FROM
FEMINIST INTERPRETATIONS OF MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY
EDS. DOROTHY OLKOWSKI AND GAIL WEISS
PENN STATE UNIV PRESS, 2006

9

Bodies Inside/Out: Violation and Resistance from the Prison Cell to *The Bluest Eye*

Laura Doyle

In Allen Feldman's study *Formations of Violence*, he quotes an Irish Republican Army prisoner in the Long Kesh prison who explains that "[t]he higher the beatings, the stronger we were. That was their weakness."[1] This is the paradoxical carnal logic I want to explore, first as it finds compacted expression within prisons and then as it floods out into the sexualized and race-d circuits of everyday domination. The work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty can help us to understand this paradoxical dynamic in which bodily vulnerability forms the ground of resistance. Specifically, Merleau-Ponty's account of the slippages and reversals in what he under-

stands as the chiasmatic intercorporeality of bodies can illuminate the perplexing way in which the dominated and gendered body not only marks "the terminal locus of power," as Feldman puts it, but also "defines the place for the redirection and reversal of power" (*FV*, 178). Here I bring together Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology with three narratives—two prison memoirs and one novel about rape—in order to better describe bodily resistance as it operates within the pressures of sexuality, race, and nation.

Taking my initial cues from the Long Kesh prisoners' descriptions, I will first of all consider the prison narratives of Lena Constante (*The Silent Escape*) and Jacobo Timerman (*Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*). These memoirs unfold the intercorporeal dynamics of violation and resistance, dramatizing what Constante calls the prisoner's "defense of the intimate being." The extreme situations endured by Timerman and Constante make highly visible the intercorporeal movements of power within which, in less extreme form, we all live. They thus prepare the way for my discussion of the everyday world of racialized sexual coercion as depicted in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*. Morrison powerfully traces the communal and corporeal effects of sexual violation for both men and women; and at the same time, in the very act of storytelling, she reengages a resistant, communal, and chiasmatic intercorporeality.

Breathing Space

The forms of domination practiced on Irish prisoners in the Long Kesh prison in the early 1980s make clear that gender inflects the violence of many prison situations. As in the 2004 abuses by American soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the guards and wardens at Long Kesh explicitly pursued practices that exposed inmates' bodily privacy, ranging from nudity to forced anal entry. Long Kesh inmates in turn resisted exactly through their willingness to risk this exposure and to use orifices as hiding places for contraband. Given that these maneuvers unfolded as part of the long colonial/anticolonial battle between Britain and Ireland (just as the Abu Ghraib abuses arose from a struggle over territory and oil), they give us a first glimpse of the way that bodily orifices and interiors serve as sites of struggle for the exterior, geopolitical competition over space—the

nation's land. While the prison dynamics themselves are not explicitly gendered, it is important to keep in mind that they occur within a situation in which victims of violence are regularly feminized, as indicated, for instance, by the paramilitary, street language, documented by Feldman, in which to beat or kill someone was to "knock his cunt in" or "give him the message," the latter phrase being slang for intercourse (*FV*, 69). More broadly, of course, insofar as such nationalist and imperial struggles have formed historically within discourses of manhood, the abuse and resistance of political prisoners becomes a gendered drama.

At Long Kesh, the world-riveting 1981 hunger strikes were preceded by a series of protests, starting with the "Blanket Protest," whereby the prisoners wore only blankets because they refused to wear prison garb after their change in status from political prisoners to common criminals. On shower day they were given two towels, one to wear to the showers and one to dry with while there. When this policy changed, and they were denied towels for the walk to the shower, the prisoners refused to shower—a decision perhaps also influenced by the fact that it was during showers that guards conducted invasive body searches.

Thus the "Dirty Protest" began—and so too a cycle of resistance and abuse that ultimately involved the bodies of the guards as well as of the prisoners. The prisoners' refusal to shower led the warden to deny them bathroom privileges, which led the prisoners to shit in the corners of their cells, which led the guards "mistakenly" to throw the prisoners' sheets and mattresses into the piles of shit while searching for contraband, which led the prisoners to throw the excrement out the window, which led the guards to board up the windows, which led the prisoners to spread the shit on the cell walls, which led the guards each day to move the prisoners and clean and whitewash the cells—until in the end the guards, smelling nearly as badly as did the prisoners, spent hours ridding themselves of the stench before going home.

In this cycle, dirt and shit invasively permeated the home lives of the guards just as it did the cell lives of the prisoners. Guards and prisoners entered a body deadlock in an extreme instance of what Sara Suleri calls "colonial intimacy."[2] As one prisoner put it, "From the moment we hit the H-block we had used our bodies as a protest weapon. It came from the understanding that the Brits were using our bodies to break us" (*FV*, 179). If the guards turned the prisoners' bodies inside out by making them squat over mirrors while they searched their anuses with metal instruments, the prisoners carried this logic further by turning their cells

into anuses replete with shit-covered walls. A guard entering the prisoner's cell in effect was forcibly made to enter the hole he had forcibly probed. The body had been turned inside out, the body's reversibility made both abject and empowering. In such a situation, far from being the essentialist ground of identity, the body is instead "a cumulative effect of exchanges between agonistic forces. . . . [The] exchange historicizes the subject, fixing it and unfixing it into determinate but manifold forms" (*FV*, 177). The body is metamorphic, most especially under duress. Strangely, the capacity for metamorphosis resides in an interior space that is also the opening to violation. In effect, prisoners and guards battle over the body's politically loaded and elusive inside/out ontology.

To put it more precisely, in violating the prisoners' interiority, the guards were forcing and displaying their access not only to the body's invisible interiors but also to its primary spatiality—the openness within the body that upholds and nourishes its exterior presence. One can rip into a body anywhere with a knife. To enter the body via given passages, passageways by which a body lives and which also create its vulnerability to entry and lead to the spaces it contains and which in fact are its inscape, this is something quite different. To shove a fist or instrument into the anus against the will of the prisoner: this is not merely to display mastery over the body (as mass) of the prisoner: it is to come between the parts of the fleshly person, to display mastery over the space contained and occupied by the body.

In these acts, I suggest, the aggressor forces himself into what Merleau-Ponty calls the chiasmus, the very ontological center which is nonetheless also the space of noncenter, of fission, of multiplicity, therefore of possibility, of parts touching to make something which is not merely them. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the productive effects of this chiasmatic noncenter of the person, casting it as that which brings the person into active, intercorporeal relation to her surround. For Merleau-Ponty, the experience of one-hand-touching-the-other-touching-it epitomizes the chiasmatic nature of our bodily being and relation to ourselves. In this experience, "[t]here is a circle of the touched and the touching, the touched takes hold of the touching,"[3] and yet this meeting of the touching hand and the touched hand is

> always imminent and never realized in fact. My left hand is always on the verge of touching my right hand touching the things, but I never reach coincidence; the coincidence eclipses at the moment of realization, and one of two things always occurs: either my right hand really passes over to the rank of the touched, but then its hold on the world is interrupted; or it retains its hold on the world, but then I do not really touch *it*—my right hand touching, I palpate with my left hand only its outer covering. (*VI*, 148)

At the same time, however, this slippage, or "écart," or "hiatus between my right hand touched and my right hand touching," is emphatically "not an ontological void, a non-being: it is spanned by the total being of my body, and by that of the world . . . : it is a new type of being, a being by porosity, pregnancy, or generality, and he before whom the horizon opens is caught up, included within it" (*VI*, 149). The chiasm is at once the vulnerability and the promise of embodiment in a world in which I come to myself from outside myself.

To forcibly enter the body's chiasmatic openings, its places of self-touching, is therefore to simultaneously expose and usurp embodiment's promise. As do all rapists, the Long Kesh guards forced violent touch from without on the ontology of constant benevolent touchings, interconnecting tissues, within. Such violence seeks not only to inflict pain but also to divide the person from her or his own possibilities, to seize the primal condition of possibility. It seeks to occupy, as an invading colonizer, the space of the chiasm—the ineffable site at which one body's two parts touch-and-in-touching-manifest-their-joined-separateness. And it seeks, by this intimate means, to occupy and circumscribe the social surround of the prisoner or the colonized community. Indeed, this view of bodily violation begins to explain the profound role that rape plays in territorial wars. On one level, of course, the rape of women by soldiers displays the latter's access to the attacked men's "possessions." But perhaps more deeply, rape serves as the ontological microcosm of the violent seizure of physical space that is war. Or, to put it differently, the geopolitical landscape is an extension of the bodily interior, in the intercorporeal sense that Merleau-Ponty theorizes, and so to enter one is to signal one's intention to enter the other. What Morrison makes clear, as we'll later see, is how battles between men over borders—in her story, racial borders—redounds upon the bodies of women.

Yet, by the same token, as all the texts I discuss show, the condition of chiasmatic slippage and possibility, which is space within surface, emerges as subject to no law of mere force. These works suggest that here,

perhaps, is where resistance lives. For, short of death, and sometimes regardless of desire, there is always an internal space—a breathing space quite literally as well as analogically; and while dense matter can be dominated, can be forced into this or that position, penetrated with this or that weapon, the breathing space cannot be. Paradoxically, this internal space is the most resistant phenomenon, even involuntarily, while also the most ethereal. In giving place to the dialectical chiasm within a body and between bodies, in its ontology as an opening and a hiddenness, this space both allows and eludes access. It holds the possibility of defiance and duplicity—of survival, of evasion of invasion.

Being Double

As evinced, that is, in the testimonies of human prisoners, and in novels such as Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the body is a reserve as well as an inescapable site of torture—exactly both at once in its doubleness. Both Lena Constante, in *The Silent Escape*, and Jacobo Timerman, in *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, describe this vexed, doubled condition. My discussion of their memoirs in the following few sections of this essay will focus not on sexual violation (which for the most part they did not suffer) but instead on the nature of the "breathing space" that domination attempts to control (a space that includes but is not limited to sexuality) and through which the person survives.

Lena Constante spent eight years in solitary confinement in Romania (before and after a puppet trial performed under Soviet rule, and before serving six more in group cells) and has titled her narrative of these years *The Silent Escape*. "In this dungeon of a cell for unending hours I became aware of my duality. I was two. For I was here and I saw myself here. I was two."[4] As becomes clear, her silent escape is not strictly from the cell, but from herself-in-the-cell.

As she awakens one winter morning to her unheated cement cubicle, on a thin straw mattress with no blanket, Constante comes to consciousness "[p]aralyzed by the cold. Aching all over. Reality holds me in its grip. A pincers. Breaking my bones." And yet she also awakens "[r]esisting the urge to give way. To give up. To give up even oneself. . . . The most difficult struggle. Against the most treacherous enemy. And the subtlest. Oneself" (*SE*, 17). Instead of giving up all of herself to her subtler self,

under this pressure from the other of herself, she struggles to "repudiate my body's 'me'" (*SE*, 9). Sometimes she apparently makes this duality a familiar, Cartesian mind-body one, with the "I" or "me" aligned with mind or spirit against body: "My body could only be here. Me, I could be elsewhere. My body didn't have the space to move its aching feet. But, *I* would grow wings. The wings of a bird. The wings of the wind. The wings of a star. And I would get away" (*SE*, 9). To pass the "86400 seconds a day that slowly twist all over [her] body" (*SE*, 15), she "escapes into" her "mind": in her eight years of solitary confinement she mentally "writes" several plays for the marionette stage (part of her work in normal life) and composes and memorizes countless lines of poetry. Thus far her experience would seem to conform to a simple dualistic metaphysics.

At first glance, the same seems true for Jacobo Timerman in his account of his experiences in clandestine Argentinean prisons, especially as reflected in what he calls his "withdrawal technique." On the one hand he "developed an attitude of absolute passivity" especially during interrogation and torture sessions: "I was told to undress. And I did so, passively. I was told, when I sat on a bed, to lie down. And, passively I did so."[5] He apparently, in the full phenomenal sense of that word, gives his seeable body over to his torturers and meanwhile, like Constante, he engages in tenacious "mental labor": imagining newspaper tasks, planning a bookstore run by himself and his wife, and writing essays or books in detail (*PWN*, 35). "I tried," he says, "through every available means, while inside my solitary cell, during interrogations, long torture sessions, and after sessions, when only time remained, all of time, time on all sides and in every cranny of the cell, time suspended on the walls, on the ground, in my hands, only time, I tried to maintain some professional activity, disconnected from the events around me" (*PWN*, 37). Timerman dissociates from his surroundings and from the body that inhabits them. Yet this "with-drawal" is, like Constante's, a leaving-behind that I would point out is deeply structured by or rooted in the material world he faces. The very word *with-drawal* indicates a pulling-with, a struggle *with* that assumes the countervailing presence of his body—a presence that must remain in order for him to return or, in other words, to survive the electric shocks and the blows. That is, to live *through* the torture he escapes into a mental elsewhere, but he does so to keep alive the body he must return to and on which his mental activity depends for *its* life. This splitting of himself from himself is the action of both his defeat and his victory. What first seems a triumphant and reductive dualism emerges

ultimately as a more lateral dialectic in which Timerman and Constante repeatedly preserve themselves via their very twoness, via the two leaves or aspects joining interior to exterior, lived-inside to lived-outside.

Constante herself admits that "[m]y body, my hand had to come to the rescue," since "[b]y itself my mind could not fill the seventeen hours of the day" (*SE*, 88). (She was not allowed to lie down or sleep between 5:00 AM and 10:00 PM) Most simply she institutes a morning routine of calisthenics; as a result, "[m]y mind became clearer" (*SE*, 88). More powerfully, she survives by way of the work she does with her hands. First, from bits of bone in her food, broom straw from her mattress, wire from the mattress frame, and teeth broken off her comb, she fashions a small sewing kit. For thread, she rips out the seams of all of her clothes and crafts spools to store it on. Then, with these handmade tools she makes a set of miniature dolls from soap and bits of her own clothing into tiny outfits, and she mends her years'-old clothing. Her working hands allow a fragile cooperation, or twoness, within the collapsed world of the cell. It is *hands* that "came to the rescue," which is not surprising if, indeed, they epitomize—exercise—the chiasm. They are the touch that "makes," whether in the sense of being tools that can physically work together (via their distinctness) or in the chiasmatic sense of continually discovering themselves to each other, knowing themselves as both object and subject, touched and touching, *almost* simultaneously.

So what first appears as a mind-body duality in Constante's "twoness" is in effect a shifting coupling, wherein one part is continually rescuing or bolstering the other, even if through a dynamic of repulsion or distancing of one from the other: one goes away, the other stays; one pursues an elsewhere, the other preserves, painfully, the here that the other must be able to come back to. Similarly in Timerman's case: although he does not describe any systematic physical routine, he tells of his habit of "moving a hand or leg and observing the movement, fixedly, in order to experience some sense of mobility" (*PWN*, 35). By this practice he too reintroduces bodily dialogue into the constricted cell world. He pursues a therapeutic restoration of twoness, of the capacity to move oneself and watch oneself moving, performed to counter the dissociation between parts that the torturers' work imposes. Timerman confesses his compulsion to repeat this moving and watching, and I would suggest that it fascinates him exactly because of the way it slips like a bike pedal on a loose chain—it stretches him across that "hiatus" of being, and in that stretching and slipping affirms an opening, a space for enactment, a condition of anticipation. A doubling and a future. Most essentially, it practices the withdrawal that for the terrorized body is survival, *is* resistance. This point seems important for the task of understanding the ways that many of us survive abuse, in hundreds of small, dissociative moments. It sheds light on the brave yet debilitating forms of endurance that develops within all kinds of social situations, ranging from coercion by domestic partners to schoolyard jostlings to street violence to anonymous rape, all the way to fascist forms of institutional power.

It is important to stress once more that the *almostness* of the simultaneity experienced in touching oneself or watching oneself moving is as crucial as the simultaneousness. For here lies the instability that is both dangerous and productive. The chiasmatic body lives a "reversibility [that] is always imminent and never realized in fact" (*VI*, 147). This imminence or almostness might involve a deferral, as Jacques Derrida would see it, but it is also a fullness, a pregnancy, as Derrida's own metaphors sometimes simultaneously hint.[6] It is a prompting that provides the invisible "hinge" of our being. In the case of Constante's "making," the almost is the space between hands within which combs are bent, matches are held to the tips of bone, and materials are sewn, literally, together.

Stripping the World of Things

The other side of this, of course, is that these objects worked by hands can be seized, and the world of the person lost within empty time. Constante's tools were all eventually confiscated, her anticipatory experience of potential and making repeatedly stolen away. Constante recovers, remakes, and survives again and again, but her moments of collapse reveal what it means to be defeated in prison or in situations of abuse: it is to have lost sight of this sustaining *premonition* of simultaneousness with oneself because the conditions for such a premonition—including the holding and working of objects—are either absent or under constant threat.

Here we might recall Edith Wyschogrod's reflections, in *Spirit in Ashes*, on what happens to the world of things, or the Heideggerian "dinge," in what she calls the "death-world" of the Nazi concentration camps. Acknowledging that "we live in the future through the accustomed series of references constituted by things," she reminds us how, for a prisoner

living in the "death-world" of a fascist prison, the confiscation of things is actually a theft of the prisoner's spatial *and* temporal holding structures. If it is the case that "[a]nticipation, the promise in things, constitutes the organic tie between life and death,"[7] then in the death world things are stripped of their promise. They are reduced to their death aspect, so that the life-death bridge they have constructed in the normal world disintegrates and they signify in this sense a further shutting down of the chiasm. When this happens, instead of hands inhabiting and working in the world of things, there is "only time" on the prisoner's "hands" and in the prisoner's space—as Timerman says, "time on all sides and in every cranny of the cell, time suspended on the walls, on the ground, in my hands, only time" (*PWN*, 37). Hunted out and held in the hands of the torturer, things become menacing, dangerous. They dramatize the void lining the chiasm, into which things drain away and hands become absurd, useless, relationless.

This is the crux of Timerman's experience when one day he notices that "a guard has my watch," while "during an interrogation another guard offered me a cigarette and lit it with my wife's lighter" (*PWN*, 4). Especially since Timerman well knows the kinds of sexualized abuse these captors are capable of (electric shocks were applied to his testicles), this proffering of his wife's lighter carries a hint of possible sexual violation, of her or of him. Timerman says "my" watch and "my" wife's lighter, but beneath this formulation lies a tension, a threat, a pull, a draining of that very my-ness. In fact, his watch is not any longer his, and his wife may be raped or dead. Both instances signify the "holding" of his intimate life by the terrorizing other. Things and bodies, and the promise they hold, can be confiscated, and in the process steal us away from ourselves. His wife's lighter is turned against him—so that the gesture of lighting is made to suggest the opposite of the tenderness it would normally involve. As Timerman leans toward the guard with his cigarette and the guard lifts his necessarily mocking hand toward Timerman, the "how" of history unfolds—the embodied irony of the way Timerman and the guard live history at odds with each other in the *dinge*, against each other together in the closeness of things. Trivial things knit together the strangling, inside-out world of torturing guard and tortured prisoner.

What Mikhail Bakhtin says of words is shown starkly here as equally true of things—they are at once mine and the others, vulnerable to another's seizure and use, transformed by this "theft" yet deceivingly identical in aspect across the transposition.[8] Things survive us but more

painfully they survive a seizing by a hostile other. This experience is confirmed by all kinds of prisoners: "No matter how many times I've been in prison the most horrible and degrading part of it is always the reception procedures. You're entered on a form, all the things you've got that are going to be taken off you are listed on another form, and then you have to sign. It makes you feel like you are signing your whole personality away. And you are too."[9] Or in the words of Ron G, sentenced to four years for possession of drugs: "First they write down all the details of you, then they take your personal possessions and seal them up in a packet, then they take your clothes off you and put them in a numbered box, and finally you end up standing there with just a towel round your waist. What they're doing is reducing your identity stage by stage, slowly wiping you out as a person until you're only one more piece of flesh with a name and a number" (*MI*, 26). We are as vulnerable to unmaking as this, and in such situations we quickly if unconsciously recognize that this "stripping" exposure of vulnerability is the beginning of domination. Thrown as we are into the world of space and a future, normally things anchor us. They can do so because things survive beyond us; we live from their power of sustained presencing. Yet things also give way, they give us away, betray us. For the prisoner, or the abused one, things mockingly beckon while holding back the possibility of her or his world-making through them.

Inhabiting the Folds

And yet, again, this doubleness, which makes things susceptible to seizure, *is* what they are: things—a presencing seen in common—give out this doubleness. Their double presencing—or rather perhaps their omnipresencing, in the sense of presence to all and any—makes it possible for things to be stolen back, hidden, hoarded, if one can find a "cranny" of the world not yet claimed by the guard and not therefore lost to the corrosive weight of prison time. Lena Constante discovers and elaborates this "promise" in things.

In fact Constante comes to live in an economy of hiding and hoarding—of living in the folds of the three-dimensional cell—and so reestablishes the carnal dialectic of the chiasm. She develops the habit of taking up any stray object that happens, rarely enough, across her path, even

before she knows what to do with it. On one of her changes of cell, she writes, "[T]he first thing I noticed was a sheet of paper stuck to the wall" listing an inventory of the contents of the room. "I was rich! I immediately took down the paper and, folding it eight times, hid it under the board of the bench, fitting it into a groove. Why? For no particular reason. A prisoner's reflex" (*SE*, 183). She later has the idea of pilfering some cigarette butts from the trash bin she passes when she is let out to empty her chamber pot and of using the paper to roll herself some new cigarettes. This instinct to seize a thing and hide it in a "groove" of the world expresses the importance for the prisoner of its nooks and crannies, or what Merleau-Ponty would call the folds of the world—its layered three-dimensionality into which we step as one more doubling three-dimensional presence. This perhaps explains what Constante discovers after she is given fabric to sew in a new lining for her coat and uses the leftover to make "a large bag full of pockets and compartments for each of my [sewing] things" (*SE*, 225). She tells us she later heard that "bags with many pockets are one of the prisoner's characteristic obsessions" (*SE*, 225)—as if the folds in the fabric provided covert ontological pockets for the being of the prisoner.

Constante's activities get woven, moreover, into a whole prison community's subversive efforts to create intra- and intercorporeal relation. This dimension of her experience points to the powerful potential of community—that is, of capacity for *inter*corporeal exchange to revive and protect the *intra*corporeal self-relation and so to set once more in motion the processes of active being. Constante eventually spends a number of years in a women's prison in which the inmates create a clandestine Morse code system by which they communicate through the walls—thus frustrating the surprise searches and other harassing activities of the guards as well as sharing information about families, friends, and fellow prisoners. They become so adept at communicating ever more precise messages that "the solidarity of our penitentiary was the staff's nightmare," since it was "primarily against the solidarity that the commandant and all the militia had to struggle" (*SE*, 213). The prisoners in effect seize power from the very material barriers of their imprisonment—the cell walls—turning them into portals of communication. In phenomenological terms, they make a virtue of the chiasmatic structure of the walls, playing on the walls' simultaneous construction of inside/outside and isolation/connection. Finally, it is by working this intercorporeal doubleness of the walls that they also protect and foster their intracorporeal acts of

making and concealing. Constante explains how a "forceful fist blow on the wall meant danger" and how it sets in motion a chain reaction of hidings from cell to cell: "The iron wires for knitting, the needles, the works in hand quickly vanished. The filched spoons, whose handles had been sharpened, the pieces of glass for cutting fabric, all the thousand little things prohibited by stupidity or spite were hidden in the straw of the mattress, under the slats around the floor, in who knows what other hiding place determined by ingenious necessity" (*SE*, 211). Thus do the prisoners remake the cell in the image of the chiasm, generating a "making" both within and across it. If, in her last comment about "ingenious" hiding places, Constante is discreetly referring to the body's orifices, she signals again the interrelation between the body's inside/out ontology and the world's bounded spaces. These wall-traversing, intercorporeal activities extend the self-constituting work with hands that keeps flexible and open the hinge of the prisoner's being. The prisoners resist and survive through a very precise "working (in) the in-between," participating in "an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another," to borrow words from Hélène Cixous's "Laugh of the Medusa" that resonate suggestively with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.[10] As Constante concludes, "The walls of my cell no longer separated me from the world. On the contrary" (*SE*, 246).

Here, and perhaps even more clearly in Timerman's encounter with another prisoner, to which I will turn next, the dynamic is one in which the chiasm of the person works together with the reversible, inside/out space of the surround, and vice versa, in a continuous circle.

The Horizon Inside Out, and Tender

As Constante's description of intercorporeal resistance shows, and as Merleau-Ponty emphasized, things presence themselves and we comprehend their presence ourselves within a multidimensional span, a horizon. The horizon may be understood as space buttressed, held, made concrete by the three-dimensionality in which one thing obscures another with its fullness—the tree, a house; the house, a field—and another behind or beyond that, on and on into a distance manifested in those things and in the spaces between them. By this means, things "promise" a fullness, depth, and continuity. Our perception of this inhabited horizon tells us

that we match the world, belong in it and to it. The invisible beyond our view can be apprehended as a threat and yet the horizon that signals toward that beyond is also lived as the welcome limit of our view, welcome because it assures us of our positionality in the world, of a place within its limits and contours, of a dimensionality equal to that of things. The ability to hide things rests on this dimensional, horizonal world, and this partly explains the "prisoner's reflex" that Constante describes.

Yet this horizon, too, the guards and torturers aim to close. They work—it is literally sometimes part of their job—to strip the prisoner of any horizon within which to place him- or herself. The guards' attempts to contain the women's covert communication is one instance of this work. In an earlier instance, the guards cut down two acacia trees outside Constante's window to which she has become attached; her physical collapse and broken feeling on this occasion registers the effects of this horizon-closing work. Timerman experiences a more radical shutdown of the horizon as well as a more singular, if fleeting, reopening of it. His depiction of this experience gives further insight into the interdependence of the within and the between, or intracorporeal chiasm and intercorporeal world—and into the simultaneous vulnerability and power created by this interdependence.

At the opening of his book, Timerman the prisoner, and therefore we the readers, have no idea where he is. He was blindfolded, his hands tied behind his back, his body shoved to the floor of a car for the transport to this place. The room into which he has been deposited has no light, no window. He has discovered its dimensions by holding out his arms, finding he cannot stretch out his legs when he lies down on the cot. There is only a peephole in the door, through which the guards speak roughly or mockingly and which is usually kept shut. A narrow outline of light marks its edges, dispersing a shadowy grayness into the dark cell. This prisoner has no visible surround. His "thrownness," in Heideggerian terms, is into a "being-alongside" without a horizon. His cell exists in a vacuous space of fear.

One day the peephole inexplicably is left open against the rules. Timerman the prisoner is drawn powerfully to the bright square of light and presses his forehead against the cold steel door. He peers out at a hall blasted with light and at two doors facing his. The effect is ontological: "What a sensation of freedom! An entire universe added to my Time, that elongated time which hovers over me oppressively in the cell, Time, that dangerous enemy of man [*sic*], when its existence, duration, and eternity are virtually palpable. . . . I try to fill myself with the visible space. So long have I been deprived of a sense of distance and proportion that I feel suddenly unleashed" (*PWN*, 5).

In the lightless cell-world, "Time" had become dimensionless, obliterating. The shadowless lack of an "open" in the surround of Timerman's cell had accomplished a shutness and flatness within, so that when a horizon takes shape around him in the hallway, his interior suddenly opens up as well, providing a space within which he can see and position himself. The prisoner is "unleashed" into a world of "distance and proportion." Timerman tries to fill himself with space, to eat it hungrily, as if to refill the yawning emptiness of spaceless Time. So fully intertwined is the body with its surround that collapsing the external surround closes off the body, and an opening of the surround likewise relaunches the body.

And so, as we can begin to imagine, a friendly human figure appearing within that hallway would extend the drama, add another fold to the "visible space" of the hall, which is already now intertwined with the interior of the prisoner. Timerman looks out trembling, wondering if the guards will at any moment poke his eyes or punish his "hungry" looking—and in this way intrude on this extension of his interior into that hallway. But instead Timerman registers in a flash that "[*h*]*e* is doing the same. I suddenly realize that the peephole in the door facing mine is also open and that there's an eye behind it" (*PWN*, 5). He fears that even this is a setup of the guards and pulls back. He waits "for some Time, more Time, and again more Time. And then return to the peephole. *He* is doing the same" (*PWN*, 5).

Meeting another's eye—meeting it in that exterior space that has been revealed as a crucial holding-structure for Timerman's interior relation to himself—now ramifies his self-relation into an other-relation. Accordingly, at this point the narrative pauses, the page holds an extra white space, and the text then pivots from implicitly addressing the reader to openly addressing, for the following four pages, the person in the cell across the hall, as if revisiting a lover: "And now I must talk about you, about that long night we spent together, during which you were my brother, my father, my son, my friend. Or, are you a woman? If so, we passed that night as lovers" (*PWN*, 5–6). Timerman's heteronormative assumptions aside, it is fitting that he compares this meeting to an encounter between lovers.

Timerman admits that "only one possible outgoing act would have

occurred to me: looking out, ceaselessly looking. But you unexpectedly stuck your chin in front of the peephole. Then your mouth, or part of your forehead" (*PWN*, 7). Also "[y]ou blinked. I clearly recall you blinking. And that flutter of movement proved conclusively that I was not the last human survivor on earth amid this universe of torturing custodians" (*PWN*, 6). Timerman credits his friend with inventing games and so "creating Movement in our confined world." These movements stand out to him precisely for being "nonviolent, [different] from the ones employed when I was dragged or pushed by the guards" (*PWN*, 6). "You'd suddenly move away, then return. At first I was frightened. But then I realized you were recreating the great human adventure of lost-and-found—and I played the game with you. Sometimes we'd return to the peephole at the same time, and our sense of triumph was so powerful we felt immortal. We were immortal" (*PWN*, 6).

Most powerfully of all, the friend recreates the tenderness of touch: "Suddenly you put your nose in front of the peephole and rubbed it. It was a caress, wasn't it? Yes, a caress. You'd already incorporated so many levels of experience into our captivity, yet persisted in the restoration of our humanity. At that moment you were suggesting tenderness, caressing your nose, gazing at me. You repeated it several times. A caress, then your eye. Another caress, and your eye" (*PWN* 9). This caress with the hand comes to Timerman's "rescue" as Constante's own hands did for her. Yet in this case the touch is a doubling of the intracorporeal and intercorporeal (as well as an affirmation of Merleau-Ponty's intuition about the reversibility, or intertwining, of the palpable and the visible). The prisoner touches her- or himself in a tender way, but here that touching is explicitly (in Timerman's perception) performed for another, as if to touch himself or herself tenderly under these circumstances were to touch Timerman. Timerman's previous experience of feeling his interior awakened within the horizon of the hallway sets up this poignant convergence of the within and the between, the intra- and intercorporeal. After the radical deprivation of existing within a lightless, collapsed chiasm, this touch performed within a freshly opened horizon that pristinely holds nonviolent movement might as well be a stroking of Timerman's most intimate parts. He and the other indeed become lovers in this sense. The prisoners' intersubjectively performed self-touching expresses what Constante calls, in her reflections on survival in a fascist prison, "the defense of the intimate being" (*SE*, 127).

Thus do prisoners become extremely sensitive to what Elaine Scarry calls the making and unmaking of the world. Within a fascist prison, inmates strive to sustain dimensionality and the chiasmatic hiatus otherwise generated by a "tender" dialectic of the within and the between. Meanwhile, the sawing down of trees and stealing of lighters and locking up in unlighted cells all aim to foreclose this "defense of the intimate being" and to replace it with a totalitarian law without referents, depriving the prisoner of a legitimating external world other than that created by the torturer in the prison.

Timerman is prompted by his experience to see how the making of the world extends even to the scope of nationhood. He perceives what Benedict Anderson would later write a book about—that the nation itself, the cause for which all these acts are supposedly performed, is on the contrary constituted by these acts. In suggesting that the course of history in Argentina is being made at this very moment and *could* be made differently, Timerman comments, "Argentina as an entity does not yet exist: it must be created" (*PWN*, 17). Meanwhile he deftly reveals how bodies and the accustomed things through which we construct our world bear the potentially body-breaking weight of history. In his account of the watch and lighter confiscated from him, he mentions that "[g]old Rolex watches and Dupont cigarette lighters were almost an obsession with the Argentine forces during that year of 1977" (*PWN*, 5). He gestures here toward the surrounding economy of "brand names" in which these commodities circulate, revealing how the prison activities of confiscation and world-unmaking emerge within the uneven and American-dominated market and the competitive flaunting of American brand names and prestige. This is the political-intercorporeal drama of persons and things, nations and watches. Timerman quickly traverses, through these things, the whole terrain they map out, signify, and sustain, from the wife's hand to the resource-seizing, geopolitical contests that have created "Argentina" and its fascism in the first place.

Thus, the unmaking and remaking of a person, by the guard and the prisoner, is the making of history. In light of Judith Butler's work on the ways that genders are likewise constituted by continuous acts rather than essences, we can begin to see the implications of these prisoners' insights for the making of the sexual order of things. And, as Toni Morrison makes clear, the larger political processes of (un)making and the local or domestic dynamics of sexual (un)making are not just parallel processes, they are interdependent processes.

The Seizure of Sexuality

Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* quite explicitly unveils the way that racial and sexual economies unfold together in homes and neighborhoods. She tracks the effects of race's invasion of intimacy and sexuality. Her story of a working-class Black family in the mid-twentieth-century United States—framed by epigraphs about the perfect "Dick and Jane" white family that mimics a first-grade reading primer—carries us into a nonprison, yet still bordered, world that extends the dynamics narrated by Constante and Timerman. She reveals the "defense of the intimate being" forced upon the young girl named Pecola.

Thirteen-year-old Pecola Breedlove enters the world of the United States under the sign of "ugly." Even within her immediate African American community, this ugliness "made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike." In school, "she was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk," and her teachers never even "glance[d] at her" (45). "Thrown, in this way," as the narrator explains, into a sense of herself as insurmountably ugly, "she would never know her beauty." Instead "she would only see what there was to see: the eyes of other people" (47). Because she does not see others-seeing-her, Pecola cannot see herself. Closed off from others, she desires a shutdown of herself—sometimes asking God to "[p]lease make me disappear" (45).

The problem is magnified when Pecola moves among white people, as when she visits Mr. Yacobowski's Fresh Vegetable Meat and Sundries store to buy three Mary Jane candies: "Somewhere between retina and object, vision and view, his eyes draw back, hesitate, and hover. . . . She looks up at him and sees the vacuum where curiosity ought to lodge. And something more. The total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. . . . Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people." This refused visibility that Pecola faces is the cruel counterpart to the pure tenderness of exchanged gazes between Timerman and his fellow inmate. This refusal arouses in her an "inexplicable shame" as she leaves the store (50). Although, for a moment "[a]nger stirs and wakes in her; it opens its mouth and like a hot-mouthed puppy, laps up the dredges of her shame" giving her a momentary sense of "reality and presence," soon the "shame wells up again, its muddy rivulets seeping into her eyes" (50). Morrison's language captures the permeating bodily effects, from the inside out, of this denial of intercorporeal exchange.

The refusing gaze of racism might seem simply excluding rather than invasive. But because of the chiasmatic condition of existence, this rejection accomplishes an inner collapse. Morrison traces how it destroys Pecola's entry into her external world and in turn cripples an interior self-relation. Before her arrival at Mr. Yacobowski's store, Pecola feels pleasurable sensations of emplacement and anticipation. These are catalyzed, first of all, by touch—that is, the sensation of the "three pennies in her shoe—slipping back and forth between the sock and the inner sole . . . a sweet endurable even cherished irritation, full of promise and delicate security" (47). The pennies' rhythmic and shifting pressure not only registers her weight and movement in the world (captured in the narrative's description of an exchange between "sock" and "inner sole"), but it also heralds a future. The pennies create a sense of "promise" and temporal "security" as well as the promise of an economic "purchase" on the world. Further, like Constante's attachment to the acacia trees, Pecola's situatedness issues from her relation to the "inanimate things she saw and experienced," such as the "sidewalk crack shaped like a Y" and "the dandelions at the base of the telephone pole" that she looks forward to seeing on her walk to the store. These things, as the narrator explains, "were real to her. She knew them. They were the codes and touchstones of the world, capable of translation and possession. She owned the crack that made her stumble; she owned the clumps of dandelions. . . . And owning them made her part of the world, and the world a part of her" (48–49).

This dialectic of world and self falls apart, however, in the aftermath of her encounter with Mr. Yacobowski. The closed door of his eyes now shutters the entire world. As she passes the dandelions on her return home, "[a] dart of affection leaps out from her to them. But they do not look at her and do not send her love back" (50). So Pecola settles for eating the candies with the wrapper picture of the little girl with blonde hair and blue eyes, since "to eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane" (50). Her agency has been reduced to this slipping of a candy into the mouth, a small, fraught decision to imbibe the world that rejects her.

The culminating scene of Pecola's unmaking is of course the moment when her father, Cholly Breedlove, rapes her. Before we turn to this

scene, however, it is crucial to see how Morrison leads up to it. She narrates how Cholly himself has been undone by a racialized gaze, precisely in his moment of entry into the world of embraces, of sexuality. And in the process she draws the reader into both sides of this excruciating encounter between father and daughter. She calls readers to extend ourselves, intercorporeally, across the violated space where father and daughter meet, and at the same time, across the space we might wish to install between ourselves and such violations.

Abandoned at birth by his mother, rescued from the junk heap near the railroad tracks by his Aunt Jimmy, and raised by her until he is a teenager, Cholly's symbolic moment of entry into the adult world occurs on the day of Aunt Jimmy's funeral. While the adults are drinking and eating, Cholly and a girl named Darlene wander off to a wild-muscadine vineyard nearby. Their budding intimacy is teased forward by their eating of the "too new, too tight" grapes. The grapes themselves embody the pleasures of anticipatory time insofar as "the restraint, the holding off, the promise of sweetness [in the grapes] that had yet to unfold, excited them more than full ripeness would have done" (145). They begin to fling grapes at each other, finally falling down in the grass to catch their breath. As Darlene begins to worry about her grape-stained dress and disheveled hair, Cholly "rose to his knees facing her" to retie the ribbon in her hair. Darleen "put her hands under his open shirt and rubbed the damp tight skin" (147). Soon they are making love and Cholly finds that "their bodies began to make sense to him." He feels "the excitement collecting inside him" until—"just as he felt an explosion threaten"—Darlene cries out in fear. For two white men have discovered them and are standing behind Cholly with guns and flashlights. Cholly leaps up, pulling on his trousers, but the men laugh and order him to "[g]et on wid it, nigger," as they watch.

Both Cholly's and Darlene's bodies shut down in what follows, now blocked from encountering each other with any desire or kindness. Their lovemaking becomes a bitter mockery and their gazes cannot alight. As he drops back to his knees and the men snigger and shine their flashlights on his backside, "[t]here was no place for Cholly's eyes to go" (148). Likewise, Darlene "had her head averted, her eyes staring out of the lamplight into the surrounding darkness and looking almost unconcerned, as though they had no part in the drama taking place around them" (148). Their dissociative responses recall Constante's and Timerman's withdrawal techniques: Darlene "put her hands over her eyes as Cholly began to simulate what had gone on before. He could do no more than make-believe" (148).

They are forced into a mimicry of embrace exactly at the moment when the energy "collecting inside" presses outward. As that outward reach collapses, the inscape of Cholly's body (in whose point of view we remain) is colonized—or, as the narrator describes it, "The flashlight wormed its way into his guts and turned the sweet taste of muscadine into rotten fetid bile" (149). The next day, "the vacancy in his head was like the space left by a newly pulled tooth still conscious of the rottenness that had once filled it" (150). And now, too, since "directing his hatred to the hunters . . . would have destroyed him," Cholly turns his hatred toward Darlene, "the one who bore witness to his failure, his impotence . . . whom he had not been able to protect, to spare, to cover from the round moon glow of the flashlight. . . . The loathing [of her] that galloped through him made him tremble" (150–51). Exposed to the mocking light of whites, and caught up in the gender demands for male "potency," Cholly's impulse to reach out toward Darlene becomes a drive to purge upon her the weakening bitterness inside of him. This invasion of Cholly and Darlene's sexuality by white people and these gendered effects of that invasion distill, of course, an entire Atlantic-American history.

Morrison thus narrates the racialized seizure of the intimate encounter. In the rest of the novel, she tracks the chain reactions that follow from this seizure, the force of its digressionary currents branching through bodies over time and into the future. She reveals the dangerous mingling of race, sex, and hatred as they move within these historical currents, especially as they shape Cholly's relations with the women in his family.

Interestingly, two key scenes of these relations—one with his wife, Pauline, and the other with his daughter, Pecola—begin with tenderness, a tenderness provoked by the women's own self-touching gestures. It is as if Cholly is drawn to that experience he long ago lost, drawn to these primal self-touchings that momentarily lift him out of his habitual state as a grown man—in which "nothing, nothing, interested him. . . . Not himself, not other people" (160). The woman who becomes his wife, Pauline, is lame in one foot—a trait hinting at her own chiasmatic handicap. When he sees her for the first time, he is walking down a country road, approaching her from behind. She is leaning on a fence with the lame foot raised and scratching the back of the other leg. "It was such a small and simple gesture, but it filled him then with a wondering softness" (162). Pauline, we learn, has been brooding on her lack of prospects for

any kind of future but as she hears a man whistling and approaching down the road, she begins to smile and fantasize that maybe she has a future after all. Provoking this momentary hope in Pauline, and in effect taking up and extending Pauline's self-touching with his own touching of her, Cholly steps up behind her and bends down to "tickl[e] her broken foot and [kiss] her leg" (115). As Pauline is "holding fast to the break in somber thoughts, she felt something tickling her foot" (115). Drawn to Pauline via her *intra*corporeal self-relation, he supplements it with his intercorporeal touching, carrying them into a future together, as husband and wife.

But Cholly's own unhinged chiasm makes this future go wrong. His tenderness "would not hold," as Morrison later puts it (163). After a few years, he becomes a drunkard, a "dangerously free" wanderer (159), and finally he is "rendered . . . totally dysfunctional [by] the appearance of children" (161). As the narrator explains, "[H]aving never watched any parent raise himself, he could not even comprehend what such a relationship should be" (160). Instead, "he reacted to [his children], and his reactions were based on what he felt at the moment" (161).

And so Cholly repeats history, but with a difference. Arriving home drunk one afternoon and seeing his thirteen-year-old daughter, Pecola, standing at the sink washing dishes, he feels both revulsion and love. Watching "her back hunched that way; her head to one side as though crouching from a permanent and unrelieved blow," he feels a surge of tenderness at the same time that "guilt and impotence rose together in a bilious duet" (161). He anticipates that "[i]f he looked into her face, he would see those haunted, loving eyes" and "the hauntedness would irritate him—the love would move him to fury." For "[h]ow dare she love him? Hadn't she any sense at all? What was he supposed to do about that?" (161). And so, as with Darlene, "his hatred of her slimed in his stomach."

Then, "she shifted her weight and stood on one foot scratching the back of her calf with her toe," mirroring Pauline's gesture nearly two decades earlier (162). Now, "the tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter." Only Morrison's words can convey the scene that follows:

> Crawling on all fours toward her, he raised his hand and caught the foot in an upward stroke. Pecola lost her balance and was about to careen to the floor. Cholly raised his other hand to her hips to save her from falling. He put his head down and nibbled at the back of her leg. . . . The rigidness of her shocked body, the silence of her stunned throat, was better than Pauline's easy laughter had been. The confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals, giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. Surrounding all of this lust was a border of politeness. He wanted to fuck her—tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear. His soul seemed to slip down into his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made—a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon. (162–63)

It is especially in her mingling of embrace and rape that Morrison's honesty has the most to show us—so that we admit how the problem is not so much that power forestalls or destroys intimacy but that power and intimacy feed on the same fleshly foods, launch from the same chiasmatic openings, and so confuse and destroy us by their mingling there together. Thus in the moment when this father-rapist's "soul seemed to slip down into his guts and fly out into her," the raped daughter is emptied of herself, deprived of that interior breathing space which now deflates like a punctured circus balloon at a deserted carnival. The impulses of reaching, touching, and holding each other that arise within the open of our-bodies-in-the-world merge here with the pressured need to invade, collapse, and violate.

Morrison not only organizes her novel around this event in which a "hatred mixed with tenderness" (161) implodes the chiasmatic world, but she also suggests that this event thrusts both Cholly and Pecola "outdoors" into a state of homelessness. Deprived of a self-constituting interior space, they can occupy no place. Earlier in the novel, the first-person narrator and neighbor of Pecola, Claudia (the novel is narrated in first and third person, in alternating sections, conjuring a world seen from both within and without), has commented on the meaning of being "put outdoors," as Cholly and his family had been when, earlier in the year, he beat up his wife and burned the house down. "Outdoors," Claudia explains, signifies the lack of home and marked "the end of something, an irrevocable physical fact," by which one was "catapulted beyond the

reach of human consideration" (18). Cholly and Pecola enter this state more irrevocably when, after the rape, Cholly disappears into an unknown outdoors and, after she gives birth to a baby who soon dies, Pecola spends her days in a state of madness roaming the neighborhood, "plucking her way between the tire rims and the sunflowers," lost among the things of the world (205).

Then, too, in a sort of negative intercorporeality, Pecola's exile from the world of places and things provides her community's leverage for a sense of security. By contrast to her outdoor placelessness, they occupy a safe, inside position. She becomes the enabling pariah of the community. As Claudia explains retrospectively: "All of us—all who knew her—felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health. . . . Even her waking dreams we used—to silence our own nightmares. And she let us—and thereby deserved our contempt. We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength" (205). If the moment when a guard lights the cigarette of a tortured inmate with the inmate's wife's lighter epitomizes the way that the ontological stripping of a prisoner accrues toward the making of a fascist nation, then Morrison's novel reveals how the rape of a girl can provide the absent yet organizing center of a community—and so remake a racist nation.

The Reach, the Reader

Both Morrison's novel and Timerman's narrative end with scenes of witnessing that, ultimately, beckon to readers.[11] Calling us into their tortured worlds even as they register our safe distance from them, they implicate us in these national, fascist, race-d, and gendered economies of domination. At the end of his narrative, Timerman stands witness in an excruciating way: by being present at the event of someone else's torture and imminent death. He is that involuntary agent whose very presence to himself is a kind of uncalled-for being that he must nonetheless acknowledge. He describes this experience as the ultimate one that makes his past in the cell ever present, even now as he writes. Cunningly enough, he frames his recollection as a question to the reader. As will Morrison, he thus "unleashes" this condition, leaving it for us to carry.

> Have you ever looked into the eyes of another person, on the floor of a cell, who knows that he's about to die though no one has told him so? . . .
>
> I have many such gazes imprinted upon me. . . .
>
> Those gazes, which I encountered in the clandestine prisons of Argentina and which I've retained one by one, were the culminating point, the purest moment of my tragedy.
>
> They are here with me today. And although I might wish to do so, I could not and would not know how to share them with you. (*PWN*, 164)

The gap between the protected reader and Timerman, which makes those gazes unshareable, is paradoxically our only connection to him: to see that gap is, in another way, to be witness to the rupturability of being, the shutdown of the within and the between that he has so absolutely experienced. In fact, it is exactly this gap between us and him that Timerman calls us to witness. Because if another person, a reader, witnesses that gap, then, with its dependence on the within and between, the chiasm again opens out and begins to move, to reinhabit time and space, moving Timerman toward a place with a future. This witnessing to which we are called engages us once more in the operations of ontopolitical making, of gender, race, and nation—by the very act of reading.

The Bluest Eye closes with a similar gesture. In doing so it implicitly addresses itself to U.S. readers, asking us to recognize this legacy of violation at the center of the nation. In the novel's penultimate concluding sentence, Claudia remarks that "[i]t's too late" to do anything about the conditions that created Pecola's madness. Yet she adds one more, quietly qualifying sentence: "At least on the edge of my town, among the garbage and the sunflowers of my town, it's much, much, much too late" (206). In counterpoint to the emphasis on "much" too late, the repetition of "my town" implicitly invites readers to reflect on *theirs*, to notice the difference, and to ask if it is too late altogether. Accordingly, Claudia's comment reopens the question of the future, registering the lapse of time and the difference of position that, if acknowledged, could, paradoxically, lift us, together, back into the open-ended and intercorporeal motions of tender, mutual making. Morrison's Pecola fails to recover, Timerman

never forgets, and Constante only partially escapes. Yet in naming these failures, Morrison, Timerman, and Constante leave *us* thrown open and called out. They arouse the desire for another future, another nation, and another surround for intimacy.

Notes

1. Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 229. This work is hereafter cited as *FV*.

2. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 23.

3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 143. Hereafter cited as *VI*.

4. Lena Constante, *The Silent Escape: Three Thousand Days in Romanian Prisons*, trans. Franklin Philip (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 9. Hereafter cited as *SE*.

5. Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, trans. Tony Talbot (New York: Knopf, 1981), 34. Hereafter cited as *PWN*.

6. See, for instance, the last words of "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 293.

7. Edith Wyschogrod, *Spirit in Ashes: Hegel, Heidegger, and Man-Made Mass Death* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 11–12. Hereafter cited as *SA*.

8. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 276–77.

9. *The Man Inside: An Anthology of Writing and Conversational Comment by Men in Prison*, ed. Tony Parker (London: Joseph, 1973), 35. Hereafter cited as *MI*.

10. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *New French Feminisms*, ed. Isabelle de Courtrivon and Elaine Marks (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 254.

11. For this discussion I am indebted to Emmanuel Levinas's meditations on witnessing in *Otherwise Than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1991), 54.