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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Growing Up Wild: The Ruined Body

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### | ABSTRACT

Nowadays, we take a more critical view of feminist art practices, with Abramovic's Rhythm 0 (1974) and Yoko Ono's Cut Piece (1964) as special cases. The body as a dispositif is subjectively deconstructed as 'ruins', developing a fetishistic approach to the sublime aura of ruins. The female body's very identity as dispositif in becoming a ruin - the manipulation of primitive hegemony, the decay of neoliberalism, the entrenchment of the social class system - is greatly ignored, and all that is left in the final text of artistic practice is the nebulous and even mythic symbols that transcend the will of the core female identity. It is a way of looking at the female body based on the aesthetic quality and transcendent value of the vulnerability of the female subject, thus distorting the truly brutal reality behind female existence. So I think the important task for women artists at the moment is how to recover a sense of intersubjectivity that allows for the recognition of flexibility and universality, creating a new kind of alliance in a way that is inclusive and not exclusionary and vulnerable.

### | KEYWORDS

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### 1. The Barrenness of the Body: As a Ruin

The female artist uses her body in an attempt to disrupt the balance between the dispositif and the subject, but only to expose the imbalance of power, the network of real boundaries from a certain specificity to universality, and the desire to resist a certain violent illusion of the Big Other (Apel, 2015, p.42). It is true that in identity politics, there is a constant reminder of the importance of the individual's search for meaning in the existence of subjectivity, yet this is often more caught up in the contradiction of introducing the subject into the monism of the symbolic realm (Lacan, 1970, p.188). Instead of being re-created, organised, extended, and iterated, self-awareness is destroyed in the process of self-questioning, and women are forced to split their bodies into smaller parts, constantly reminding themselves of their imbalanced identities with the use of 'body parts'(Lacan, 2017, p.120). This is the fetishistic doctrine of body worship, the eroticised fetishisation of sex set. The deconstructive characteristics of the body in numerous feminist visual works attest to the notion that the body functions as an object of "the microphysics of power," rather than as a collective concept formed by habitual associations in an experiential sense (Heyes, 2007, pp.15-38). Therefore, in this study, I emphasise that we must first dismantle the dichotomy between the visibility and observability that constitute the body schema. Body schemata should not merely emphasise the excessive representation of female body imagery; rather, they require deconstructing established systems of defined and objectified imagery to reconstruct a wholly new, decentralised self-awareness (Butler, 1988, pp.40-44). Therefore, at another level of this study, I shall focus on exploring the interactive relationship between body image and the real world, and the potential emergence of variant self-identities that may be stimulated within the networks of natural

and social bodily materiality during the process of reconstructing this relationship. Yet we must also reflect on whether, amidst this process of mutation, the persistent cut-and-paste of bodily practices and bodily fragmentation effectively challenges systemic power structures. Might we inadvertently be allowing the body to slip back into the trap of fetishism (Butler, 2024, pp.11-18)?

Abramovic and Yoko Ono may have been caught up in the enigma of preconceptions about the Big Other, and their use of their own corpses to lure the power out of control and encroachment is also due to the fact that they would have preconceived the situation in the system of the *dispositif*. Here I think it is important to introduce Agamben's ethical conception and application of the principle of 'Gesture' (Agamben, 2007, pp.61-72). Gesture as a mediated performance, a process of making methods visible, is dependent on the subject's desire and pleasure (Agamben, 2007, pp.61-72). Because the subject feels the meaning and joy of his or her own existence, the subject wants to get rid of the paradigm's limitations on the self. Then, female artists such as Abramovic and Yoko Ono need to use their bodies to find a pose to present the meaning of autonomous consciousness. Yet in *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964), the performer of the pose always occurs in some opposition, in a preconception of the Big Other (Freud, 1961, p.152). At this moment, their bodies become 'places of poverty' or 'places of ruin', and despite the heterogeneity of the subjective element and the system of *dispositifs*, they are obliged to impoverish external decisions, to suspend them, to render them ineffective.

Could "barren flesh" be an oxymoron here? The favourable part can be extended to viewing corporeality as something entirely different from virtual embodiment. Yet if embodiment consists in the projection of the phenomenal-imaginary of positivity, i.e., the phantasmic body of the dream (Morgan, 2012, p.805). The corporeality on display in *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964), then, is constructed by purely symbolic mediation (Apel, 2015, p.42). This somewhat exaggerates the distinction between real existence and bodily desire, and therefore creates a certain confusion of positions and tendencies in the performance, whereby we seem to immediately enter the highway of some kind of 'erotic theme' of deviation and inadvertently become part of the fetish rituals that we have to participate in (Lacan, 2017, p.156). Abramovic and Yoko Ono's physical "wilting" is one of the darkest moments in contemporary art performance. There are also issues of morality and technology at stake, and one of the sexy/chaotic aims is to criticise the form of performance, while in doing so giving the right to arbitrarily romanticise/eroticise trauma (Lacan, 2019, p.142). Whatever the system of *dispositif* is, it is a composition of absolute desire, and ultimately we will only participate in certain 'seductive' rituals in contemporary art's presentation of the body, rituals that are only related to the phantom-bound body or the taboo or unauthorised orgasm of the self (Freud, 1961, p.150). As Abramovic and Yoko Ono renege to a certain extent on their commitment to return to a sense of bodily autonomy, the singularity of the conflict continues to cut the body into different fragments, and the viewer is left with only a few suspended body symbols.

Moreover, the issue requiring particular attention and resolution in this study is the inherent essentialist tendencies within feminist thought, a perspective widely acknowledged within the communities of female artists and research on female body image. This study's understanding of feminism lies in the recognition that women are not simply subsumed under a singular or unified category of "womanhood," but rather embody countless differences that demand a more nuanced and complex repositioning (Butler, 1988, pp.40-44). Moreover, how women perceive themselves and position themselves within the world - whether across cultural backgrounds, class distinctions, educational disparities, or factors such as race, religion, beliefs, and ideology - profoundly influences the potential for the alienation of bodily autonomy (Butler, 2024, pp.18-22). Therefore, this study cannot reduce complexity to essentialism, nor can it overlook these critical distinctions that demand urgent recognition. In this study, bidirectional tracing is equally crucial: we must examine how societal factors of a specific era shape bodily representations within visual media, while also focusing on the critical interpretation of how connectivity and divergence within spatio-temporal networks reconfigure bodily subjectivity (Bartky, 1997, pp.25-44).

## **2. Deprived subjectivity**

In Agamben's context, Gesture has three meanings. The first level of meaning is to use Gesture a, to expose and deconstruct the current paradigm (pre-paradigm), so that the pre-paradigm is transformed into the Gesture

(defined as the second level of Gesture b) itself, i.e., the fullness and activity of the energetic finger itself (Morgan, 2012, p.805). At this time the paradigm loses its efficacy, it refers only to itself, it assumes its own responsibility and is not purposive. At the same time, a third layer of Gesture c and a second layer of Gesture b are then found to be fused (and sometimes part of Gesture a is combined) to form a new paradigm, and ultimately a paradigm analogy is reached (Agamben, 2000, p.49). However, we need to pay special attention to the fact that the three layers of Gesture (a, b, c) are usually not in chronological order; they are more often simultaneous (Agamben, 2000, p.49). Simultaneously deconstructed and reconstructed, Gesture and Gesture are compatible with each other.

Like an extended 'state of exception', Abramovic and Yoko Ono have found a prototype for fetishism, but reconfigured it according to contemporary representations of collective functions and demands. It desecrates both the historical archetype and the current genre of body gesture art (Dousot, 2014). Simultaneously deconstructing and reconstructing, new types of subjectivity are born. Thus, we can understand that in *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964) Abramovic and Yoko Ono are subjecting the body to a process of contemplation-exposure-display. Their need in this process is always to complete the transformation from Gesture a to Gesture b, so that the extension and development of Gesture b necessarily includes strategies whereby they provide a new vehicle for experimentation, improvisation, reflection and openness in the process of linking the subject to the device by rendering the actions of the pre-determined Gesture a no longer productive-Body (Agamben, 2007, pp.61-72). Or even more polarised, a static body. Through stillness, subjectivity is made strange. However, at this moment the 'difference' required for the production of Gesture is obliterated, leaving only the antagonism that is always presupposed, that is, violence against the body always carries the 'gene of imbalance of power' or the 'binary combination of good and evil that is always present in human beings' always a combination of good and evil' (Agamben, 2000, p.49).

Thus, we think it can be derived that the subjectivity of the body never emphasises the 'I', but the 'One'. In this regard, the subject of the body aspires to break down the dichotomy of multiple socialities, not only as a process of disembodiment, but also as a practice of de-centred presence, the body's sense of autonomy emerges only when the meaning of the body image is linked to the network of dispositif that gesture unfolds in its social, historical and symbolic activities (Oliver, 1993, p.33). Abramovic and Yoko Ono stubbornly elevate the image of femininity from its natural humanity to the realm of social practice, and 'social' means 'symbolic'. I want to emphasise that any idea of mastering and manipulating the subject is dangerous: what 'exists' is only the realm of practice, in which, through the dissolution of real existence, the subject can foresee the future, which is always a priori (Mallarmé, 1945, pp.282-407).

Therefore, a mere discussion of the vertical relationship between consciousness and the body is not enough to explain the central contradiction in the struggle between identity consciousness and fetishism, and it is more important to broaden the discussion of the horizontal relationship, which lies in paying more attention to the private experience of the existence of a pluralistic or marginalised body and the inner feelings and perceptions of the body (Snyder, 2012, p.101). From body image to social identity, the more the body's own existence is marginalised, the less room there is for the construction of a sense of autonomy, and the less the body's interior and exterior are valued in the network of dispositif (Snyder, 2012, p.101). Therefore, when reflecting on body image in contemporary art practice, greater attention should be paid to the process of moving from a top-down approach to a more inclusive and pluralistic one (Sandercock, 1999). An in-depth study of the body's individualised perception of existence and activity self-consciousness as well as gesture's de-centred elements in the actions of the natural body and the social body.

### **2.1 Stillness? A New Posture of Resistance?**

I would like to emphasise that many female contemporary artists have only accomplished a poor reproduction and imagination of the spirit of worship. Imagination does not simply intervene when the possibility of the body being subjected to violence is directly on display, but rather it is precisely this intervention that breeds fantasies of the romanticisation of physical trauma (Spiteri, 2003, p.202). Thus *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964) are excellent cases where the artist's body becomes a site of emasculation and sexual difference in the course of the

performance, and where the return of the female body to its true objective reality does not mean that it needs to be subjected to a shocking form of violence (Spiteri, 2003, pp.198-207). For in order to maintain the integrity of the sense of self, there exists in any experience of self-cognition a 'body without organs' that is constantly fragmenting and overlapping. Throughout the history of body as research, many differences in body perception have arisen through denying the gender of individual bodies. In a discourse system centred on the Other of absolute desire, the body itself is set up by the radical discourse system of sociality - the 'hegemony of reason' - as a priori, silent, negative and violently objectified (Žižek, 1999, p.207). The positioning of the body as the only ideological symbol that somehow transcends representation is in a way also a reflection of the contemplation of a specific paradigm of the body's existence in contemporary art (Dousot, 2014).

At this moment the body is suspended, the self-identity of identity is stripped away, and the sense of female subjectivity is instead overshadowed by the extreme desire for the Big Other. Agamben dialectically discusses the body as a medium for non-verbal expression, which is in fact a reconfiguration of the network of dispositifs that highlights the anti-dispositif (Agamben, 2007, pp.61-72). This is why the difference of the subject becomes so significant when Abramovic and Yoko Ono desire to express the will of the body to be subjected to a certain part of it or to be eroded by the desires of the Big Other. What we need to ask, however, is what Abramovic and Yoko Ono are performing? For me they were somehow performing a kind of static 'body', the scene was like a tourist visiting a ruin (Snyder, 2012, p.101). The body performs the body, the ruins perform history, they have not yet touched the limits of creation as subjectivity, while still not abandoning their attempts at a potential hegemonic sense of resistance (Sandercock, 1999). They try to focus on making the corporeality of the body expressive, but have not yet fully arrived at the borderland of resistance to the gesture's connection to the network of dispositifs (Agamben, 2007, pp.61-72).

We ought to reject the notion that a body image falling into the trap of 'fetishism' is necessarily stigmatised or degraded. We must emphasise that within genderist narrative systems, the accelerated organisation of bodily subjectivity may hold greater potential for diverse reconfiguration within future theoretical frameworks, potentially even undermining the self-awareness of artistic creators. Fundamentally, the act of 'gazing' within body imagery which ought to constitute the very label of bodily subjectivity fails to elucidate any issues in certain such works (Sontag, 1966). This is because these pieces (with Yoko Ono's Cut Piece as the central case study) confine the body's label within specific symbolic categories from the outset, rather than examining its organic subjectivity to distil the authentic experience of natural consciousness (Mulvey, 2019). Traditional theories of gender have invariably been confined to responses to dualistic philosophical concepts, rather than emerging from the inherent diversity and complexity of the interplay between natural and social realities (Salamon, 2019). Therefore, in critiquing body schemata, we must continually emphasise Deleuze's concepts of difference and repetition. Ultimately, we may thereby incorporate radically distinct gender performances within bodily forms and subjectivities (Deleuze, 1997, pp.25-30). On the other hand, traditional philosophical criticism has failed to genuinely engage with art criticism, thereby preventing the analysis of visual texts from truly participating in the interweaving and construction of the networks of natural reality and social reality (Heyes, 2007). Certain post-structuralist theories do indeed attempt to demonstrate practical strategies for multiple gendered subjectivities, and some methodological approaches to the relationship between the body and desire are quite persuasive. However, the argument for bodily subjectivity is obscured by numerous grand yet vague dualistic concepts. Moreover, these concepts' excessive disregard for the inherent diversity and complexity of subjectivity renders them ill-suited for analysing visual texts concerning the body (Butler, 1988). Therefore, I contend that the transition from degendering to dehumanising should serve as the starting point for research into body schemata, rejecting the hasty imposition of gendered labels upon the body.

### **3. Physical Disability: As a Battlefield.**

Here we need to systematically emphasise the French post-structuralist perspective: The human body, as a sort of organism, drove the application and development of the technologies of the first makers at the dawn of matter, and the body seeks an extension of its sense of autonomy with the use of diverse and complex gestures as tools or weapons, and then a return to the existence of the natural body through the construction of linguistic systems that reshape the self-perception of bodily experience (Foucault, 1988, pp.16-49). It follows that gesture as a certain

methodological approach to epistemology is not a priori opposed or hostile to human nature. Instead, a gesture reveals the 'anthropomorphic' nature of the body itself, and all interpretations of the gesture link the body's internal autonomy and external creativity, which can continually reshape and augment the body's natural strengths (Foucault, 1988, p.18). Thus, the body as organism is able to complement, adapt to, and accept the dispositive, thus reaching a dichotomous distinction between the nature-society dichotomy. And I will continue to focus on the use of gesture as a weapon and a tool in an even more important endeavour: access to the 'decentralised' web (Foucault, 1988, p.37). The subject of the body as an embodied organism, a biocultural entity par excellence, which is genderless, featureless and organless.

When the viewer is confronted with a static body, or when the viewer is confronted with a 'ruin', the phantom of the Big Other begins to evoke a certain desire for subjectivity. The body as subject begins to aspire to be free from the moment of suspension as capable of referring, the body aspires to achieve the purpose of cognition of the concept of identity by presupposing a purely intuitive and imaginative synthetic capacity (Barthes, 1975, p.14). *Cut Piece* (1964) can be cited as a more specific example of Yoko Ono's use of a more symbolically-installed interpretation. She does not deliver her body directly to the object of action, but rather allows her body to actively undergo a process of nudity. Compared to Abramovic's *Rhythm 0* (1974) this is a more pleasing approach, yet this strategy precisely backfires on the diversity of perceptions of autonomy. The perception of the existence of the body, the perception of the female self-consciousness, the creative reconstruction and development of the network of devices, all fail, and ultimately the perception of the identity of the subjectivity is once again caught in the trap of the monolithic, i.e., 'a piece of a cut-off piece'. However bare that piece of skin? The 'corpse' I mentioned earlier is covered, forgotten and dissolved in the desire for the Big Other. The resistance to power, the connection to the network of devices, will lose its positive effect, and will even become a mere interpretation of the 'cult' of the 'fetish ritual.'

### **3.1 The Illusory "Toolbox".**

The transcendental nature of female's bodily experience, as emphasised in postmodernist theories, is immune to the primitive ideologies attached to the perception of her differential gender identity (Sartre, 1957, p.45). But this perception of difference contains the negative value of being stigmatised, a state in which female subjectivity is conceptualised as an 'asu-jettissement'. This process of conceptualising the value of gender exists in both the material and symbolic dimensions of the textual practice of body image textual practices in contemporary art, so that the female figure begins by tracing the bodily experience of subjectivity, rejecting any gendercentric or binary understanding of the embodied nature of its self-consciousness (Sartre, 1957, p.45). It is understandable that the artists of contemporary art tried to establish a configuration with a clear ideological-critical tendency in the text of the images, but they neglected the more important case studies and did not put forward a proposition for the independence of female themselves as well as a complete methodology (Butler, 1993, p.23). Their so-called thinking about the sexual position merely conforms to what is imagined in the male discourse, yet female's sensory awareness is not a rigid linear development, but a multifocal, three-dimensional collection (Butler, 1993, p.23).

So *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964) go some way to proving Lacan's claim that 'women don't really exist'? That is to say that women, in subjectivation, experience the object and, through the gaze, form absolute nothingness in the mirror image? Perhaps Abramovic and Yoko Ono do use the body to extend a certain pessimism, yet in another way they do confirm in these experimental scenarios that the female body has been reduced to a symbolic object in the extreme. I think that the female body is now like a 'toolbox' that cannot be opened, and everyone can only use 'fantasy' to imagine the 'tools' in the 'box'. As a result, the female body becomes a 'landscape of ruins' and her existence loses its significance; she is only an object to be gazed at and an object to carry desires (Žižek, 1999, p.207). From such a perspective, I think the hailing of *Rhythm 0* (1974) and *Cut Piece* (1964) as iconic feminist artistic experiments needs to be viewed critically. This can even trap women themselves in a kind of frenzied complacency, because there is a certain ambiguity and deception implicit in the performances themselves. Just as Žižek, in his defence of Lacan's topic of 'female existence', cunningly directed his argument towards the paradox of 'the woman's role in the event' (Vighi & Feldner, 2007, p.180). Abramovic and Yoko Ono also only show the existence of opposites and do not explain the complexity and diversity of women's own existence.

### **3.2 "The Walking Dead" Service.**

The most important aim is how to connect autonomy to difference and reconfigure a subject of desire that can be constantly self-generating. The way to avoid its overpenetration is to make bodily experience as autonomous and contextualised as possible in spatial-behavioural awareness (Passot, 1999, p.75). By de-exalting the Other and emphasising women's place in social discourse, the intersection of their bodily experience and social space should be constructed as a broad territory that has been de-centred. As Judith Butler highlights the model of impersonation, we can substitute it for the origins of the fetish spirit and, more importantly, break down solidified ideological proprieties (Passot, 1999, p.82). Thus, while the alienation or parody of the body gesture that Abramovic and Yoko Ono display in their practices does not in itself constitute the aim of using the female as a machine for critiquing sovereign violence, the 'fractured body form' itself is no more subversive than the forms of their practices. But the 'broken body form' itself is not more subversive in their forms of practice.

The methodology of a good gesture model lies precisely in endeavouring to supplement the residual problem of differences in bodily experience brought about by repetition. When contemporary art is able to give authenticity to the existence of the female body itself in its practice, it inspires the viewer to focus more on the autonomous potential of the artist's body (Braidotti, 2011, pp.137-165). While it is clear that Abramovic's and Yoko Ono's artistic practices are highly political, we can still see a clear trend in the development of contemporary art, which is that the interpretation of the female body tends to reject the crude separation of symbolic and empirical images, and to a certain extent to align the female figure more closely with the historical realities of Western culture (Baum, 2008, p.112). Especially in the critique of postmodernist issues, the female body has been habitually associated with the disorder of desire and the loss of control of obscenity. Just as a female's innate genetic significance in carrying such sexual anomalies makes her an easy enemy of the so-called noble view of the history of civilisation, she is often even labelled as an outsider in the social system of civilisation, and therefore ends up as the 'other' who loses the right to speak (de Lauretis, 1986, p.12). While acknowledging the repeated alienation of the body image in the postmodern predicament, contemporary female artists such as Abramovic or Yoko Ono, for example, predominantly fail to complete the de-romanticised part of this practice and discuss the construction of shared social values that can trigger a broader sense of the body's internal autonomy in relation to the external reality.

Yet how can women be privileged so that the female body itself becomes a sturdy space of effective resistance within the grand narrative of consciousness. The 'generative woman' in feminism is an ontology of the creative nature of bodily experience, emphasising sexual difference as a discursive force that needs to be attended to (Braidotti, 2011, pp.245-262). Women's bodies can be constantly changing in the realm of space and time. This may leave Abramovic and Yoko Ono in a quandary when dealing with forms of practice: how rationality is perceived and the evasive gaze are obstacles it cannot avoid. In a way, therefore, this discussion is not parallel to contemporary art practice of the inner and outer entities of the female body, but rather forms a distinctly intertwined relationship with each other (Braidotti, 2011, pp.137-65). And it is the more bodily, autonomous relations of experience associated with inner subjectivity that Abramovic and Yoko Ono's practice ignores. Although the resolution of the historical controversies contained therein remains a continuing problem, we need the body's gesture as the most central medium for self-awareness and visions of change (Braidotti, 2011, pp.137-165).

### **4. Physical Desire: As a Playing Field.**

Here I would like to emphasise that Judith Butler's mode of performative will for a long time be an effective model for substituting the issues presented by these experimental body arts into the future. Encouraging the return of the body to a primordial autonomy and the denial of the binary status of identity and gender is similar to the weaving of a huge network of 'de-anthropocentricity', in which gender, sense of autonomy, and bodily experience can flow freely (Butler, 1993, p.23). At that time, the individual will not be able to be defined as male or female, and the identity gender will be gradually dissolved in a continuous process of deconstruction and reset. I look forward to exploring a genderless, rather than diverse gender future here (Butler, 1993, p.23). Especially in the contemporary art community, the trend of exploring plurality has become an indisputable fact, like a modern-day race track, competing for a trophy of who is more pluralistic (Spiteri, 2003, p.202). I am not denying the importance of this exploration, but I would like to emphasise that in this 'competition' many artists fall into traps that are more

sensitive, or that we overlook. One of the things that I think is most worth emphasising in this article is the neglect of the 'body' itself in these 'competitions'.

Now consider the most intuitive question of all: Imagine the viewer's most intuitive view of Yoko Ono in *Cut Piece*. Is the viewer going to be more focussed on the emptiness of the clothes on show? Or Yoko Ono's body itself? The answer is almost entirely in favour of the former. It's as if, faced with a side of rubble painted with messy graffiti, we focus most on the graffiti and lose sight of the rubble itself and what it might be carrying on its own (Sandercock, 1999). It's the ultimate romanticised fetishistic spirit, and in *Cut Piece*, the value of pieces of clothing, has completely surpassed the value of the body itself. There is no love for the body that is firm and true, or for the everyday and spontaneous nature of bodily experience, so the viewer does not gain insight into the signs of suffering or self-sacrifice displayed by the subject, and the subject is even less likely to be able to articulate clearly the independence and complexity of the sense of autonomy (Vighi & Feldner, 2007, p.180). The body is suspended throughout the performance and replaced by a seated instrument. replaceable, perpetually ignored, and ultimately an out-of-order code. This is to some extent a disappointing ending, yet when we look at the reality of the development of contemporary art, we find that the cult of this fetishistic ritual remains deeply rooted (Spiteri, 2003, p.202).

#### **4.1 As a Possibility: Wild Growth.**

If we need to pay more attention to the body, or the experience and value of the body itself. Attention should then be given to the gesture in performance as a medium for developing the coherence of the body with the dispositive scene (Butler, 1993, p.23). The body is a frozen image on the outside, and on the inside is a spontaneous extension of consciousness by autonomy; gesture does not produce violence action. The role of gesture is to accelerate the part of the conflict of action and consciousness before the programmed constitution of sovereign power is shown to be lethal (Braidotti, 2011, p.15). At this point gesture will undergo an infinite nomadic-like decomposition and ultimately establish an intervention in violence in the temporal and spatial stasis and intervention of performance (Butler, 1993, p.23). We may not be able to predict the nonviolent accidents of unknownness through this indefinite stagnation, yet the body can present a more complete picture of what the gesture will be like when it is finally subjected to intervention. The development of gesture as a medium has made the action of autonomy consciousness more complex, making it part of a diverse sample of factors that correspond to the viewer's constitution. And this should be seen as a potential for bodily autonomy in which there is room for the infinite development of bodily possibilities.

Feminist currents in contemporary art are at times in danger of over-romanticising notions of trauma and violence. Therefore, I think we rethink the expansion of the autonomy of the body itself as a means of resisting a desire to fetishise the trauma of the female body. This tendency towards reflection needs to involve, first and foremost, a general dismantling of the concept of 'anthropocentricity' and the concept of 'gender binary', and therefore of any form of identification with a primordial place or authority (Braidotti, 2011, p.15). However, we still need to be wary of the systematic recognition within postmodernism of the redundancy and fragmentation of feminism's connection to the body and the neglect of independence and complexity, which may be accompanied by the 'relativism' that has arisen from global pluralism, but rather a greater neglect of the search for the reality of the body's experience and the reconstruction of a sense of autonomy (Braidotti, 2011, p.15). Therefore avoiding the construction of the toxic other, and the romanticisation of the broken body image is necessary. I propose to break with the series of narratives in contemporary art that treat the female body as a mere bearer of formalised violent aesthetics, and to re-position the body in a precise gesture, explaining how it can be used as a medium and weapon in a network of dispositifs that freely and infinitely extends the 'natural body' and the 'social body' (Butler, 1993, p.23). 'social body' in a network of dispositifs that are free to extend infinitely.

This practice of relocation is in part linked to the model of impersonation. As I mentioned before the representation of the so-called fetishisation of the implicit female body in contemporary art. We therefore need to always ask, in engaging with or observing these arts, whether the artist perceives the body and consciousness as simultaneously autonomous, as well as reflecting on the body's negative or definitive character or experience of the Other. In a postmodern thought that increasingly theorises the symbolic deconstruction of the female body, the negation of

the fetish seems to mark the discussion of sexual difference at best. Especially in the critique of postmodernist issues, the female body has been habitually associated with the disorder of desire and the loss of control of obscenity (de Lauretis, 1986, p.12). Just as a female's innate genetic significance in carrying such sexual anomalies makes her an easy enemy of the so-called noble view of the history of civilisation, she is often even labelled as an outsider in the social system of civilisation, and therefore ends up as the 'other' who loses the right to speak (de Lauretis, 1986, p.12). The female body as a sign of self-knowledge is capable of defeating the forms violently defined by the primitive machine, and female's needs are precisely certain clarity of being, highly recognisable autonomy, and a complete system of identity (de Lauretis, 1986, p.12).

## 5. Conclusion

Therefore, I believe gender or social gender is a product of the representation of subjectivity as perceived by female artists within body imagery. As imagery functions as one element within the social networks that construct gender, gender issues become irrelevant to imagery and may exist entirely outside body imagery, or can only be discussed in relation to artworks that explicitly address gender concerns (Lauretis, 2007). Therefore, in this discussion, I must clarify that as an artistic work, the image does not constitute a methodological issue concerning the representation of bodily schemata. The awareness of subjectivity is not an external issue to the body image, for the consciousness of self-performance itself participates in constructing gender concepts within the image. Perhaps I ought to begin by briefly outlining the female gaze, or rather, a mode of viewing that enables us to experience the female body through its representation in visual imagery (Lauretis, 2007). This concept links the body with the gaze. However, for a work to be classified as belonging to the category of the 'female gaze', it must satisfy the following narrative criteria: Gender self-identity; Bodily experience and action patterns; The backlash of body schemas and the order of social networks. Additionally, when discussing the formal aspects of imagery, the following requirements must be met:

- 1) Utilize visual techniques to broaden audiences' understanding of gendered perceptual experiences;
- 2) When bodily schemas are eroticized, their representation must embody a self-constructed sense of agency;
- 3) Viewers' pleasure should not stem from voyeuristic gratification or impulsive urges.

Therefore, in the main body of this chapter, I will conduct a more innovative and multifaceted analysis of structuralist philosophical concepts through multiple themes: desire, rape, pleasure, and the dynamic bodies of wild women to distinguish how the gendered gaze apprehends the subjectivity of the body within my research. Thus, I will set two objectives in my research: on the one hand, to reconstruct the subjectivity frameworks of these visual works and their female directors; on the other hand, to create poetic imagery by linking the stylistic expressions of historical works, thereby exploring the possibility of constructing a shared visual discourse through bodily schemata in image analysis. Through analysis of these bodily imagery cases, I reject the notion of gender as a social construct founded upon physiological dualism, preferring instead to construct a new framework to supplant the outdated discourse. Traditional discourse merely presents the concept of physiological binary gender, subtly domesticating each individual's self-identification as male or female through the construction of an orderly network of mechanisms, thereby binding it to other binary oppositional categories (Brey, 2020, p.77). Thus, we frequently tend to simplistically conflate the 'male gaze' with 'the experience of the female body on screen' within many methodologies of body image theory. I believe this approach risks fostering a rather pervasive misinterpretation. By confining discussions of gender solely to the perspective fixed upon the physical body's owner, it severs gender from the body's formation as an organic organism of subjectivity (Butler, 2024). Furthermore, by isolating the exercise of power from all other dimensions, it traps feminism in an endless cycle of self-justification from the outset. This tendency towards gender dualism remains taken for granted to this day, scarcely subjected to thorough questioning or critique. Within its analysable scope, it has further spawned a series of interrelated dualisms, such as: subject/object, active/passive (Butler, 2024). To underscore the universal applicability of these binary oppositions, those wielding ideological discourse power have invoked simplistic labels of good and evil to reinforce their influence and operational mechanisms within the field of visual analysis.

Perhaps we ought to reconsider the natural forces and authenticity of the body. When examining this issue from a genderist perspective, the emphasis should neither lie in highlighting the manifestation of gender issues nor in promoting the value of gender characteristics (Irigaray, 1995). The objective lies in how to construct or deconstruct bodily authenticity, how to naturalise gender hierarchies, rather than compelling the domesticated body to serve as the sole definable object within its social network of realities (Jansen & Wehrle, 2018). This has nothing to do with judging the merits of artistic works. Regardless of whether a gendered perspective is adopted, any analysis of bodily schemata should examine the natural characteristics of bodily subjectivity. My research does not focus on promoting feminist visual art, nor does it endorse artistic manifestos that celebrate the depiction of the female body from a discourse-centric perspective. My objective is to critique the entrenched genderist tropes and self-imposed constraints within female artists' methodological practices, whether in the natural representation of the body or the extension of subjectivity. Therefore, I emphasise the development of a non-binary research perspective on the human and non-human, wherein the natural body and the social body are continually constituted at the intersection of networks of subjectivity and the reality of repetition. The aim is to critique the textual narratives of bodily imagery, which invariably fall into the conventionalism of power-labelling discourses. Thus, positioning a body at the centre of the frame to emphasise the spontaneity of its movement and the experiential exercise of subjective awareness prompts viewers to actively recognise that bodily subjectivity is no longer a symbol of gender, but rather the authentic, natural agency of an organism.

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