

WORKING:

a conversation between Andrea Geyer, Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Maryam Jafri, Kara Lynch, Ulrike Müller, Valerie Tevere, David Thorne and Alex Villar.

As an artist I have always understood my work as a combination of different practices. One of them is the ongoing discourse that I have with my colleagues around working, teaching, politics, theory and of course the challenges of every day living. By its nature this discourse is rarely public. Being invited by Carlos Motta, to contribute to artwurl in form of an interview, I suggested that instead of generating a new conversation, I would invite some of my colleagues to formalize some of the already existing dialogues that we have and have had over the years to be contributed to the magazine. What brings this group of artists together, I think, is a shared agency in our work that I hope will become visible in some of its layers over the course of this conversation. Formally we decided to each ask one question which will be answered by everybody else. We will publish the questions in succession over the course of the next issues of artwurl. I would like to thank you Carlos Motta for his invitation giving us the opportunity to develop this dialogue.

— Andrea Geyer

Stage 2:

Sharon Hayes' Question: In our last conversational sequence, the words/phrases "fissure," "insertion," "fracture," "breaks in the concrete," "repositioning," "resignification," and "détournement" came up repeatedly to name a collection of strategies that we engage in our work that, I would say, come from and move toward a desire to locate spaces or instances that open up the possibility of individual agency and collective transformation. I am interested in asking more specifically about this notion of fracture. How do you take up and/or create these spaces of fracture in your work and what do you feel are the limitations and possibilities offered by such action?

Ashley Hunt: I like thinking of 'fracture,' largely because of the difference between *locating* fractures (fracture as a noun) and *causing* fractures (fracture as a verb). I like that it implies both that *fractures exist*, as well as an agent *who fractures*. As Sharon has raised it, one way 'fracture' engages our own work and strategies might be in how we understand and describe power.

Is power, for example, something that *can* fracture? Is it something in which fractures already—or inherently—exist? Is it something that we (subjects, agents, individuals or collectives) can fracture, or must we wait for fractures to form? Is power, in fact, like concrete, where cracks have to form for something to grow through ('life' or 'resistance' of some sort, presumably?), or is it porous and

transparent in an entirely different way? Where does the idea of fracture leave us in regard to questions of incorporation, appropriation and co-optation; do fractures have a sort of time limit, after which the 'space' of a fracture becomes closed off, 'healed' or re-territorialized by power? And if fractures in power are where we can achieve agency, 'freedom,' etc., then with what are we left—power? Does fracture lead us toward a monolithic, reductive idea of power as something top down, rather than as something diffuse, collected, appropriated and re-articulated by those with more power? Do some people have more 'power' to fracture than others?

As artists, where fracture seems a useful strategy is in relation to power's *coherence* and *continuity*.



RUN OFF WATER, Colleen Hennessey (image collected by Sharon Hayes)

Whether we consider the built environments and concrete structures of power, its ideological and discursive formations, its appearances or overall spatial production, I believe we have the chance to intervene in each of these; and certainly, our work 'means' in relation to them, regardless of whether we are working "on the ground" or away from the spaces where the "head counters" are taking attendance. One

strategy of that intervention can indeed be one of fracture: fracturing the appearance of continuity and coherence as it is projected and narrativized by power on each of these levels.

In my own practice, I try to consider these spaces, but also the spaces we create to respond, be outside of, protest, or hide in 'folds' from the vision of power (Helloooooo Alex). For me, this has manifested primarily in analyzing carceral space as one of 'social death' (of disappearance, segregation, racisms and disenfranchisement from possibility or claims to power), and trying to intervene in the continuity of its logic and reproduction. It's also meant looking to the ways in which people resist such subjugation, individually and as communities, perhaps seeking their own fractures and breaking the continuity of the power to which they are subjected. Here I see fracture as part of a counter-hegemonic practice, but one in which we must not get too caught up in strict opposition, or in con-firming power by summoning the Other upon which that power resides (which constitutes it). This may connect with David's concern over a un-critical/non-contextualized dissent that, by its very agreement to the polemic laid out (i.e. "Attack on America"), affirms the coherence of the position of power, and all that its position excludes and denies. Such affirmation would not be a "fracture" as I think Sharon offered the term. Rather, fracture would need to be something more like 'differánce,' that combination of 'to differ' and 'to defer.'

So methodologically speaking, I'm thinking of the liminal spaces I tend to map out for myself (and sometimes for others) between the modes and sites of existing discourses. One strategy would be to attempt to open up such spaces by working across their discursive lines, points of articulation, spaces for speech and action, context and audience(s), hoping to summon up incongruencies, aporias and contradictions, in which criticality and creative energy might emerge. Currently, this has meant trying to piece together the generally separate but overlapping discourses of 'statelessness,' as common to the subject positions of both *prisoners* and *refugees*. Although there are certainly problems with flattening out the two positions, I'm interested in the space between the two as they are defined discursively, seeing what positions and what politics emerge across them in relation to the larger, emerging analyses of 'supra-national' power and the definition of Empire which is not seen simply as the U.S.; as well as the historical lines of identification and solidarity between the First World Left and the protagonists of anti-colonial struggles.

Maryam Jafri: Fracture: I agree with Ashley's summation of the totalizing hegemony of narratives, pat solutions and ahistorical, mythologizing accounts of contemporary global politics, and indeed, a great deal of my work centers on questioning narrative structures via my use of video, performance, installation, texts, etc. However, I'd like to ask how this translates into aesthetic strategy. What I've noticed, and think can be problematic, is that fracture often translates in cultural production, into a valorizing indeterminacy of meaning, relativism, and a simplistic rejection of all forms of narrative (and thus accountability). In short, my question is, does revealing fractures within the wall of power necessitate certain formal strategies over others? What if these formal strategies are merely a rehashing of

certain avant-garde strategies that at this point merely fuel (cultural) capitalism's search for new markets (and thus forms)?

Kara Lynch: In bold are the themes that came up for me while reading Ashley and Maryam's responses. I will try my best to explicate them.

Conspicuous invisibility:

In my work around issues of race and representation I have found that race's constituent elements—gender and class—always inform and interrogate the processes of racialization. Understanding this is one way to understand how power works. In the last few years, it has become relevant and even necessary to include the national subject as one of the constituents of RACE. In light of this, I have been fascinated by the hyper-present absence of black and brown female bodies within the production of power.

The most representative and most cited image of this is the Hottentot Venus, Saartje Baartman, the South African woman who was toured throughout Europe in the 19th century. On the surface, she is powerless—an object viewed as a freak of nature. The Western representation of her: big booty, hyper-sexual, primitive, erases her as a political subject. It is her very hyper-presence as a body that makes her disappear and renders her unrecognizable. Meanwhile, if you scratch the surface a bit deeper, you find out that this woman did agree to participate in these tours. You find that she was literate and fairly educated. And though we don't know all of the circumstances of her decision to join the circus of Western colonialism, there is the possibility that she in fact had some agency. Maybe she wanted to travel, see the world, and on someone else's dime.

I give this example because my work troubles this question of subjectivity and agency that I think most liberal thinking simply describes as 'un-empowered.' If women, specifically black and brown women, do not exist in any meaningful way in Western philosophical and political discourses, nor in Black discourses, as visible in Fanon and DuBois' descriptions of double consciousness, or Carmichael's *Black Power*, I propose we take on these conspicuous invisibilities as spaces of resistance where we can name ourselves and perform those identities. I think this is part of what Ashley suggests in his analogy of grass/trees breaking through concrete and growing in the fractures. I think of roots pushing up and unsettling the smooth lines of a manicured landscape of politics.

The body in relation to subjectivity, recognition and double consciousness:

Identity and identification are processes of power, subjugation and recognition. For black folks, recognition, as it's understood in Western philosophy, has always been through our relationship to whiteness/power/master. Dubois/Fanon/Hall/Carby, et al. describe the process of seeing through this veil of subjugation to understand oneself and propose a self-recognition that engages this double consciousness. I think that there are folks making work that take this double consciousness as a baseline, and then push it forward to imagine that we not only know ourselves

through this veil, but we also know whiteness/power/master in a way that it can never fully know itself without us. The driving question in my work these days is: what if black people just didn't show up? If we just followed our parallel logic/trajectory without whiteness, what would power look/feel like?

This of course brings up all of our investments and dependencies upon those power structures and narratives that we want to disrupt, fracture and resist.



*still, from the film MEET YOU MORE THAN HALF WAY by Sara Takahashi, 2004
(image collected by Sharon Hayes)*

Space/time, performance, non-narrative strategies and reception:

I still grapple with the place of the narrative and its performed-ness in my work as its own body. When experience is everything to a piece, what happens when you refuse a narrative to your audience? Is this a way of silencing myself or speaking more loudly? And what are the strategies of conspicuous invisibility that originally brought me to this material in the first place? So far, my work has found its way into the tricky world of abstraction that Maryam talks about.

I have a very elaborate back-story to my project, *Invisible*, that at this moment is only for me. My back story is set in a future where time travel is possible, "Time Tourists" are picked up after by a commoner caste of "Cleaners," a resistance movement plots the disruption of a Eurocentric time/space continuum, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade never happened but is kept alive by a pseudo-religious

cult. I chose science fiction, or rather it chose me, because it is unlike the more character-driven genres within literature. Sci-fi speaks to and contends with social relations. The back-story, the narrative, is the vehicle for me to get into the issues at hand: the inherent violence of subjectivity.

The performance/execution of this project, so far, was a seven day audio/video installation embedded into transitory public spaces: stairwells, vestibules, catwalks, hallways and elevators. The installation concentrates on multiple perspectives of violence and environment: the moment of a photographed lynching of a black woman, Laura Nelson and her son, from a bridge in Okemah, Oklahoma on May 25, 1911; and the present day recovery of that place/time. The piece encourages the audience to perform by way of internalization or incorporation, as well as by way of disassociation and dismissal. It is as much a performance to *not* see/hear the piece as it is to acknowledge its presence. Anyone could walk through, into or past the work. Just as we do or don't witness, recognize, engage in, or open ourselves up to the daily ordinary violence of becoming a political subject.

Ulrike Müller: In my artwork right now, I guess I am more interested in connections than in fractures. Especially when thinking about our alienated selves. Negri/Hardt talk about affective labor and describe it as part of the most recent paradigm shift of labor in Western capitalism—jobs that require abilities like empathy, understanding, care for others, etc. However these “soft skills” and qualifications include only positively valued feelings. But in our lives, these don't come without their darker counterparts: fears, anxiety, depression, and all kinds of ways of dropping out of the bright picture of late capitalism and going crazy. Paolo Virno writes: “There is no one so poor as the one who sees his or her own ability to relate to the ‘presence of others,’ or his or her own possession of language, reduced to waged labor.”

The idea of fractures, windows in time and space that allow for inserting something, makes sense mostly on a very practical and institutional level. When dealing with art spaces and art funding, one runs the danger of being co-opted, of becoming a mere content supplier to an event culture that thrives on good quotes. Still, the potential of art institutions and exhibition spaces is important for me to examine—as an artist and as a visitor. Whenever I am working in such a setting, I want to evaluate specifically how capital is being distributed. I think about how funds, knowledge, and resources can be redistributed. I like the idea of finding new sites, but I am also interested in using the old ones for my own purposes. This was something I thought about when organizing the performance symposium, “Public Affairs,” at the Museum of Modern Art in Vienna last Fall, and it comes up again now as I am working towards my first solo show this year.

Conceiving political action as an intervention in social relations, I see a chance for emotional and intellectual communication via art—potentially this might lead towards individual agency and collective transformation. I would wish so.

Valerie Tevere: To address Ulrike's mention of emotive communication—perhaps a fissure or fracture can be found on that level. Different measures of resistance are called for in this present state of heightened surveillance and tight regulations. I think of humor and satire as disarming and vital—catching power off guard through emotional impact in relevant ways. If you get that cop to giggle, he may not arrest you. This example is a shift in the 'expected performance of the body' that Alex had previously mentioned; here the impact is time-based, where conceptual realization occurs after the moment of interaction or performance. An effective example is the work of the Surveillance Camera Players who employ theatricality and humor to make use of and expose the mechanisms and vulnerabilities of institutions of power. Considering its 'broadcast' potential, these tripartite performances take place in front of individual surveillance cameras throughout New York City.

In terms of my individual and collaborative work, respectively, I am interested in mimicking broadcast interview styles and using technology that interrupts and mediates hyper-spaces. I feel that critical repositioning/resignification through mimicry can be an operative strategy. Through the production of performances/situations that involve spontaneous or scripted interactions/movements through urban space, I have utilized the interview process as a way to participate in or 'create' the possibility for public dialogue around constructed and mediated representations of a city environment. Although sometimes fraught, here the use of the person-on-the-street style interview can be a vehicle for 'unrestrained' encounters with one's fellow citizens (and I mean 'citizen' in the non-limiting sense of the word—all of those inhabiting a space regardless of birthplace or 'legal' status).

The communicative, political, and creative potentialities of 'plugging' into the airwaves / carving out collective spaces outside of the ultra commercialized broadcast spectrum / finding and filling the empty spaces on the dial, are the continuing foci of our (neuroTransmitter's) work. Broadcasted sounds, interviews, discussions, monologues, and music are simultaneously spatial and symbolic, indexical marks that can in/trans-form one's relationship or cognition of a place. Radio signals are invisible suspended audio continuously flowing through space, blanketing the urban (suburban, rural...) environment and are intermittently received. Building upon these ideas, we have constructed a device (in the form of an everyday use object) that creates the potential for mobile broadcasting. This object is a multi-use tool for information dissemination and public broadcast, and prefaces the relationship between radio transmissions, the body, and how the two—through mobile experience—can negotiate, interrupt, and sonically map the space of the city. I think the chameleon nature of this object illustrates what Ashley referred to as hiding in the "folds' from the vision of power," though radio is less about vision.

David Thorne: Despite my round-one citation of Foucault, at the moment I am tending— with absolute wholesomeness—to protest, "Fuck Fracture! Down with Fissure!" I would not say that my work involves generating fracture, or works within the space of fissure, or occupies any of the recently much-vaunted "spaces in-

between." It must be getting very crowded in the spaces in-between which so many people say they are working in, very crowded indeed. Perhaps I'll stay right here where I am, in the most non-fractured space of all, Los Angeles, USA. When I hear someone claim, "I am interested in the spaces 'in-between,'" or "I am working in the gap between x and y," I want to reach for my revolver, although I don't have one. There is a revolver on the other side of an in-between space that separates me from it, and I can't quite reach it, it mocks me with its cool presence.... Ok OK, the spaces in-between—but then what? At least make a case for a certain (revolver less) materiality in those spaces, else we dissolve into groundlessness, incapacity, stupor.



*detail, BALTIMORE SERIES (Fin de Siecle), Isaac Julien, 2003
(image collected by Sharon Hayes)*

My cantankerousness here has a point, and it is to reiterate and perhaps expand on the concern which Maryam raised about how varying notions of fracture deployed as aesthetic strategies can yield over-valorized indeterminacy and relativism. I have been thinking about question #2 from Sharon as part of a process of assembling a screening program here in LA, and so have been tending to link these concerns around fracture to what is perhaps a more general concern with work that in one way or another takes up notions of history, contingency, and another term that approaches the status of “the in-between”—“the possible” (I think this relates to fracture in the sense that ‘the possible’ is what we might articulate from within a space of fracture, etc.), in the context of the demise of the so-called meta-narratives of modernity, which, like the recently reported demise of the nation-state, is perhaps a premature report. As Wendy Brown notes, the meta-narratives are troubled but still continue to weigh quite heavily on our present condition. In any event, I had been thinking that the work for the program engages history with a Benjaminian blast, but blast now seems too romantic a verb, and blasting (an image from the continuum of history, etc.), as an act, too weighted with Benjamin’s preoccupation with redemption, and with revelation as a strategy in his frame of post-Marxist historical materialism.

For the screening program, part of what I was interested in was the frustrating yet hopefully productive tension between the strengths of the work included (films by Rebecca Baron, Walid Raad, Matthew Buckingham, Erika Vogt, and *The Speculative Archive*) and a “need” for some sort of clarity or certainty in this particular moment—against fracture. This sounds rather risky to say, in a way, but what I mean is that in the face of massive reassertions (with massive variation on the older forms to be sure) of several foundational politico-theocratic paradigms, it seems important to be doing or saying something concrete, concretely different, rather than thinking that these reassertions simply provide new points of fissure, new points for resignification, *détournement*, and so on. But concrete? Can this desire for concretization register or manifest as something other than a sort of longing for a lost direction or, rather, a previously non-existent totalizingly easy way out of current complexities? Or other than as some sort of guilt-ridden imperative to “DO something”? Or other than thinking that one can be a valiant little blade of grass pushing out through a crack in the very foundation of power?

I remember showing a rough cut of “Its not my memory of it” (a *Speculative Archive* video project) at NYU last year, and during the Q & A saying something about how perhaps one reaches a certain limit with the investigation of suspensions, indeterminacies, multiplicities of interpretation, and so on. After all, these are the spaces we inhabit under present conditions. In a sense, this IS our condition, and it is perhaps too easy to diagnose, the spaces too easy to work in. And yet they remain important spaces to work in (in-between?), to flesh out, etc. Maybe the difficulty really hits when one tries to find one’s way out—into what? There’s a lot that’s been written about this stuff, I suspect, in theoretical circles, and I am admittedly behind—texts about uncertainty, contingency, indeterminacy, doubt, etc. And of course, I like to think I recognize the political significance, the positive potentials of these spaces (spaces of fracture or fissure as spaces of potentiality, as some philosopher has probably written) or of these characteristics of history, time, the

political, for example, deployed and considered in the video and film works in the screening. But such notions, in my view, always chafe against or sometimes crash headlong into materiality, the fact of material effects, and/or a desire for material effects that are “other than” repressive, foreclosing, violent, and so on, in contrast to the misery of actually lived material conditions at the start of the 21st century—the ones we are crashing into all the time.

At NYU I was responding to a question about facticity and truth and evidence, and it struck me that perhaps, in this moment when the notion of evidence is so thoroughly abused, or blatantly jettisoned, for example, by the Bush administration in the context of war and terror, it might be important to argue about “evidence” differently, or even to make a claim for “new” forms of evidence, or to make a DEMAND for evidence even, and for facticity, and for accountability to actually lived material conditions. And here is where the chafing gets vigorous: All of the works for the screening, it could be said, work around notions of contingency, indeterminacy, etc., or propose, in various ways, something about evidence (more in the historical sense, and in an indexical sense, than in a judicial sense). I think the works DO make a case for a certain notion of materiality within the spaces they occupy and represent, even if it is often what we might call a materiality of affect. And yet I think we have to ask some questions about how these works “work,” about their strategies and approaches, and about the specificities of histories that are absented by and in them. This is not to say there are not notions of history, and articulations of specificities present in these works, but rather to ask—well, what are the effects of these approaches and conceptualizations if, in fact, our present condition is fraught with indeterminacies and uncertainties that are politically debilitating? How might we address the present in ways which move beyond the symptomatic (“Look, I’m fractured!”) or at least in ways that do not remain entirely within the space of the symptom but point us toward a productive analysis of a set of (material) conditions? As much as I am drawn to artworks that operate to open up spaces of thought (perhaps even sometimes by “fracturing” other ones) as a way of generating important challenges to political debilitation, I also think such works risk generating a kind of confinement to or by these sorts of spaces of thought. In other words, is there not a risk of being trapped by “the possible,” particularly when the forces of capital sing, “I love you when you explore the realms of the possible”? And if this risk is, and I think it is, a necessary risk to take, by making work that is bound up with all these questions, how do we negotiate it?

At the moment, I am having a hard time engaging fantasies of subversion, transgression, critical re-appropriation, “culture-jamming,” fracture-inhabiting, or counter-hegemony. Something else, it seems to me, is demanded of us in the present misery, and I for one have no idea what it is. Anything’s possible! What about “not showing up”?

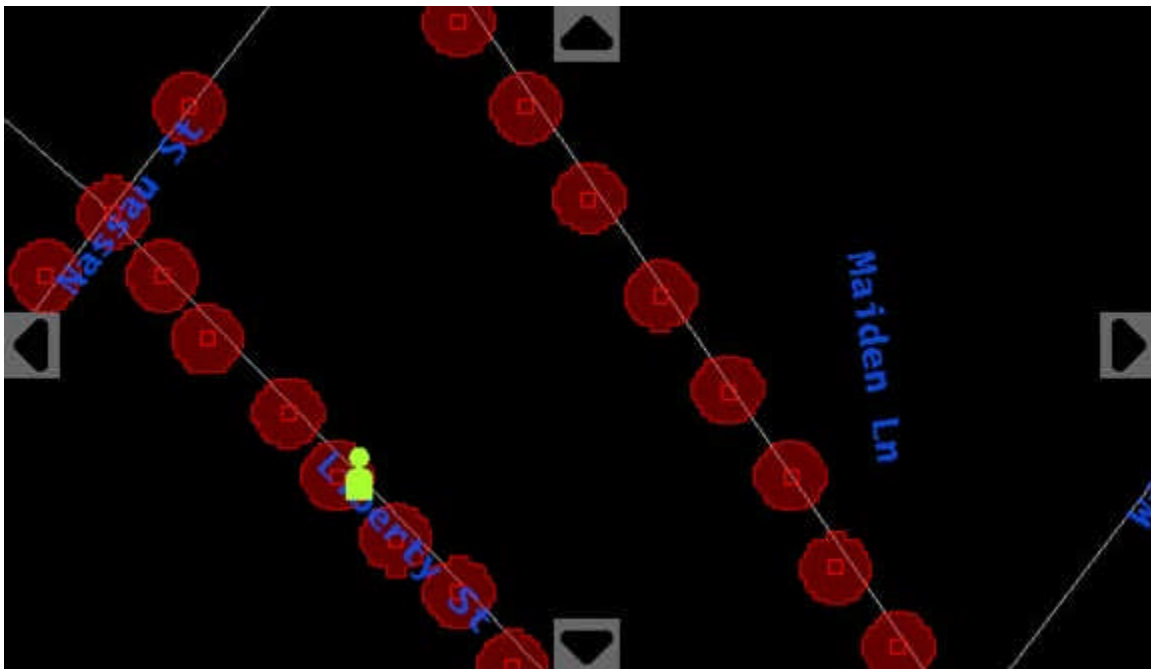
Alex Villar: In the face of such profusion of passionate and explosive insights about the concept of fracture, I felt compelled to revisit our first exchange to review its references. I had in mind simply scanning over my copy of “Microfísica do Poder” (Microphysics of Power) to read the essay David quoted from: “Nietzsche,

Genealogy, History.” Instead of going straight to the French original, I ‘had’ to reach instead for a Portuguese version of an Italian anthology of Foucault’s interviews. So, twice removed, I began to search in vain for the ‘fracture’ quote. Initially suspecting my translation, I also looked into the two books in English that published that essay: Rabinow’s *Foucault Reader* and Bouchard’s *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. I couldn’t find the quote there either. At that point, I began to suspect that David, as I often do myself, had attributed the quote to a different text. All in all, I think the detour I took was a rather productive one—even if I felt like Debord’s friend who drifted through a region of Germany while following a map of London. I eventually found the actual source for the quote in an interview Foucault gave to Gerard Raulet, initially published as “Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault,” and republished in Lawrence Kritzman’s anthology *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: interviews and other writings of Michel Foucault*. I think that the misunderstanding was productive because this latter text, preoccupied as it is with setting straight the historical record of the development of contemporary theoretical ideas, does very little to shed light on Foucault’s import in general, and even less so in his cryptic usage of the word ‘fracture’ in the paragraph in question. Truthfully, the next question in that same interview will provide a slightly better response, when Foucault says, “the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history.” But it is not until one reads the “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” essay that it becomes clear that what Foucault qualifies as fractures result from the contingent conditions of possibility exposed by his genealogical methodology. In other words, when an established situation in the present that appears to be natural or eternal, can, via the tracing of its genealogical development, be shown against the background of its mundane and limited context of formation, the fragile ground that supports such a hegemonic situation is exposed to the possibility of change. That is, I believe, what Foucault means when he refers to virtual fractures as the space of freedom and of possible transformation.

Forgive me for this roundabout way of addressing the question at hand, but I needed to clarify some things for my own understanding. I needed, for instance, to take the word in question out of its metaphorical general usage and comprehend its very specific application in the particular field in which it was used. I needed to do that before I could think about how the concept of fracture could migrate into a different field. The risk is, of course, that one would compromise the term’s specificity and indulge in a generalized, totalizing, application of the notion. I don’t think anyone here has done that, much the other way around. But the overarching usage of any such term, pre-empted of signification as a result of indiscriminate usage, might well be the horizon against which some, if not all of us, might raise the flag of caution when confronted with a catchy concept. I couldn’t agree more. Nevertheless, one could still make use of a popular concept once there is a clear understanding that this might be one among many possible, and not necessarily mutually exclusive, tactics. And how could it be otherwise if power has so many facets? Clearly one of them is very obvious, Machiavellian, and indeed blatant in its deployment of violence—this facet is very well depicted by Chomsky and, as he would say so himself, it might not require much more than general common sense to

understand and confront. Another rendition will account for the intricate channels through which power will disperse and, at the same time, multiply itself. Yet another account will investigate power's re-appropriation of counter tactics. And the list goes on and on. In order to confront simultaneously such a multifaceted enemy, what we need could not be further removed from the deployment of a single-handed strategy, even if a sophisticated one. What we possibly need is to foster a productive relationality across an incredibly varied spectrum of resistant forces and subjectivities.

I realize that I've been sketching out a response to the latter part of Sharon's two-part question—that is, what do I feel are the limitations and possibilities offered by this notion of a fracture? To recoup, I feel that this is one among many tactics that can and should be deployed simultaneously—perhaps not by the same agent, but certainly in consonance with other agents. The concept's limitations lie, as I see it, on its generalization, so I try to exercise caution in my enthusiasm. Nevertheless—and this leads me to the first part of the question about how I would make use of these spaces of fracture in my work—its possibilities are abundant and I have, in the modest context of my own work, attempted to exploit this potential. I would say that what I do is articulate a state of potential transformation by proposing a detour in very specific instances of everyday life. I am referring to my oblique representation of innocuous activities like walking, running, playing, etc., which gradually takes them away from their expected neutrality toward a position of dissent, proposing a displacement in the representation of the self in the public sphere.



iSee, webgrab, Institute for Applied Autonomy (image collected by Sharon Hayes)

Andrea Geyer: In front of the 9/11 commission a couple of days ago, Madeleine Albright said: "...As we all know, history is lived forward and written backward...." It stood out to me, in the context of spoken words/testimony pouring out of the radio for hours those two days, as a remarkably direct statement in the context of the hearings. Albright's saying, in my opinion, reflects her conscious awareness of the fragile construction of power and hegemony, perceived as a whole, a body, an arch, and brings us right to what Foucault described as fracture. *Power* as well as *history* is constructed backwards, coming together as lines in a place, a time, a person. A fracture of that structure can only happen right there, in this case in her person, as an individual testifying. She had done her reading—maybe.

To Sharon's question and the insights that have already been given: Aware of the conscious and constant abstraction of English as my second language, I hear 'fracture' and think *broken leg*, a cast, crutches, and then after that, I think theory, philosophy, strategy. This detour that my perception takes allows my mind to linger around the object that is fractured, broken, marked with an imperfection in its wholeness. For me this means that the recognition of fracture, consequently, is a recognition of the object that is fractured. What does that imply? Reflected in my practice, I would say, is an attempt to describe structures of social and political organization in relation to the current moment, the moment in which the lines cross: in a place, a time *and* a person; not in opposition to but structurally as part of a *whole*.

The way that I could understand fracture is as something that is not generated through action or practice (art practice in our case) but as de-facto existing, moving toward what David and Kara described. Existing within communities of cultural workers, I tend to forget that my very existence, in some ways, is a fracture in an omnipresent inscription of normativity by a hegemonic class. Fracture could be read as a condition not an action—no need to generate it—'being' as 'fracture' by default. But nevertheless, as a strategy, I do not recognize the context in which I could be perceived as a 'fracture' of something dominant, in an ideological sense (despite its political force and violence.) Again following Kara's thought, it's the understanding that agency as such is already present and that the challenge should not lie in the action of generating it but rather in the understanding of what renders the numbness that confronts the impact. (Hello Spivak.)

At a protest on Saturday March 20th, 2004, in New York, I saw a couple of women carrying the banner of the Black Radical Congress. Seeing the word 'radical' reminded me of the necessity of an idea of radical—as in original; fundamental; thorough-going; a radical position; a radical identity; as transforming the ideas of fluid identity into a solid platform of action. To assume a position, an opinion.... To claim the existing space in which I work as a signifying force, while keeping the 'values' of what sometimes is (in my opinion wrongly) described as fracture: the temporality, the potential for change, the immanent heterogeneity, and mark this instability as 'a whole.' This is an intriguing strategy for me.

CVs and weblinks:

Andrea Geyer lives and works in New York. Her work stresses the possibility of defining complex fluid identities in opposition to mechanisms which attempt to form and control static collective identities. Big cities are recognized as sites for projected images and fantasies, places of diverse political, ethnic, religious and social realities, integrating relations between human beings and their surroundings. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Serpentine Gallery, Secession, Manifesta4, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Parlour Projects and White Columns. She is a 2000 participant of the Whitney Independent Study Program. In 2003 she received a NYFA fellowship as well as a IASPIS residency. She is currently a resident at the Woolworth building LMCC space program. Over the recent years she has been involved in various curatorial and organizational projects among them Nomads and Residents, New York.

www.davidreedstudio.com/andreageyer.html

Sharon Hayes is an artist who employs conceptual and methodological approaches borrowed from practices such as theater, dance, anthropology and journalism. In her most recent work, she has been investigating the present political moment through a critical examination of various historic texts, including a speech from the 1968 democratical convention in Chicago and the transcripts from the audio tapes made by Patti Hearst and the Symbionese Liberation Army in the 1970s. Her work has been shown in gallery spaces and theatrical venues including the New Museum of Contemporary Art, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Dance Theater Workshop, Performance Space 122, and the WOW Cafe in New York City. Hayes was a 1999 MacDowell Colony Fellow. She also received a 1999 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship and a IASPIS residency in 2003.

Ashley Hunt is a Los Angeles based artist who works primarily in video and multi-media. His main project of the last five years has been the "Corrections Documentary Project", exploring the political economy and relations of U.S. prison expansion.

<http://ashleyhuntwork.net>

<http://correctionsproject.com>

<http://prisonmaps.com>

Maryam Jafri is a video artist based in New York and Copenhagen. Her work centers on performance, narrative and gender. Her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions and screenings both in the US and abroad.

Kara Lynch is a time-based artist stretching her limits into space. Her work criss-crosses media, but she will own performance as her discipline and point of departure. Recent works include: 'Black Russians' 2001 117min documentary video; 'Mi Companera' 2002 12min video; 'Xing Over' 2003 6hr performance/2.36min 3 channel audio piece; 'Invisible: episode 03 meet me in Okemah, Ok circa 1911' 2003 7day audio/video installation. En exilio in La Jolla California, she retains a post office

box in Nueva York and a storage space in Western Massachusetts. She is a gemini monkey born in the momentous year of 1968.

Ulrike Müller lives and works in Vienna/Austria and in New York. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and in 2002/2003 was a participant in the Whitney Independent Study Program. As an artist she is interested in a critical feminist perspective on social, political and economic developments and their impact on everyday life.

Valerie Tevere - Driven by discursive practices, Tevere,s work has looked to the public sphere as a condition and framework for inquiry and discourse. Recent projects permeate the urban environment as temporal public works and performances that rely upon structured yet spontaneous encounters with city inhabitants. Tevere,s solo and collaborative projects have been exhibited internationally at venues throughout North and South America and Europe. She was a fellow of the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2000, a recipient of a Mellon Humanities fellowship at the CUNY Graduate Center 2002/03, and, as part of the radio collaborative neuroTransmitter, is currently in-residence at Eyebeam Atelier, NYC.

<http://www.neurotransmitter.fm>

David Thorne lives and works in Los Angeles. His recent work has addressed the conditions of so-called globalization; notions of justice shot through with revenge; and memory practices in a moment of excessive rememorations. Current projects include "The Speculative Archive" (with Julia Meltzer); the ongoing series of photo-works, "Men in the News" (1991-present); and "Boom!" a collaboration with Oliver Ressler.

www.speculativearchive.org

Alex Villar lives and works in New York. His work draws from interdisciplinary theoretical sources and employs video, installation and photography. His individual and collaborative projects are part of a long-term investigation and articulation of potential spaces of dissent in the urban landscape that has often taken the form of an exploration of negative spaces in architecture. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Institute of International Visual Arts in London, Museu de Arte Moderna in Sao Paulo, Paco Imperial in Rio de Janeiro, Tommy Lund and Overgaden in Copenhagen, Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius, the Goteborg Konstmuseum in Sweden, Joanna Kamm in Berlin, Arsenal in Poland, Lichthaus in Bremen and Halle für Kunst in Luneburg, Exit Art, Stux Gallery, the Art Container and Dorsky Gallery in New York. He holds an MFA degree from Hunter College and is a 2000 graduate of the Whitney ISP. In 2003, he received a NYFA fellowship.

www.de-tour.org