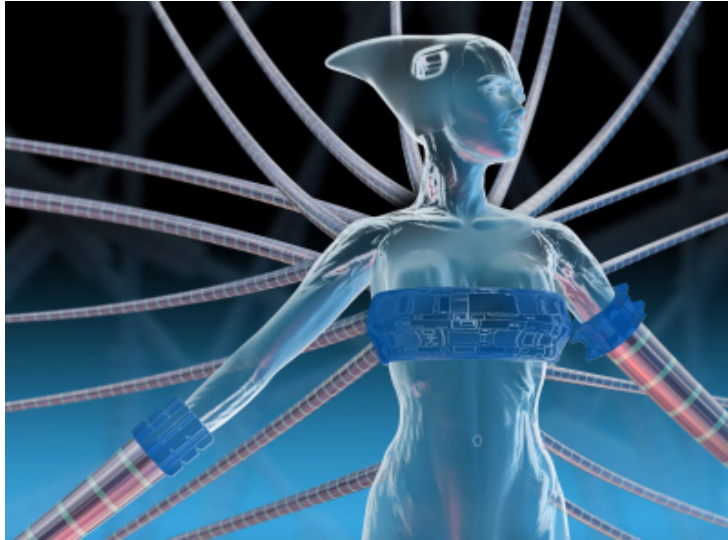# Mundus Imaginalis - The Body

Abstract

Mundus Imaginalis – *The Body*
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In a time when flesh is lethal, what does it mean for us to turn on our computers to touch one another? What does it mean for us to spend our time in a state of disembodiment? Whether it is online or in the dimension of virtual reality, we become bodiless.

This chapter combines the author's own creative writing along with her analysis of a wide range of existing works of literature such as Nicole Brossard's Mauve Desert , Kathy Acker's Empire of the Senseless or Winterson's Written on the Body in order to examine the implications of the body's role and its definition in our interactions and exchanges in the realm of cyberspace. As we continue to develop alternate identities in the parallel worlds of the online the body becomes *meat* . Transported into the bodiless, we both are silenced by the absence of our bodies. The slant of our two voices, reaching for the other in the muted silence of the imaginings.

Introduction

Nomadic tribe. Early-century wanderers. The land of our travels is not made of sand, nor is it bordered by water. We do not collect rocks, nor are we able to taste the salty fruits of distant shores. Our losses are not measured in tears, nor are they healed in scars. Our wanderings take place within, where light is rarely cast. It is the realm of our imagination, the space of our cybernetic masquerade.

In a time when flesh is lethal, what does it mean for us to turn on our computers to touch one another? What does it mean for us to spend our time in a state of disembodiment? Whether it is online or in the dimension of virtual reality, we become bodiless. Our reality is always shifting as we move our body through space or extract it from its confines. What is our notion of time? Time within the body, time in the machine. Time inside our dreams.

What is the role of our body? What are its implications? As I leap forth into this exploration of our corporal and temporal selves in this age of cyberspace, I will define, redefine some of the most fundamental concepts of our reality. The notion of our memory, space, time, flesh, the imagination, the psyche, dreams, bringing our understanding of our disembodied selves to a more circular vision.

In this quest, the focus of observation should always be turned in the direction of the subject. The concern should be, when trying to cut through the mystery of contact and exchange in our twenty-first century world, to look at the life force behind the symptom. The computer is the tool. The use of it is the symptom. What is the disease? The answer lies in the structural representation we have come to give ourselves. The answer lies in the way we view energy and the ways in which we decide to contain and or access its forces. Who are we?

The direct gaze of the explorer upon the object of her quest rarely leads to a crystallized understanding – what is most direct is often the least apparent. It is important to invert the quest and aim it towards an observation of symptoms, signifiers. An inverted quest, which very much resembles the dream state and the revelations of the unconscious realm brought to the surface in the construction of reality. The answer is manifested through distortions, mirrored images whose inversion must be turned inside out in order to access the metaphysical implications, the dual structural representations of the fundamental mechanism of communication. This quest can be illustrated by the fundamental principle of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. It is the shadows that point to the representation of reality. The people in the cave are confined to the shadows on the wall, never looking directly at the objects which cast the shadows beyond the cave. The reconstruction of any reality through the exploration of its symptoms is truly the challenge at stake here. Let us ask ourselves the questions behind its manifestations: why do we create virtual worlds? What lies behind the quest of frenzied online communication? What happens beyond the computer? In the moments that follow the interaction with the machine, in the silence that follows the 'switching off', what truly lies at the center of all this frenzy? What is this unquenchable void? What truly lies behind the drive of our "virtual eros"?

At night, I sometimes drift into a higher realm. I am not sleeping. I am not dreaming but I allow my body to become secondary, yet present. I anchor my senses in the silence of the night and the soothing sensation of the absence of light and I let my thoughts come in. They come in sometimes one at a time; the pace is slow and thorough. I move through each section of the thought in succession until completion. At other times, I am confronted with an explosion of thoughts where the flow is so powerful and chaotic that I am left with no other option than to let go and let **my body** drift. Yes, my body. I am present in the dimension of my mind and yet it is my body, which takes place me there. It turns into a shell, or rather a container for travel. The whole experience very much resembles a journey into the ocean's waters where I am the ship and my mind the passenger. The water is the incredible energy that surrounds us at all times but which is only accessible in moments of release and fearlessness.

The body is our planted anchor, encroached in a reality of changes and shifting nuances. It all begins here: in the flesh of our living selves. We can transcend its demarcation, we can even transform it but we cannot escape it altogether. Always encroached in the flesh, often grounded into its confines, the energy of thought cannot escape its incarnate manifestation. From the simplest notion of electric impulse traveling through the neurons of the brain to create images, a mapping out of our visual consciousness to the more

complex realm of emotions and its triggering in physical sensation, the body is and remains our point of departure for all thought processes. Unavoidable restrictions of the flesh, exponential freedom of its expression, in its myriad or possibilities, manifestations in movement, spatial conquering, visual representation, visual association triggered into the other's mind/body; it all starts here.

The representation of reality through the body is limited and partial. The virtual body becomes the central apparatus of perception. It is perpetually recreating reality and the sensory realm by way of referential to a previously constructed reality. Never actually representing a direction of notion of reality. In the case of the disembodied expression, the layer between expression and object is thus removed. The actual body becomes more and more atrophied, an abandoned shell of expression.

Dangerous and potentially misunderstood is this notion of the anchoring of reality into the parameters of the flesh. There is an instant, a fragile point in time that only exists in its primal state of fluid energy and unbounded expression. A moment existing in the confines of the flesh, in the reality of the body, before language and the crystallization of words. A sensate realm, followed by thought and the expression of language. This is a point of contention between empirical vs. rational reasoning. The notion of sensation before language, perception before expression is crucial in my definition of reality and the world of cyberspace and spatial realms. As a linguist and a product of a perpetually changing environments, I have been aware of the existence of myself, in the world of my thoughts as existing in a 'place' before language. The existence of a self separate from language is as real for me as the conscious realization of my ability to pour myself, my thoughts into a number of languages (I speak four). This translation of self is always an approximation of the original expression.

Narcissus et Mater – Paradoxical Communion

The 'matrix' of cyberspace, the realm of the disembodied and the 'exchanges' and levels of interaction which take place in this matrix can be compared to the relationship of the child to her narcissistic mother. The word 'matrix' stems from the

word matrix stems from the Latin 'mother'. The metaphor of matrix in this sense is enriched with possibilities: the notion of the mother's womb, the starting point of life, growth and transformation. The matrix however, like the connection tying the child to her narcissistic mother is an exchange of finite possibilities, statically contained in a structure of one-way communication. The static of this interaction is very much uni-directional, always pointing back to the same direction, towards the unquenchable 'mater', the perpetually dissatisfied mother whose demands never cease, never abate and are never defined by the identity of the child as a separate entity. In both cases, in the exchanges of the cybernetic matrix and that of the narcissistic mother, time acts a link between a past even, a trigger point of action. In other words, in both cases, the interactions taking place between child and mother and user and user (in the matrix) are crystallized in the trappings of a complete and past event.

The mother is perpetually trying to resolve her unfulfilled needs with her own mother, father, important primary relationship in her past while the user is always caught in the crystallized plexy of her memory and the finite completion of a finished action, an event, always pointing back to the static image of an interrupted self. A self caught in motion as the congealed image of a body in motion trapped by the camera and its interrupted representation of reality. A fragment. Completed piece. Time in both of these cases is the thread linking a past event and a present re-enactment of this pact, a navigational thread enabling yet another cycle of repetition. The level of exchange taking place in the present, as in the case of the matrix is not defined by present states of reality or existence, removed from the body and its role as container of endless possibilities, the interaction is static and predefined – very much like the role of the child for the narcissistic mother. Beyond the boundaries of the child's predefined role of the child, exists nothing. A nothingness of blurred existence, an ablated self that for the child equates a form of death of self. Who am I? Who are you? Do you see ME? do YOU see me? Prosthetic selves and perpetual necessities of translation are born. An endless thirst

for absolute communion is created. But as is the case of most cycles of repetition, the impulse cannot escape its own destructive and unfulfilling impulses. "Le mal qui perpetue le mal". "Evil perpetuating evil). As in the original myth of Narcissus who falls in love with is own reflection in the water. The thirst for communion is there; it is real, in the unsatisfied level of communion existing between child and narcissistic mother. The child perpetually continues to search for the absolute level of closeness where she will finally be recognized as separate and real, but the search remains endless and the communion remains confined and absolutely confining. Individuality is erased. Only the static definition of the child's role in the dynamic of Narcissus and self is enacted. This is true in the realm of the bodiless matrix. As Michael Heim states in his chapter "The erotic ontology of cyberspace" in his book The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality :

"Being a body constitutes the principle behind our separateness from one another and behind our personal presence. Our bodily existence stand at the forefront of our personal identity and individuality. Both law and morality recognize the physical body as something of a fence, an absolute boundary, establishing, protecting our privacy." (Heim 100).

The metaphor and elucidation of this paradoxical communion can be taken to yet another level of its representation in the fiction of Nicole Brossard in her novel Mauve Desert . In this novel, the narrator is perpetually confronted to the closeness existing between her mother and the character Lorna. Their closeness and relationship is absolutely exclusive and self-sufficient leaving no room for the narrator and her representation of self. She becomes obsessively driven to move through space and time, through the parchedness of the desert in the hope of linking, connecting with the reality of the external world she has become accustomed to viewing only as a flattened image in the confines of her crippling solitude. The heat of the desert is her link to the outside and the only reminder of her separateness of body in relation to the objects and people that surround her.

"I was driving slowly. It was broad daylight, hot and sweat. Total insanity to be driving like this in the high noon sun. An exhausting solitude I inflicted myself as if to recapture that time from before writing, before reality. I was driving and the desert was now real, dangerous, full of daggers, blades and venom. I had sworn not to drink anything during the first five hours. I wanted heat and thirst whole, excessive. I wanted my body feverish, to lose nothing of its fluency, of its exuberance. I wanted it both in focus a doubt of the frame, overlaid on the hyperreality of blue, compelled in its every cell to acquire a taste along the reality of roads for all the ephemeral shapes crossing the gaze. I wanted no part of myth. Only what's body, sweat, thirst." (Brossard 28. Mauve Desert.).

She is in perpetual need to be shaken back into a separateness of existence: Look at me, I am, I am, I am. I feel the sun on my face, and the cracking of my skin, my lips begin to bleed in the violence of the sun. But she never touches the world, the world never touches her; she is only a witness, a voyeur in the observation of her secluded self with no doubt, no external probing, internal insertion, from with OUT to with IN, nothing passes past her skin. She merely repeats the cycle of her own repetitive isolation in relation to her mother, always seeing, watching but never being seen. The writing of this novel, its necrophilous style repeats the isolation and the solipsistic dance of the narrator with herself, encircling her body around the world in an endless motion of outward gazing. Brossard never allows the cycle to be broken, takes the reader along the edges of the concentric circles she draws around the layers of her created reality, never does she let us pass or enter beyond the ring of circles. Never does she let the reader leave again completely. Always with OUT, wanting to bet with IN.

This is a perfect point to introduce the role of cyberspace in this model of absolute self. It is not enough to attempt to establish the impact of the disembodied realm on the creation of behavior patterns on individuals. It is even more fascinating to extend the search in the notion of the appropriation of cyberspace by certain "psychological profiles" of behavior in certain individuals.

Masochism in Narcissistic Subjects – the Effects of Cyberspace

Let us take our previously introduced narcissistic subject in cyberspace and apply yet another level of behavior characteristic to their psychological profile: masochism. The wall of isolation that envelops the narcissistic subject from the outside, the thick barricade of silence is sometimes manifested in masochistic behavior. The inability to reach out or to be reached perpetuates manifested in masochistic behavior. The inability to reach out or to be reached perpetuates an old and ongoing cycle of repetition on a psychoanalytical level. The subject desperately thirsts for contact, communion with the outside but unable to visualize clearly the boundaries between self and other. He/she drowns in his or her own liquid reality of ablated self. An ablation has occurred in early childhood. The ablation is for example, the absence of attention, healthy, directed towards the child: a microcosm of representation of self or rather a sound mechanism for resounding the necessary references made between outside and self which constitute the healthy process of definitions of identity and self. The obliteration of the child on a level of referential obliterates in turn, the child's ability to visualize outside the inside clearly and separately. The boundaries between self and other are blurred here. For the masochist, cyberspace becomes a transformation. The self-mutilation is manifested in the self-referential of auto-stimulation, necrophilia masturbation, ablation of self into words. A drowning of self to self to self to self to self, perpetual loop. Murky waters, brackish musk of their odors never airing itself out with the outside and the contact with the external world. Incestuous pond, closed system of its own drowning. How many times can you kill yourself that way? Infinitely.

The narcissistic masochist is able to use cyberspace to perpetuate the masochistic tendencies in an entirely new way: the appropriation of the imagination, and language as an obliteration of the body. Shed your skin. Leave your limbs behind Put on whatever masks you may wish to wear. Envelop your being into the representation of an experience, which bares no direct links to the body. The flesh, in this way, the body becomes meat. An obliterated self, a shattered, shredded shard of forgotten flesh. When the flesh is left behind, when it is forgotten, it begins to decay and its decay always leaves a smell of unbearable weight.

The body as meat

I

On the edge of your eyes, on the line of the blade, there is a point of entry. Slowly, gently, then a twist onto the fertile grounds of a desire – a hunger, turned ravenous; you fear your way into me, into my flesh, into my bones, make your way into the residues of my pulse. Pulsate, pulsate, rhythmically, I take you in, not knowing better than to stop breathing. Withhold the air from my lungs. I could stand it, if only darkness did not scare me so. The blackness of your eyes, into mine, the green in them, my eyes are green with

you, green with envy, blue-green eyes of my nights, blue-green just like the dream.

II

Rip me open I said. I flung my body forward into the space of motion. Movement, perpetual, it takes me whole, takes me clean, onto the edge, onto the fragile line of exultation. I breathe, I breathe, you see, I breathe. It never stops does it? It never really stops, that sound in my temples, that gentle thud, thump, thump. I know it's there, the flow of it, its oozing warmth. How fragile my skin, how bold my energy. Rip me open I said; take me whole into the ground…faster, faster, faster, the edge of fear. I smell the death, I smell my death. I taste it in my moth, into the metal SNAP of my own blood, into my mouth. I want it leaked. Leak out of my I said, leak out of me you purple thunder – SNAP out of it they say, SNAP out! I stumble and then I fall. In my fall, I sometimes end up sleeping and in my sleep, I sometimes dream…of silence.

Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto

Donna Haraway utilizes the concept of Cyborg as metaphor for the deconstruction of the dualistic forces that skeletonizes our Western culture. She uses the concept of cyborg as a representation of the many excluded beings, hybrid, ablated souls whose voice is not being represented. She questions the system which consciously omits the voice of the monstrous, the contradictory, the illegitimate. Haraway makes cyborg politics the politics of exclusion. In this transformative approach, she reclaims the power of the technology and recognizes its potential as "an aspect of our embodiment," she rejoices in the confusion of boundaries existing in our civilization, and rejects the dualistic, crystallized oppositional force onto which domination, exploitation and silencing are based. She states:

"By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condemned image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation. In the traditions of "Western" science and politics – the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other –the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination…(Haraway 150).

In this desire to reclaim the tools have been the tools of 'other,' Haraway places her recognition in the positive implications of the technology. Haraway perceives the technology as a potential entry point into our body, to reclaim our body, to reclaim our expression and to blur the boundaries of opposition.

"Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in our tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machine identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. (Haraway 181).

It is with caution and heed that I too rejoice in the potential empowerment the technology offers. The muted voice of the millions whose representation in our society has been omitted is more than hungry for expression. The ravenous hunger turned lose into the seemingly boundariless modes of self-representation in cyberspace is bound, in the early stages of this leap, to lose its way into wanderings of isolationist echoing. The image is simple here; the deprived, the denied, the ablated, the damned living for centuries in a state of perpetual darkness now turned lose into a sun-drenched field. No alleyways, no signs, no guides, no waiting room. A sudden explosion of noise – a high pitch strident voice: "here I am, here I am!"

The Cyborg

The cyborg opens her eyes in the middle of darkness – a 'field' of no luminescence with the exception of the blue/white glow of her monitor exists around her. ENTER YOUR NAME – the machine thrusts its whiteness glow forward in the form of this invasion. "Today my name is plexus – solar plexus." I like the energy it generates that tiny somewhat rigid spot of energy between my breasts.

I place the helmet on my head and tightly fasten the straps under my chin. I press ENTER and wait for the "Insertion Mode" to begin. In anticipation of contact, my mind wanders in the desire to enter Cybertron.

Tentacles of the machine, I push them into me, into my bones. Sharp twinge and then the silence. A quiet moment between short breaths, an instant between instants, they enter me. I feel the electric pulse enter me freely, liquid images pour into me, into my eyes – liquid reality, I see again. The darkness of before has fallen – it never takes movement for me to run. I run again, throw my body forward in a perpetual motion of falling. I fall and fall again until I can lo longer remember the standstill notion of before. I 'saw' the sky today, it opened onto me, onto my open face and rained onto my lips.

Bleep, I enter the world quickly – so simultaneous my transposition – immediately propelled in synchronicity with the sound of the machine at my end. They are waiting for me. I know they want me there.

"Open your eyes," I hear it whispered. "Open your eyes."

Twitch of the skin, my eyes open boldly and see the motion of flowers in the force

of the wind. I 'hear' the rustle of the leaves and hold my breath an instant on the edge of silence. The silent quietude between the shifting motion of the field. Blue green of sky above my head and the solidity of earth below my feet. I observe the swaying of vermilion, oscillation of the spectrum into my eyes. Gold, ochre, blue-green, green indigo from out to center and back out again. I catch the motion of the petals into my hands. I cup my open palms to catch their light fully. The wind envelops me, wraps itself around me whole, twisting and turning, caress of its shifting, I take it into me. I breathe again, breathe it full again, into the stretching of my lungs. I hear the voices speak to me, their whispers into my ear. I hear their voices. The earth calls out to me. "lean onto me", "lay down your body whole" and I do. Lower my weight into the tautness of thighs, drop into them onto my knees onto the ground waiting for me. The warmth of it takes me astray, catches me by surprise. How soft its granular surface upon my cheeks, between my fingers, under my nails. I turn my head to face the clouds, their shifting faces as the sky grows into a deeper blue. An indigo I could have hung my faith onto…

Transition back into the outside is always difficult. My head collapses on the table. I stay like this for quite some time unable to move, to feel past the emptiness of my ringing ears and the tingling sensation of the tip of my fingers in their uncontrollable movement back into feeling. My BODY awakens slowly. I edge my way back into 'doneness' as I like to call my bodied self, outside of the machine.

The Use of Text as a Deconstruction of Self in Masochism – the Paradox of Language

The use of written language in cyberspace and the opportunity to move away from body into the etching of the characters put forth for 'the other' is a form of deconstruction that perpetuates itself in the inescapable fact of the appropriation of language. Going back to our definition of absolute self and brining it in the light of the previously made argument of "perception before language," the notion of language, spoken or otherwise is and always remains an imperfect approximation of the original expression. It is now important to determine the way in which language allows any power claims at all. Language of course does not always act as a destruction in its approximate essence. It is the intent behind the language or rather the drive behind it, the motive behind the filtering of self into language that determines the direction in which the expression will go. Words, written or otherwise, in the approximation of perception represent a layering of images, facts or simply sounds that create imperfect structures on the other side of its reception. The image: two bodies standing in a room far apart surrounded by nothing by space and darkness. The sound of their voices guiding the other as to the location, not only of the other in the space but of themselves. Always an approximation and a perpetual recalculation of meaning throughout the process of layering. I utter sounds and add another layer, you on the other side recalculate its meaning, but only and always confined to your own ability and perception and potential for understanding.

Let us go back to our narcissistic masochist in cyberspace. In this way, the dangers of cyberspace are not inherent to the medium of expression but lie in the subjects entering its realm. A knife is but a knife is but a knife. Not yet a tool. Not quite a blade without my hands to give it definition. And so the danger of the tool does not exist without the user's presence. The 'attack' or rather the deconstruction of cyberspace here is not made on the inherence of cyberspace but rather on the monstrous state of our mutilated voices. Do not look directly at the source of light. Don's strain your eyes on trying to decipher the source

of its intensity, but look at where it falls. Observe the shadows that it casts in its fallings. The light is of no interest without the objects they illuminate. Here we are back to the notion of the 'inverted quest' previously defined. Listen to the echo and you shall *see* its source.

"Masochism involves a continuous demolition – a paradoxical "making" in corporal and textual terms – of those narratives of an already inadequately constituted self. (Redding 287).

The notion of masochism in cyberspace is interesting in that it examines a minute aspect of our turn of century world. It does not make the claim that definition of the modes of expression is exhaustive. It simply takes a glimpse at some of the shadows cast by the tools we have created. Inverted image, always referring back to us. Kathy Acker's novel Empire of the Senseless is a fascinating layering of images which very much like the approximation of language comes up with an echoing on the other side that bares some significance as to the state of our world. The novel is set in the future in a Paris devastated by revolution and terrorists. The main characters are Thivai a pirate, and Abhor a cyborg. This book successfully evokes the naming of our worlds and the effects of a prolonged muting on individuals plunged in a world of techno madness. The language Acker uses is brutal, not in its precision of words but in its blunt, repetitive direct gaze at painful truths. The reading is often torturous and in the long run, numbing. Acker recreates the existence of muted voices and lets them play in infinite darkness; the reverberations that come forth from such a game are horrifying and fascinating at once. Redding in his article about Masochism in Acker's writing makes an interesting claim about her successful failure in representing a reality:

"Whatever we might learn from the dreaming, whatever glimpses of a society which wasn't just disgust, is still largely inexpressible. In this respect, Acker's writing remains a failure, naturally enough, a shambles, a mess; brash, shrill, petulant, and incoherent; as dreary and repetitive as any conventional pornography; naïve and sentimental wherever it finds occasional cause to celebrate. Even the endless adventure of disgust becomes wearying. Yet it is, for all that, a triumphal failure, as it scorns all means – personal, political, literary – by which we might feebly acquiescence to the insipid and reactionary ideology of "success"…Acker is neither defeatist nor smug, but caught up in a ceaselessly productive cycle of self-mutilation that fully disrespects the limits of the self. Acker is bent on further demolishing abjection, even as she speculates on buildings myths atop destruction. (Redding 301).

In this way, it is interesting to make the use Acker's Empire of the Senseless as an example of the approximation and language and its successful failure in the layering of our perpetually shifting reality.

Trigbed's Loss of Content Reality

It began a long, long time ago, in a land far, far away. Nothing was as we know it today. The world was simple. Trigbed, the creature that inhabited the land lived in large, empty space where he would sometimes sleep, although there were no rules about these things, and he often chose to sleep under the stars. He only knew one way of expressing himself and that was my making sounds which we call "WORDS". When he was hungry, he would say "APPLE" and walk over to the tree and pick an apple, but there was no symbolic meaning to that gesture, not as we know it today.

When he saw the "she" creature for the very first time, he said "LOVE" for that was what he felt. He was happy and content. Then came a new way of expression and that was by drawing symbols on a blank piece of material we call "PAPER" and that was exciting for Trigbed. It enabled him to minimize his thinking to one time frame and then he could just look at the symbols and remember everything just as he had though it before. He liked the drawings and drew often and sometimes other creatures came to him with their drawings and they spoke and drew and understood one another. One day he saw a "drawing" that said: "Those who acquire it ("drawing") will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on (it) to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own resources." Plato – Phaedrus.

Trigbed was afraid but soon he forgot what he had seen. Time as we know it went by and Trigbed had become what we call a "busy" creature. Things had changed; no one drew on material anymore but on cubes. Many cubes had pre-drawn symbols and all Trigbed had to do was pick up a cube which contained the approximate expression of his thoughts and show it to others. Sometimes there were not cubes which expressed what Trigbed felt and he became confused but he was very busy looking for the right cube and quickly he forgot everything.

Soon, the space in which he lived became overcrowded which 'symbol cubes' and larger structures which expressed more complex, pre-structured symbols. Trigbed stopped going outside, and never saw other creatures since he could do everything from his space. If he threw a cube up in the air, some magical force would take the symbol on the cube and take it to the creature of his choice within seconds, they called it "electronic cubing." Sometimes Trigbed would pick up a cube called "The Great Cube" and touch it in a certain way in that he could hear the voice of others and they could converse. Most of the time, he could only obtain a voice similar to the creature he wanted to meet except it would always say the same thing over and over gain in response to that Trigbed learned a phrase which he used often but hardly expressed what he felt at the time and that was "CALL ME BACK". The world in which Trigbed lived grew in complexity and Trigbed became very sad. Whenever he had the desire to express something, he had to look for the right cubes but often in the middle of his search he forgot what he had thought and would randomly pick up cubes which he assembled, forgetting what he was doing. Other creatures around him were often angry and they yelled at Trigbed but he could not understand why and soon they too would forget why they had been angry.

When Trigbed became too sad, he would stare at a giant, rectangular surface from which came bright colors and loud sounds and soon he would stop feeling and that was good for Trigbed. Sometimes he would eat a lot and drink large quantities of colorful liquids that altered his feelings and usually made him sleep. And when he felt a great need for affection and comfort from another creature, he picked up the cube with the symbol 'SEX" and life seemed more bearable to Trigbed.

One day the space inhabited by Trigbed became so cluttered that he could no longer move. So he just laid down and closed his eyes and when thoughts came to him, which had become very rare, he could blink and the "Great Cube" picked up the section of thought going through him at that very second, and he did not even have to move to express himself. When reality had become such a burden to Trigbed that it made him tired to even think he decided to stop feeling altogether and never open his eyes again for that was painful to Trigbed.

Necrophilous Remembrance – Impossibility of Communion in Cyberspace as Death in Winterson's Work.

Jeannette Winterson is a writer whose work offers some interesting angles on language and the possibility for powerful metaphors linked to cyberspace. In her book, Written on the Body , Winterson captures the power of the body as metaphor for reality. The body as a trapped door to the infinite possibilities of interaction, the perpetually transformative exchange which can only take place in the here, and now, in the confines of the flesh. The narrator, whose gender is never actually revealed, recounts the story of her/her passionate relationship with the character Louise. The entire story is told as journey through the body, an exploration of reality through the cavities of tissues, the vessels that carry blood. In the simplest of ways, the static, finite, perpetually self-referential direction taking place in online interactions can be compared to a death. The death of Louise, the absence of her body, the countless obsessive references the narrator makes to her body and its absence. The absence of the body as a simple way of characterizing death also characterizes the impossible finiteness of cybernetic reality. When memory relives the past, creating a thread between a point in the present and finished moment in the past, it actually crystallizes the impossibility of transformation of such a past moment in the present. Like Winterson's narrator mourning her dead lover, the reference to the past is and can only remain static. With no possibility in the absence of body. Here is a passage from Written on the Body , which illustrates this point:

"Let me penetrate you. I am the archaeologist of tombs. I would devote my life to marking your passageways, the entrances and exists of that impressive mausoleum, your body. How tight and secret are the funnels and wells of youth and health. A wriggling finger can hardly detect the start of an ante-chamber, much less push through to the wide aqueous halls that hide womb, gut and brain…As I embalm you in my memory, the first thing I shall do is to hook out your brain through your accommodating orifices. Now that I have lost you I cannot allow you to develop, you must be a photograph not a poem. You must be rid of life. We shall sink together you and I, down into the dark voids where once the vital organs were…"Explore me" you said and I collected my ropes, flasks and maps, expecting to be back home soon. I dropped into the mass of you and I cannot find the way out. Sometimes I think I'm free, coughed up like Jonah from the whale, but then I turn a corner and recognize myself again. Myself in your skin, myself." (Winterson 119).

When I hold my representations of self within the corners of my memory, and concretize it into the words on my computer monitor to share with you, the user, my friend, my lover, I am creating an image, a photograph, a static, beautiful perfection of finite reality. I carry it with me at all times; I put it in my pocket. I pull it out to look at it, 'remember it', again in its perfected definition. Sometimes I take out my brushes, my bountiful colors, the wetness of my pains and chose to play with variegated hues of the spectrum to paint your into my reality. I chose the elements which only my body remembers of you, the currents of your body against the shadows of the sun, the resonance of space in the presence of your hands and how your eyes would twitch in the face of life's uncertainty. I took these pieces of you, took them inside the corners of my mind. Sometimes I paint with them, I pull them out, one by one, piece by piece, and raise them high, dangling feet of theirs, kicking in the wind. I examine them carefully into the light as one can only indulge in such states of ownership. I know you well. I know you through the juxtaposition of these pieces. I plop you down onto my canvas surface and plunge you whole into layers of gouaches, watercolors, the sticky texture of acrylics. I

cover you until your face grows black and blue again from so much color, from so much light.

Pointlessence of the blinking cursor. I wait for words from you on the other side. A word or two come through; an image falls, cascading quickly into the picture of your face. A self I dip and dip again into the paints of my reality, constructed whole and solidly in the confines of my imagination.

And if I hold out a piece of you, if I can catch an object of remembrance, a sock you left behind, a cup you held, a song you'd made your own, then it is with certainty that I will lose my way within the alleyways of my search for you. Transported into the bodiless, we both are silenced by the absence of our bodies. The slant of our two voices, reaching for the other in muted silence of the imaginings.

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