself. It is not the weakened counterfeit of the true, but a real participation in it.'⁸⁸

If *Hamlet* precedes the becoming autonomous of the aesthetic sphere, Brisley's art follows its dissolution into the universalisation of commodity value that the aesthetic prepared. Brisley's work of the 70s sought to extend his practice out from the autonomous aesthetic, already challenged by his experience of military service in Germany after World War II, into the social reality of labour relations; to give art a use-value. If this approach, through no fault of its own, failed to achieve its political aims, Brisley's subsequent practice, largely but not exclusively involving performance, sought not to directly

alter external reality but to touch the real of embodiment and the exposure of the flesh through sometimes extreme acts of endurance, such as self-starvation, which took on an allegorical or emblematic significance. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, as Brisley enters his eighth decade, an exposure of the effects of ageing, the immanence of the human as mortal, is combined with a reflection on the physical and discursive framing of the performance, specifically in relation to the egalitarian and republican ideals of the French Revolution. For Brisley, the play-within-the-play in *Hamlet* has become a model of how an action or installation may be related to the 'reality' in which it takes place. It is clear that this relation is not one of separation or an infinite mirror-regression, but rather of an existential intensification of a relation to an inaugural event of not-yet-realised potential.

The event of revolution, which erupts as the new, as something other than a return, in the French Revolution, is, through the Republican Calendar, linked to cosmos and epoch, and to cycles of regeneration. To make a calendar that incorporates this inaugural event as the 'zero' that begins Year I reveals the problem of how an 'origin' is constituted – always retroactively – in relation to history as a linear narrative and nature as cyclical.⁸⁹ The Revolution was a collective act of political and juridical institution, involving a founding violence, and therefore both outside and inside the new order that it sought to establish. In the case of the French Revolution, this act of violence concerned the redistribution of sovereignty from the king to the people. If the sovereign has two bodies, mortal and 'mystical' or corporate, and stands both inside and outside the field of law, what happens to this structure when sovereignty passes to the people? Agamben has developed Schmitt's idea that the sovereign is he who decides the 'state of exception' into the notion that such a state has become a general condition of society, with its model in the concentration camp, where 'bare life', defined as life subject to the ban (as in 'banished' or 'bandit'), may be killed but not sacrificed; this life is the object of the violence that is related to the condition of

sovereignty.⁹⁰ What is involved here is a relation that is also a non-relation of the law to its constitutive outside, and this outside comes to take over the inside: the whole of society comes under the state of exception, which is now the norm, and everyone becomes subject to surveillance and control. Of the human being reduced to a condition of 'bare life' in the camps, Agamben writes: 'Mute and absolutely alone, he has passed into another world without memory and without grief.'⁹¹ Not only have voice (associated with the living being as *zoē*) and *bíos* (language associated with the human in the polis) split apart, voice has been lost. Brisley's *Before the Mast* could be seen as combining the exposition of the body with the attempt to regain voice – not to speak or to speak for, but to make speech possible; to give voice, if not language, to what Jean-Luc Nancy calls the 'exscribed', the outside of sense that is also its condition.⁹²

These are the Revolution's two legacies: its ideal of equality remains unrealised; and the wasteland of the sovereign ban, the terrain that is neither inside nor outside, has become generalised. Rather than seeing a re-establishment of sovereignty, and the boundaries of nation and self, we might begin from the state of abandonment, in the immanence of the exposed and vulnerable body, which might, instead of being a fatality, be turned into opportunity, but, again, without being recuperated as sacrifice. If sovereignty involves an incorporation of the political body, this would involve a process of *excorporation*. Is it not this turning from incorporation, and mimetic representation, to excorporation that was witnessed in Stuart Brisley's performances *Before the Mast* and *Breath?* These acts involve circumscription, the adaption of already existing places and institutions and a relation to history – thus leaving behind the abstraction of a total revolution as origin and new beginning – but in ways that involve a turning inside out, so that the inside also becomes outside. While sovereignty does indeed remain to be grasped by the people as the basis for collective action, the notion of sovereignty and its relation to the body also needs to be

transformed. The duality of the *mise en abyme* or *mise en relief* suggests that the relation to reality is not limited to being that of representation in relation to a purported context where either may be taken to dominate the other, but rather, without leaving the immanence of the flesh, the relation of exposure and vulnerability to an outside already inhabiting the inside as the basis for change.

Notes

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1 *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, W. & R. Chambers, Edinburgh, 1972.

2 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand, Fordham University Press, New York, 2008, pp.2–4.

3 *Ibid.*, pp.32–37. The English translation keeps the word 'exposition'.

4 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, New York, 1995, pp.3–6.

5 *Ibid.*, pp.9–10.

6 Stuart Brisley spent from 1960 to 1964 in the US, and began his career as a teacher there.

7 Another distinction is that the bloodier Vienna Actionist performances appeared to have been faked, bringing them closer to theatre than Brisley's work. See Amelia Jones, 'Survey', in Amelia Jones and Tracey Warr, eds., *The Artist's Body*, Phaidon, London, 2000, p.32: 'Most notably, the violence of Rudolf Schwarzkogler's famous 1969 histrionic castration performance, documented by the seemingly incontrovertible evidence of the black and white photograph, was nonetheless faked, like most of the bloodshed in the Actionists' works.'

8 See Tadeusz Kantor, *A Journey Through Other Spaces: Essays and Manifestos, 1944–1990*, trans. Michal Kobińska, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1993.

9 Brisley shares this concern with Gustav Metzger, whose Destruction in Art Symposium in London he attended in 1966. He did his national service in the army from May 1955 to July 1956, stationed first in Münster; then on the German side of the Dutch border near Mönchengladbach; then close to the East German border near Königsutter, at the Langeleben Camp.

10 See Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Alan Sheridan et al., Polity Press, London, 1986; and *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey, Polity Press, London, 1988.

11 For a critique of Lefort's account of the emergence of 'the political' of democracy as an 'empty place', and arguments influenced by Lefort, see Mark Neocleous, 'The Fate of the Body Politic', *Radical Philosophy* 108, July/August 2001, pp.29–38. Neocleous argues that what emerges in the eighteenth century is not a disincorporation of power but a new conception of the social body, which is first articulated in Rousseau. He then claims that, rather than reverting to a pre-modern theological political conception of the body, capitalist democracy and

fascism share the same (modern) conception of the social body, and treat threats to the social order in the same medicalised and biological terms. He suggests that Marx has an account of 'socialised humanity' not based on the metaphor of the body. While Neocleous's insistence on the distinction between the theologico-political metaphor of the 'body politic' and the modern conception of the 'social body of the people' – such that the corpus of the people, which is supposed to include the whole citizenry, embodies sovereignty (p.33) – is an important distinction to make, he misrepresents Lefort's argument. Neocleous either fails to fully take into account, or refuses, Lefort's distinction between the symbolic character of power and its 'real' embodiment: it is not the empty place as such, but this distinction that is crucial. 'The legitimacy of power is based on the people; but the image of popular sovereignty is linked to the image of an empty place, impossible to occupy, such that those who exercise public authority can never claim to appropriate it. Democracy combines these two apparently contradictory principles: on the one hand, power emanates from the people; on the other, it is the power of nobody. And democracy thrives on the contradiction.... If the place of power appears, no longer as symbolically, but as *really* empty, then those who exercise it are perceived as mere ordinary individuals, as forming a faction at the service of private interests and, by the same token, legitimacy collapses throughout society.' Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, p.279. Moreover, according to Lefort, totalitarianism involves not a reversion to a pre-modern conception of the body politic, but precisely a historically distinctive, modern disavowal of the empty place of power, from which, as the preceding quote suggests, democracy is not immune. Rather than an argument concerning the appropriateness or not of the 'metaphor of the body politic', the *philosophical* stake for Lefort is the very process of metaphorisation, and the way in which its logic of substitution dependent upon an emptiness both appears, becomes explicit, in modernity and is covered over. If anything, what needs further consideration is the *difficulty* of the relation to the nothing of the empty place.

12 For the role of the political imaginary, see Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987.

13 This association was pointed out by Paul Overy, 'Introduction', in *Stuart Brisley*, exhibition catalogue, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 1981, p.8.

14 T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1999, p.15.

15 Quoted in *ibid.*, 32. For a vivid description of the funeral and David's involvement, followed by a discussion of the painting, see Simon Lee, *David*, Phaidon, London, 1999, pp.162–74.

16 Clark, *op. cit.*, p.32.

17 *Ibid.*, p.18.

18 In this, of course, it functioned like an icon carried in a procession, or exposed on a particular occasion.

19 *Ibid.*, p.46.

20 *Ibid.*, p.47.

21 *Ibid.* This scumbling looks forward to Jackson Pollock, who is discussed elsewhere in Clark's book, and a certain closure of the possibility of modernism. For a critique of Clark on Pollock, based on an account of sensuous particularity from Adorno, see J.M. Bernstein, 'The Death of Sensuous Particulars: Adorno and Abstract Expressionism,' *Radical Philosophy* 76, March/April 1996, pp.7–18; also 'Social Signs and Natural Bodies: On T.J. Clark's *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*,' *Radical Philosophy* 104, November/December 2000, pp.25–38.

22 This may be considered in relation to the discussion of the Abbé Sieyès account of the Third Estate in Neocleous's 'The Fate of the Body Politic' (*op. cit.*, p.32), where he points out that the logic of incorporation is pushed to the limit in an account of representation: "The deputy is a member of the body of the Assembly and member of the body of the Nation for which he legislates." Representation is thus a projection of a symbolic social body onto a real institutional body. This is, of course, the exact inverse of Lefort's argument, which concerns the substitution of a real body for a symbolic empty space.

23 Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*, trans. Charlotte Mandell, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1997, pp.291–92. Marat was not the only such 'martyr' (see p.282). De Baecque's whole argument concerning the changing ways in which the people were embodied during the revolutionary period, including the Terror, complicates Neocleous's account, and justifies Clark's emphasis on the failure of embodiment, although the claim that the scumbling on David's *Marat* is evidence of this failure is retrospective projection from the later history of modernism (and no less interesting for that). The situation was perhaps more complicated than that since, as Tom Gretton has pointed out, the Jacobins needed to assert their control over revolutionary violence, so 'the image had to demobilise Marat's supporters, rather than mobilise them, which an image exhorting to revenge, even to steadfastness, would have done'. Gretton, 'Marat, L'ami du peuple, David: Love and Discipline in the Summer of '93,' in William Vaughan and Helen Weston, eds., *David's The Death of Marat*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.43. This accounts for the rectilinear structure of the painting; its lack of movement and the individuation and isolation of Marat: 'His representation imposes silence and order. These qualities apply both to Marat and to the people, which is inscribed in the painting only as legitimating abstraction, not as a noisy and disorderly presence.' *Ibid.*, p.50. This provides a

different spin to the non-figuration of the people to Clark's.

24 Insofar as in his larger argument the contingency of abstraction involves a failure of the conditions for representation. For an extremely interesting discussion of the way in which Edvard Munch and Pablo Picasso's reworkings of the *Marat* bring out its phantasmatic structure of identification with the victim and self-sacrifice of the artist, which is linked to Bataille's accounts of sacrifice, see David Lomas, 'Staging Sacrifice: Munch, Picasso and Marat,' in Vaughan and Weston, eds., *David's The Death of Marat*, op. cit., pp.153–78. Indeed, it is clear that David's *Marat* is a key work in the transition from religious-political discourse of sacrifice, which is at once how Marat's 'martyrdom' was presented, to a sacrificial logic governing the work of art and the artist's relation to it, a role which has something to do with the ambivalent status of the painting itself, which was both use-value as funerary replica and an aesthetic transfiguration of its (object) subject. Performance art could be understood as reversing this trajectory; what Brisley seems to have understood is that such a reversal must also engage with the logic of sacrifice that made the movement possible in the first place.

25 For the political implications of this, see F.R. Ankersmit, *Aesthetic Politics: Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1996. It follows from Ankersmit's argument that the collapse of political space in its mediation is precisely the denial of delegation by a 'copy' theory of representation.

26 Nancy, *Corpus*, op. cit., p.17.

27 Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, ed. Simon Sparks, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2003, pp.59–60.

28 See the critique of Foucault through Lefort in Bernard Flynn, *Political Philosophy at the Closure of Metaphysics*, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ and London, 1992, pp.83–84.

29 Lefort, 'The Permanence of the Theologico-Political', in *Democracy and Political Theory*, op. cit., p.226.

30 See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1957.

31 Lefort, 'The Permanence of the Theologico-Political', op. cit., pp.244–45.

32 *Ibid.*, p.233.

33 I cannot remember whether this suggestion came to me from Rudi Visker or Slavoj Žižek, so I had better thank them both. Whatever the case may be, the source in psychoanalysis is Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre VIII. Le transfert*, Seuil, Paris, 1991, pp.277–337.

34 See Nancy, *Visitation (de la peinture chrétienne)*, Galilée, Paris, 2001.

35 For the *re* of representation as an intensification or redoubling of presence, see Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, trans. Martha M. Houle, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988.

36 Nancy, *Corpus*, op. cit., pp.14–16.

37 See the chapter 'The Unsacrificeable' (1990), trans. Richard Stamp and Simon Sparks, in Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, op. cit., pp.51–77. Where references to Nancy texts in translations are not noted, all translations are by the author.

38 See Georges Bataille 'The Notion of Expenditure' (1933), in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, trans. Allan Stoekl, with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr., University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985, pp.116–29.

39 On the fall of the object revealing the image as empty, thus connecting the Imaginary with the lack in the Symbolic, and therefore the Real, see Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter, Routledge, London, 1992; and Parveen Adams, *The Emptiness of the Image: Psychoanalysis and Sexual Differences*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996.

40 Brisley, 'Conversations', *Audio Arts*, vol.4, no.4, 1 January 1981, 0:12:55–0:14:35, audio cassettes based on recordings of discussions with Brisley made during February and March 1981, available at <http://www.tate.org.uk/audio-arts/volume-4/number-4> (accessed 23 January 2015), which includes a full description of ZL656395C.

41 For *unworking*, see Maurice Blanchot, 'Orpheus's Gaze', in *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1982, pp.171–76. There is also an excellent discussion in Leslie Hill, *Maurice Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p.118. See also Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor, trans. Connor et al., University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991.

42 See Brisley, 'Conversations', *Audio Arts*, op. cit.

43 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998. Agamben's use of the *Muselman* as a figure, indeed, as an allegorical figure, has been subjected to criticism, some of it devastating; see Philippe Mesnard and Claudine Kahan, *Giorgio Agamben à l'épreuve d'Auschwitz*, Editions Kimé, Paris, 2001. Nonetheless, I consider the concept of 'life that may be killed but not sacrificed' and its connection with the normalisation of a state of emergency to be important.

44 Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, op. cit., p.9.

45 Agamben takes the figure of the *Muselman* from Primo Levi's *If This is a Man*: 'Their life is short, but their number is endless; they, the *Muselmänner*, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand.'

'They crowd my memory with their faceless presences, and if I could enclose all the evil of our time in one image, I would choose this image that is familiar to me of an emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of a thought is to be seen.' Levi, *If This is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf, Penguin, London, 1979, p.96.

While those in the condition that Agamben describes as that of bare life may have been described as *Muselmänner* in the camps, in the current context, the implication of the designation of the 'drowned' of the camps as 'Muslims' needs to be questioned.

46 Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, op. cit., p.59.

47 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1987, p.129.

48 See Bataille, *The Tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor, City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1989, p.204. Bataille was given one of the images of this incidence of 'death by 1000 cuts' by the French psychoanalyst Dr. Adrien Borel in 1925. 'This photograph had a decisive role in my life. I have never stopped being obsessed by this image of pain, at once ecstatic and intolerable. I wonder what the Marquis de Sade would have thought of this image, Sade who dreamed of torture, which was inaccessible to him, but who never witnessed an actual torture session.' *Ibid.*, p.206.

49 Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, op. cit., p.65.

50 *Ibid.*, p.66.

51 *Ibid.*, p.69.

52 *Ibid.*, p.70.

53 *Ibid.*, p.71.

54 *Ibid.*, p.73.

55 *Ibid.*, p.74. The *Ereignis* as a way of rethinking the relation of being and the human as an appropriating event of being, or a being-appropriated, is the central topic of Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2012. Heidegger wrote the text during the period of 1936 to 1938, but it was only published posthumously.

56 Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, op. cit., p.74.

57 The preeminent other here being, of course, Emmanuel Levinas; see Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being: Or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1998.

58 Carl Schmitt was a German philosopher of law and politics who became a leading jurist under the Nazi regime; prior to this allegiance, Walter Benjamin drew on Schmitt's thinking on sovereignty for his thesis 'The Origin of the German Mourning Play' (1925, published 1928), in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, New Left Books, London, 1977. For a discussion of the relation of Benjamin to Schmitt, see Samuel Weber, 'Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt', *Diacritics*, vol.22, no.3/4, 1992, pp.5–18. Schmitt is also central to Agamben's account of the 'state of exception' in *Homo Sacer*, op. cit.

- 59 'When life and politics – originally divided, and linked together by means of the no-man's land of the state of exception that is inhabited by bare life – begin to become one, all life becomes sacred and all politics becomes the exception.' *Ibid.*, p.148.
- 60 See Lacan, *Ethics*, *op. cit.*, pp.71–139. See also Jacques-Alain Miller, 'Extimité', in *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, ed. Mark Bracher et al., New York University Press, New York and London 1994.
- 61 Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, Zone Books, New York, 1999, p.145.
- 62 Blanchot explores the idea of a 'relation without relation' (*rapport sans rapport*) in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993, pp.40–58. The problem of relation arises from the ethical relation in Levinas, where the other person (*autrui*) is absolutely other, and cannot be mediated by a common being as the basis for relation. Blanchot considers the implications of this for language, including the language of poetry. The phrase 'relation without relation' arises when he considers that poetry names the possible but responds to the impossible (p.48): the 'relation without relation' would be an 'impossible' relation, but one absolutely required as a response to the other, although here Blanchot, contra Levinas, is sliding between the personal other, *autrui*, and an arguably impersonal otherness, in order to engage with the (non-)relation of poetry, and by implication art, to otherness, in a way that avoids the appropriation of that otherness (p.51).
- 63 Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1993, pp.338–39. The essay 'L'écrit' was originally published in 1988, and included in the collection *Une pensée finie* (1990), which also included 'L'insacriable' ('The Unsacrificeable').
- 64 *Ibid.*, p.319.
- 65 Brisley remade *Beneath Dignity* at the Whitechapel Gallery on 16 April 2002. I would like to thank John Wyver of Illuminations television for lending me rushes of his company's documentation of this performance, and for his interview with Brisley.
- 66 The connection is made in a video-taped interview with John Wyver, 5 June 2002. Brisley was approached by the Artists Placement Group in 1976 as to whether he would be interested in being Town Artist in Peterlee New Town. He followed the suggestion up independently, setting up 'History Within Living Memory' in a workshop/office in Peterlee and employing a group of people to collate material. The aim was to establish collective memory within living memory of the new town to examine and record the history of the Development Corporation, and to facilitate a community workshop where people could discuss the issues that engaged them and what action was to be taken. He did not claim the project as his, so that it would be there for others to continue after he left Peterlee. When the Development Corporation's work came to an end, the local authority took over History Within Living Memory and turned it into an archival heritage project. The Sociology Department of Durham University did a study of the history of the Development Corporation as part of History Within Living Memory. For further information see http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/27/70s/Works/Artist_Project_Peterlee_History_Within_Living_Memory/page:27 (accessed 7 January 2015); and Brisley, *The Peterlee Project 1976–77*, Museum of Ordure, London and Antipyrine, Aarhus, Denmark, 2014, which includes essays on the projects by Sanja Perovic and Tim Brennan.
- 67 One in the series '7 Performances: cicle tangents, entorn a la performance', Fundació La Caixa, Barcelona, March–April 1992.
- 68 Referring to the performance *Between* by Brisley and Iain Robertson at de Appel, Amsterdam in 1979, Marina Abramovic has commented: 'Another remark that I would make is that Brisley is always busy with kind of structures. He always needs to leave traces. After maybe twelve hours they decided to put water on the board, but before that he was licking his finger and his feet to make wet traces, and also from the body and from the sweating. He always carries something visible, physical, onto the material he is dealing with. Also in other performances when he uses chalk or colour, and leaves traces on the wall or on the floor. And then he leaves this after a performance, but this one I liked more because they destroyed the construction. The process is more important; the result is in you, in your memory, but not concrete. There should not be an object afterwards.' 'A discussion about the performance between Michael Gibbs and Marina Abramovic', *Artzien*, vol.2, no.2/3, December 1979–January 1980.
- 69 See http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/33/00s/Works/The_Collection_of_Ordure/page:8 and <http://museum-ordure.org.uk/> (accessed 7 Jan 2015). Brisley has published a text involving the Collection of Ordure: *Beyond Reason: Ordure*, Bookworks, London, 2003. The first showing of works that were to become part of the Collection of Ordure was in 'Black', at the South London Gallery in 1996, and the Collection of Ordure was shown in curated form at the Freud Museum, London in 2003, which was the occasion for the publication of the original version of this essay.
- 70 For discussions of the Nazi discourse of hygiene, see Robert N. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1988; and Neocleous, 'The Fate of the Body Politic', *op. cit.*, p.33.
- 71 Brisley, *Beyond Reason*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 43 'East Berlin', n.p.
- 72 For the political implications of ordure, see Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit*, trans. Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khoury, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 2000.
- 73 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, The Athlone Press, London 1997, p.236.
- 74 See Jürgen Habermas, 'Walter Benjamin: Consciousness-Raising or Rescuing Critique', in Gary Smith, ed., *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 1988, pp.90–128.
- 75 In Freud, as is well known, faeces are equated with gift and with gold. It could be said that shit points two ways: towards enjoyment and towards its sacrifice. In the 'Three Essays on Sexuality' (1905), Freud writes: 'One of the clearest signs of subsequent eccentricity or nervousness is to be seen when a baby obstinately refuses to empty his bowels when he is put on the pot – that is, when his nurse wants him to – and holds back that function till he himself chooses to exercise it. He is naturally not concerned with dirtying the bed, he is only anxious not to miss the subsidiary pleasure attached to defecating.' Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, ed. James Strachey, The Hogarth Press, London, 1957, vol.8, p.186. In 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis' (1918), he writes: 'The handing over of faeces for the sake of (out of love for) someone else becomes a prototype of castration; it is the first occasion upon which an individual parts with a piece of his own body in order to gain the favour of some other person whom he loves.' *Ibid.*, vol.17, p.84. The complexity of the articulation of shit and sacrifice in relation to jouissance in Lacan is discussed in a chapter titled 'You Should Give a Shit!', in Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*, Routledge, London, 2001, pp.56–105. Against the standard account of sacrifice associated with Lacanian psychoanalysis ('the subject does not offer his sacrifice to profit from it himself but to fill in the lack in the Other, to sustain the appearance of the Other's omnipotence or, at least, consistency', Žižek suggests that sacrifice is staged to conceal from the Other's gaze the subject's possession of the object of *jouissance*. Therefore, 'sacrifice and castration are to be opposed: far from involving the voluntary acceptance of castration, sacrifice is the most refined way of disavowing it, i.e. of acting as if one effectively possessed the hidden treasure that made me an object worthy of love'. *Ibid.*, pp.70–73. The interest of this for us is that it provides a critique of the model of sacrifice from within psychoanalysis: 'for Lacan,' Žižek writes, 'the ultimate aim of psycho-analysis is not to enable the subject to assume the necessary sacrifice (to "accept symbolic castration"...), but to resist the terrible attraction of sacrifice – attraction which, of course, is none other than that of the superego. Sacrifice is ultimately the gesture by means of which we aim at compensating the guilt imposed by the impossible superego injunction.' *Ibid.*, p.74. However, for Žižek this still seems to be for the sake of sacrifice, so long as the sacrifice is 'for nothing', a renunciation not out of guilt in relation to the superego but for the 'paradoxical *jouissance*' that 'characterises the movement

of the drive as that which finds satisfaction in circulating around the object and repeatedly missing it'. *Ibid.*, p.78.

76 Brisley draws on the brilliant study by Sanja Perovic, *The Calendar in Revolutionary France: Perceptions of Time in Literature, Culture, Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012.

77 Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–1940*, trans. Harry Zohn, Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006, p.395.

78 See Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, *op. cit.*, pp.178–81.

79 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, *op. cit.*, pp.419–37.

80 Perovic discusses the relation of the manifesto to the French Revolution in *The Calendar in Revolutionary France*, *op. cit.*, pp.196–201, 244.

81 01.01.CM collection of the Museum of Ordure, Antipyrine, Aarhus, Denmark, 2014. See http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/25/News/01_01_CM_collection_of_the_Museum_of_Ordure_book_launch/page:19 (accessed 23 January 2015).

82 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp.3–18.

83 Eric L. Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2011, p.306.

84 Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006, pp.6, 66–78.

85 See <http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/25/News/BREATH/page:5> (accessed 5 January 2015).

86 There is a reference to the source for the discussion of these structures in Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989.

87 Johannes Türk, 'The Intrusion: Carl Schmitt's Non-Mimetic Logic of Art', *Telos* 142, Spring 2008, pp.85–86. Carl Schmitt discusses the play-within-the-play in *Hamlet or Hecuba: The Intrusion of the Time Into the Play*, trans. David Pan and Jennifer R. Rust, Telos Press, New York, 2009.

88 Türk, 'The Intrusion: Carl Schmitt's Non-Mimetic Logic of Art', *op. cit.*, pp.84–85.

89 See Perovic, *The Calendar in Revolutionary France*, *op. cit.*, pp.104–26, 236–45.

90 See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *op. cit.*, pp.28–29, 83–109.

91 *Ibid.*, p.104.

92 See Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, *op. cit.*, pp.338–39.

APPENDIX VI

The Revolutionary Calendar¹

Vendémiaire Sept.–Oct.	Brumaire Oct.–Nov.	Frimaire Nov.–Dec.	Nivôse Dec.–Jan.	Pluviôse Jan.–Feb.	Ventôse Feb.–March	Germinal March–April	Floréal April–May	Prairial May–June	Messidor June–July	Thermidor July–Aug.	Fructidor Aug.–Sept.	Jours sans- substituer September
1 22	1 22	1 21	1 21	1 20	1 19	1 21	1 20	1 20	1 19	1 19	1 18	1 17
2 23	2 23	2 22	2 22	2 21	2 20	2 22	2 21	2 21	2 20	2 20	2 19	2 18
3 24	3 24	3 23	3 23	3 22	3 21	3 23	3 22	3 22	3 21	3 21	3 20	3 19
4 25	4 25	4 24	4 24	4 23	4 22	4 24	4 23	4 23	4 22	4 22	4 21	4 20
5 26	5 26	5 25	5 25	5 24	5 23	5 25	5 24	5 24	5 23	5 23	5 22	5 21
6 27	6 27	6 26	6 26	6 25	6 24	6 26	6 25	6 25	6 24	6 24	6 23	
7 28	7 28	7 27	7 27	7 26	7 25	7 27	7 26	7 26	7 25	7 25	7 24	
8 29	8 29	8 28	8 28	8 27	8 26	8 28	8 27	8 27	8 26	8 26	8 25	
9 30	9 30	9 29	9 29	9 28	9 27	9 29	9 28	9 28	9 27	9 27	9 26	
10 1	10 31	10 30	10 30	10 29	10 28	10 30	10 29	10 29	10 28	10 28	10 27	
11 2	11 1	11 1	11 31	11 30	11 1	11 31	11 30	11 30	11 29	11 29	11 28	
12 3	12 2	12 2	12 1	12 31	12 2	12 1	12 1	12 31	12 30	12 30	12 29	
13 4	13 3	13 3	13 2	13 1	13 3	13 2	13 2	13 1	13 1	13 31	13 30	
14 5	14 4	14 4	14 3	14 2	14 4	14 3	14 3	14 2	14 2	14 1	14 31	
15 6	15 5	15 5	15 4	15 3	15 5	15 4	15 4	15 3	15 3	15 2	15 1	
16 7	16 6	16 6	16 5	16 4	16 6	16 5	16 5	16 4	16 4	16 3	16 2	
17 8	17 7	17 7	17 6	17 5	17 7	17 6	17 6	17 5	17 5	17 4	17 3	
18 9	18 8	18 8	18 7	18 6	18 8	18 7	18 7	18 6	18 6	18 5	18 4	
19 10	19 9	19 9	19 8	19 7	19 9	19 8	19 8	19 7	19 7	19 6	19 5	
20 11	20 10	20 10	20 9	20 8	20 10	20 9	20 9	20 8	20 8	20 7	20 6	
21 12	21 11	21 11	21 10	21 9	21 11	21 10	21 10	21 9	21 9	21 8	21 7	
22 13	22 12	22 12	22 11	22 10	22 12	22 11	22 11	22 10	22 10	22 9	22 8	
23 14	23 13	23 13	23 12	23 11	23 13	23 12	23 12	23 11	23 11	23 10	23 9	
24 15	24 14	24 14	24 13	24 12	24 14	24 13	24 13	24 12	24 12	24 11	24 10	
25 16	25 15	25 15	25 14	25 13	25 15	25 14	25 14	25 13	25 13	25 12	25 11	
26 17	26 16	26 16	26 15	26 14	26 16	26 15	26 15	26 14	26 14	26 13	26 12	
27 18	27 17	27 17	27 16	27 15	27 17	27 16	27 16	27 15	27 15	27 14	27 13	
28 19	28 18	28 18	28 17	28 16	28 18	28 17	28 17	28 16	28 16	28 15	28 14	
29 20	29 19	29 19	29 18	29 17	29 19	29 18	29 18	29 17	29 17	29 16	29 15	
30 21	30 20	30 20	30 19	30 18	30 20	30 19	30 19	30 18	30 18	30 17	30 16	

¹ The Revolutionary (or Republican) Calendar was in official use between 22 September 1793 (1st Vendémiaire of the Year II) to the end of 1805 (11th Nivôse of the Year XIV). In leap-years (1796, 1800, 1804), 11th Ventôse corresponded to 29 February and the extra day of the Republican Year was 'found' by adding a sixth 'jour sans-culottide' (or 'jour complémentaire') to the five shown above.

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