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Corporeal Cartography: The Body as a Map of Place-Based Relationships

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The Body as a Map of Place-Based Relationships

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By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Corporeal Cartography:

The Body as a Map of Place-Based Relationships

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Master of Arts in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Ursula K. Heise, Chair

The drama *Heroes and Saints* and film *Fresh Kill* respond to local and global environmental justice issues and generate a corporeal cartography that maps the relationships between place and the body through embodied memory, desire, movement and machine. These bodily maps make environmental injustice visible and intervene to form an alternant future. The texts thus contribute to a canon of activist-oriented literature and participate in a conversation about the agential capacity of literature to expose injustice and activate an intervention. *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* pose an interest in cartography and the body, and I draw on the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to frame the body as a map of place-based relationships. Deleuzian theory posits the map as that which can form rhizomatic connections on a singular plane, and the body functions like a map. Queerness, gender and race shape embodied experience in my primary texts, and this positionality informs the bodily map. Corporeal cartography, then, builds connections and interruptions to generate becomings that can change the future.

The thesis of Addie Cherice Shrodes is approved.

Allison Carruth

King-Kok Cheung

Ursula K. Heise, Committee Chair

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Contents

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Introduction

Cartographer Charles Joseph Minard's famous 1885 map of Napoleon Bonaparte's failed campaign to Russia graphically represents the movement and death of bodies across space. A brown bar illustrates the movement of dwindling troops from France to Russia; the dramatically thinner and thinning black bar below maps the deadly return of troops to France. While historical bodies constitute the map, it abstracts the death of these troops across space rather than maps the soldiers' embodied experience in place. Bodies become a vanishing bar on the map. In contrast, *Heroes and Saints*, a 1994 drama by Cherrie Moraga and *Fresh Kill*, a 1994 film written by Jessica Hagedorn and directed by Shu Lea Cheang, draw upon cartography to foreground the body *in* place. The texts critique maps that obscure embodied experience, and they formulate speculative maps I will call *corporeal cartography.* The body maps its place-based relationships. The texts frame this cartography as a generative intervention in social and environmental justice issues that has the capacity not only to build connections but also to create alternative futures. They thus contribute to a vigorous conversation about the capacity of literature to intervene in knowledge production and extant social systems. While Minard's map charts historical passing, a school of cartographical theory foregrounds the agential ability of maps to construct speculative futures. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theory of rhizomatic maps as that which build connections to generate becomings will be central to my analysis of cartographical possibility. The drama by Moraga and film by Cheang represent the experience of queered, gendered and raced bodies in place, and the corporeal cartography the texts posit is thus informed not only by queer and critical race theory but also by the positionality of bodies and embodied experience rather than the 'body' as such. Bodies do not become graphical bars on a map in their work; bodies rather assert their social, material and technological corporeality. While the texts

document the deaths and damages of environmental injustice, and Minard's map charts the death toll of Napoleon's march to Russia, Moraga and Cheang depart dramatically from Minard. They foreground the dynamic and reciprocal relationship of the body to place.

Heroes and Saints and *Fresh Kill* participate in a canon of activist-oriented environmental justice literature, and many scholars speculate on the capacity for such literature to activate an intervention. The texts I examine in this thesis explicitly respond to social and environmental justice issues in the United States and abroad. *Heroes and Saints* responds to and participates in the United Farm Workers' and laborers' struggle against toxic pesticides in California's Central Valley. *Fresh Kill*, produced in the same year of the drama's publication, reacts to global capital's transnational dumping of toxic waste and media proliferation. Moraga and Cheang frame their productions not only as engaged with these issues; they also frame the work as interventions. They thus take part in a conversation scholars have established about the agency of literature to intervene in environmental justice issues. The conversation arguably arose with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, which describes the detrimental effects of pesticides on ecology, and it has since inducted a global canon of literature invested in social and environmental activism. Notable authors in the canon now include Moraga, Linda Hogan, Arundhati Roy, Toni Cade Bambara, Zakes Mda, Ana Castillo, Karen Tei Yamashita, Amitav Ghosh and Mayra Montero, to list a few. Many academics highlight literature's contribution to the public understanding and scholarly study of environmental racism. Ecocritic Julie Sze writes: "Literature offers a new way of looking at environmental justice, through visual images and metaphors, not solely through the prism of statistics. This new way of looking references the 'real' problems of communities struggling against environmental racism, and is simultaneously liberated from providing a strictly documentary account of the contemporary world" (163).

Beyond Sze's attention to literary images and metaphors, I want to emphasize her recurrent use of the term 'looking.' These scholars and writers are often invested in making visible experiences left unrecorded in mainstream media or social science accounts of environmental racism. However, scholars and writers employ literature to do more than complete the picture and extend the knowledge of environmental racism; many also see it as an agential intervention in issues with the efficacy to create change. Bruce Allen, for instance, writes of author Ishimure Michiko of Japan, "A recurring message in all her works has been that we need the assistance of an evolving, living tradition of stories if we are to withstand the destructive forces of modernization" (156). Literature, in these conversations, can extend the visibility of environmental justice issues and intervene in the problems to instigate change.

The centrality of intervention and visibility to environmental justice literature establishes a natural relationship to mapping. Cartography is an inherently visual medium meant to graphically represent and shape spatial relationships. Indeed, cartographer James Turner shifts from a historical emphasis on the facticity of cartographical representation to an interest in what change maps can generate: "mappings do not *represent geographies* or ideas; rather they *effect* their actualization" (225). Turner thus describes maps as "an active agent of cultural intervention" (217). The language of intervention echoes that of environmental justice literature, but it is important to address the fraught imperialist history of cartography in which structures of power have employed maps to impose control, bolster xenophobic and racist ideologies and exploit resources. Postcolonial scholar Suzanne Conklin Akbari argues that European maps of Islamic countries and Asia in the Middle Ages, for instance, "anatomize, categorize, and hierarchize space" (14). Literature, of course, is also rife with histories of control, including spatial control. Akbari posits that medieval texts as well as maps "reconstruct the contours of an

imaginative geography whose status is not that of a universally accepted 'truth,' but rather a discourse that is continually in the process of being articulated and thus creating, as it were, its own truth" (14). Prose texts, then, also construct a spatial order that shapes how readers imagine and act in the world. While structures of power have used maps and prose geography to control space, Turner aims to focus rather on the "ways in which mapping acts may emancipate potentials, enrich experiences and diversify worlds" (213). I turn with him to the agency of cartographical intervention to resist and interrupt structures of power. In this project, I also invoke, with Turner, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of maps versus traces. A map functions like a rhizome to *build* connections across a plane of consistency, while a trace serves to *represent* linear and extant relationships. Turner elaborates upon the differences with an emphasis on the generative potential of the map: "The distinction here is between mapping as equal to what is ('tracing') and mapping as equal to what is *and* to what is not yet. In other words, the unfolding agency of mapping is most effective when its capacity for description also sets the conditions for new eidetic and physical worlds to emerge" (214). Deleuzian cartography builds connections in order to generate a new present and position toward the future, a process that Deleuze and Guattari frame with the crucial term *becoming*. In Turner's words, mapping, as a cultural intervention, "*unfolds* potential" for an alternant future by "uncovering realities previously unseen or unimagined, even across seemingly exhausted grounds" (213). Environmental justice literature occupies the same space, and it should be no surprise that these texts are deeply engaged with the trope of mapping with the goal to intervene in place.

Heroes and Saints and *Fresh Kill* draw upon cartography to intercede in environmental justice issues by routing place-based relationships, and they establish these relationships with the body at the center. Moraga and Cheang's investment in queer and critical race projects and

politics arguably augments their interest in the body. The body and its relationship to place are foundational and continuing concerns of queer theory and queer geography, for one. Queer critic Elizabeth Grosz, who theorizes the body in conversation with other queer and feminist critics, focuses on the body precisely because it has been under-theorized in studies of space. Indeed, she notes that many influential geographers, including Edward Soja and David Harvey, privilege space over the body rather than analyze space *with* the body or the body *in* space. Queer and critical race scholars often take the body in space as the locus of study because the race, gender and sexuality of bodies indisputably affects their experiences of space. Grosz emphasizes, "The specificity of bodies must be understood in its historical rather than simply its biological concreteness. Indeed, there is no body as such: there are only *bodies* – male or female, black, brown, white, large or small – and the gradations in between" (*Volatile Bodies* ix). She elaborates in another book that the gendered, racial and sexual identities inscribed on the body greatly alter the "mode of corporeality assigned to the subject" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 84). While Jennifer Gonzalez allows that the race, sexuality and gender of the body transform its experience as a subject, she warns against the colonial implications of reading the body "as a coded form, a visible map, of the subject" ("The Appended Subject" 539). I mean to avoid a gaze on the body that would 'anatomize, categorize, and hierarchize' its subjecthood, to draw on Akbari's language. Rather, I want to understand the raced, gendered and queered bodies in *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* as that which can act as agential maps of their place-based relationships. Grosz frames the body as a map of its social constitutions, its "social needs, requirements, and excesses" (*Volatile Bodies* 140). Donna Haraway similarly writes, "bodies are maps of power and identity" (490). In contrast to Grosz and Haraway, I want to read the body not as a map of social structures but rather as a map of place and the body in place.

The body indeed functions like a map in Deleuzian theory, which builds out an understanding of corporeal cartography. Grosz aims to analyze the body aside from the Cartesian dichotomy of consciousness and corporeality. She invokes Deleuze and Guattari to consider bodily capacities:

> the body is regarded as neither a locus for consciousness nor an organically determined entity; it is understood more in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, the transformations and becomings it undergoes, and the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, how it can proliferate its capacities – a rare, affirmative understanding of the body. (*Volatile Bodies* 165)

If a map can do, can perform, can create relationships to generatively engage in *becoming*, so, too, can the body. The body can function like a map to 'find and found' relationships, to use Turner's terms (213), and I argue that those relationships can be spatial. The body is able to generatively map place-based relationships. I posit the term *corporeal cartography* to describe how the body is able to agentially function as a map. The place-based map generated by the body will be specific to the embodied experience in place, including the experience of race, gender, sexuality and disability. The corporeal map will also be rhizomatic, and I invoke the exploratory tone of queer theory and Deleuze and Guattari to analyze cartography that continually deterritorializes other maps and itself. Pinning the corporeal map to the wall, figuratively, is beside the point, as it has the embodied capacity to move and transform. I draw the concept of *corporeal cartography* from creative works as well as from theory. While *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* do not directly frame the body as a map, they demand an engagement with place and the body, and they invoke the trope of mapping to consider the body in place. Moraga makes her interest in embodied spatiality explicit in *This Bridge Called My Back*, a compilation of creative works by women of color that brings the embodied experience of race to the attention of feminist discourse. Other queer and queer-of-color writers have called upon the concept of bodily

mapping in textual form. Barrie Jean Borich's memoir and 2014 Lambda Literary Award winner *Body Geographic* plots an alternant queer geography, real and imagined, of the Midwest through her bodily relationship to place. She challenges print maps and underlines the bodily potential to map: "Maps obscure more than they reveal because their flatness is contrary to the layers experience of living. Maps are representational, but life is lived in the body, is dimensional, has voice and history…. The body, my body, is a stacked atlas of memory" (7). Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha's recently published collection of poetry *Bodymap* explores the queer, disabled cis-female South Asian body's experience of and resistance to space. Annah Anti Palindrome emphasizes on the back cover that *Bodymap* "is a cartographer's worst nightmare": "In navigating through this gorgeous and complicated terrain of pages, we find ourselves amidst a landscape that refuses to be charted by the voyeur's gaze – a landscape that is defined by its own muscle memory, by the reclamation of its own shifting form" (Piepzna-Samarasinha). Corporeal cartography generatively maps place-based relationships, and it often does so through deterritorializing the 'map' as an extant form and a concept. Corporeal cartography is purposefully unwieldly, which rhizomatically amplifies its capacity for Deleuzian becoming.

In this thesis, I will argue that *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* generate a corporeal cartography that maps the relationships between place and the body through embodied memory, desire, movement and machine to intervene in environmental justice issues and form an alternant future. The texts' corporeal cartography thus engages with the futurity of Deleuzian becoming by establishing connections in between and, I will argue, interrupting in the middle. In chapter one, I will argue that *Heroes and Saints* stages an interest in political visibility and mapping before positing the body itself as a map. Embodied memory and desire, in this play, build out corporeal cartography as they map bodily experience in place and generate alternative futures. While the

central character Cerezita, born without limbs because of pre-natal pesticide exposure, establishes bodily mapping and grounds the text's line of sight, the queer Latino body of Mario ultimately collapses the connections the play aims to draw onto a singular bodily plane. The drama thus poses a corporeal cartography that reveals the imbrications between body and place, urban and rural, and social and environmental issues. In chapter two, I will argue that *Fresh Kill* expands the focus of environmental justice issues from the local to the global while successfully maintaining a focus on the raced, queered body. The film has a multiethnic cast of characters led by a lesbian couple, and their bodies mark the culpability of global capital for environmental injustices in the global South and North. Toxicity and technology are the primary products of capital in the film, and it routes them through the body in embodied movement and its machinic connections. Beyond establishing connections in between the body and place, corporeal cartography in *Fresh Kill* generates becoming through its interruptions in the middle that resituate the future. While the scope of this project is limited to the two primary texts, I aim to illustrate the implications of corporeal cartography for studies of mapping, environmental justice and literature. As Ishimure employs literary mythologies to "withstand the destructive forces of modernization," so, too, can corporeal cartography combat the 'destructive forces' of environmental injustice (Allen 156). Maps and bodies both have the capacity to represent and effect place. Linked in corporeal cartography, they can actualize place-based futures.

Body Map with Memory and Desire:
Imbrications of Body-Place, Rural-Urban and Social-Environmental on the Body in *Heroes and Saints*

Cherrie Moraga's 1994 play *Heroes and Saints* makes visible the experience of Central Valley Latino farm workers on the stage. She works in dialogue with other writers invested in environmental justice causes, particularly Chicana writers like Ana Castillo, who contemporaneously wrote *So Far From God,* a novel that also manifests the Latino experience of toxic exposure at the job site. The trope of visibility permeates Moraga's play, but, like other writers in the environmental justice canon, she also seeks to create political visibility through critical and speculative mapping. Specifically, these writers challenge maps that obscure embodied experience and create maps that take bodies into account. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of maps as rhizomes bears weight on the concept of maps that take bodies into account. Unlike linear traces that arise in genealogy, the rhizomatic map has "multiple entryways" and is "open and connectable to all of its dimensions"; it resembles bodies (Deleuze and Guattari 12). Importantly, Deleuze and Guattari's map, like Moraga's textual mappings, opens onto bodies in *becoming*: "It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum openings of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency" (12). Theory aside, the intersection of bodies and maps anchors environmental justice writing. Kamila Platt notes that Castillo, for instance, maps "the effects of environmental racism onto gendered human bodies" ("Ecocritical Chicana Literature," 69). While Moraga does incorporate bodies into her textual maps, she also literalizes corporeal cartography. In Deleuzian theory, a map resembles a body through its emphasis on openings and connections while a body resembles a map through its definition by latitude and longitude; in Moraga's play, the body *becomes* a map, and, as such, it extends the potential of cartography with memory and desire. In

this chapter, I argue that *Heroes and Saints* seeks to make visible the relationship between body and place and engages with the trope of mapping before positing the body itself as a map. While Cerezita's visuality grounds the text's bodily mapping, the queer body of Mario ultimately collapses the connections onto a singular bodily plane. The text theorizes a corporeal cartography that reveals the imbrications between body and place, urban and rural, and social and environmental causes.

Heroes and Saints' plot revolves around the pesticide protests of California's Central Valley in the late 1980s, yet it aims to manifest the farm workers' experience of pesticides rather than the increasingly visible protests of the United Farm Workers. Cherrie Moraga's author's note specifies that the drama responds "to the numerous events that took place in 1988" in reference to protests and boycotts against pesticide poisoning that heightened the movement's cultural presence. For Moraga, the protests were visibly rooted in the 36-day fast of UFW president **César** Chavez and the violent police beating of vice president Dolores Huerta at a press conference (89). While union leaders became most publically visible, the marginalized position of Latino farm workers exposed to toxic pesticides precipitated the social movement, and Moraga notes that she aims to represent their lives. Geographer Laura Pulido similarly highlights positionality in observing that the Central Valley farm workers' exposure to pesticides is a function of race and class, and their "take on pesticides" "was informed by their working class status and subordinated position within a racialized division of labor" (38). Indeed, she argues that "the intersection of their racial identity and class position," is "key to how people experience, articulate and respond to environmental issues" (46, 34). While Pulido's contemporaneous work employs social science research to sketch the contours of the farm workers' position within the institutional social structures of race and class, Moraga turns to the

creative form of drama to materialize the farm workers' embodied experience of a social site. Moraga thus realizes Platt's thesis about environmental justice Chicana literature: "the best analysis must articulate lived experience" ("Ecocritical Chicana Literature," 70).

In her turn to drama, Moraga contributes to a vigorous conversation about the importance of creative forms in the environmental justice movement. Indeed, Sze emphasizes that "environmental justice can be read and understood not only through the narrow grid of public policy, but through the contours of fantasy, literature and imagination as well" (173). *Heroes and Saints* makes visible in text and on the stage the people Moraga describes as "behind the scenes" of the conspicuous events, "the people whose personal tragedy inspired a national political response" (89). She specifies that her drama fictionalizes the town of McFarland, California, where "a so-called cancer cluster was discovered" (89). However, because the town is first depicted in the UFW documentary *The Wrath of Grapes*, a central question remains: Why turn to the creative form of drama above social science or documentary forms to portray the experiences of McFarland residents? The title of the documentary, in its allusion to John Steinbeck's well-known novel about Dust Bowl migrants to California, already gestures toward the stakes of creative representation, in that literary forms hold potent sway over the public imaginary. Sze similarly notes, "The separation between ideas and practice is a false one, because the cultural realm (discourses, philosophies and ideologies) does impact what kinds of public and corporate policies are enacted" ("From Environmental Justice Literature" 166). Platt helpfully employs the term "activist poetics" to describe the way creative form can reshape the 'cultural realm' and subsequently the realm of practice. For her, activist poetics can "represent race, class, gender and sexuality issues as interlinked and find it crucial to identify these links" ("Chicana Strategies"

51). Moraga turns to drama to materialize farm workers' experience and to furthermore create critical and speculative cartography that draws permeable links from place to the body.

The plot of *Heroes and Saints* explicitly takes up the trope of cartography as that which can make lived experiences of oppression visible and that which can furthermore inspire speculations on the future. Young children are dying in the community of McLaughlin, and their postmortem crucifixion in the pesticide-ridden grape fields that gave rise to their death marks the play's inceptive and anchoring action. The play thus stages political visibility in its central plotline; as Amparo notes, "If you put the children in the ground, the world forgets about them. Who's gointu see them, buried in the dirt?" (94). The crucifixions ensure that the children's deaths do not go unnoticed, and the crosses map the relationship between the children's deaths and the fields. While Moraga fictionalizes the crucifixion, the central character Cerezita resembles a child represented in the UFW documentary, a child born with "no arms or legs" to a "farm worker mother," and Moraga aims to imagine "the child's future as we turn into the next century" (89). She envisions a future in which Cerezita's experience of her body in place gives rise to heightened visual capacity to map and ultimately resist processes of oppression. If the play speculates on the future of the farm worker's child in the UFW documentary, Moraga also engages with futurity in the play's present. Cerezita and her maps "demonstrate transformative strategies of resistance," to draw on Platt's description of activist poetics, or participate in the process of *becoming*, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, meaning that they make connections that can create an alternant future (Platt, "Chicana Strategies," 49). Cerezita becomes increasingly visible to the fictional town of McLaughlin as she emerges from inside her familial confines throughout the play, and she is also the character whose visual perspective grounds the drama's line of sight. Cerezita's vision continually returns to the children who are dying in McLaughlin,

and towards the end she transforms herself into a deformed Mother Mary to make visible the injustice of pesticide contamination and create a call to action for the people or 'El Pueblo.' The play's action builds as media coverage heightens the stakes of this visibility, and the farm owners threaten to shoot anyone who trespasses in the fields. Cerezita's brother Mario returns from San Francisco at the end of the play and rushes into the field through gunshot in the last scene in a call to burn the fields, which implies a continuation of action rather than an end point.

Heroes and Saints materially and metaphorically stages an interest in the possibilities of embodied vision to witness injustice and incite action. On the material level, the form of the drama performed by bodies on a stage and witnessed by bodies in an audience interrogates the trope of visibility. Moraga draws out the trope in her work with stage lighting. The text's stage directions employ light to clarify and obscure action as the light fades in and out – often blacking out at climatic moments. A "relentless fog," the stage directions for which Moraga leaves open, also overtakes the Central Valley throughout the play, which precipitates and represents the inability to see, the impossibility of representational clarity. The play employs fog to obscure chemical pesticide in particular; the crop duster sounds overhead as the "*fog begins to roll in*" (122). Because the fog conceals people, place and pesticides, the play thus manifests the perpetual invisibility of chemical violence. The text indeed signifies chemical crop dusters and helicopters through sound and shadows, never entirely visible: "*The sound of a low-flying helicopter invades the silence. Its shadow passes over the field. Black out*" (92). The shadow of chemicals defines the environment while remaining incorporeal. The text employs a parallel description of a shadow that passes to illustrate that this same invisible presence defines the characters in the environment; as "*the sound of a low-flying crop duster fills the stage*," Dolores

"*stares up at it as its shadow passes over her*" (103). Ever-present and ever-abstract, pesticides cast a pall over the community and foreshadow the death or passing of the children with cancer.

Despite the play's stage directions for persistent fog that shrouds visibility, the central character Cerezita aims to 'see' the toxicity and make it visible to others. She often gazes out of the window, since she is confined inside through most of the play. She emphasizes the importance of keeping watch, of seeing as an act in itself, to her mother (112). While Dolores repeatedly denigrates Cerezita's act of seeing, other characters observe the value of Cerezita's eye: "DOLORES: Cerezita don' know nothing. YOLANDA: She sees. DOLORES: She sees nothing (*To Juan*:) She looks out the window all day, nomas. What can she see?" (99). Dolores emphasizes the limits of what one can see from a window, but her perspective implies the limit of what the community can visually witness in a befogged environment. The text invokes empathy for Dolores because she represents the community's visual limit. However, the text also constructs Cerezita as a character who has the unique sensory capacity to make visible the atrocities of toxicity. After Dolores doubts Cerezita's capacity to see, Cere visualizes the connection between toxic body and place:

> The sheep drink the same water we do from troughs outside my window. Today it is an orange-yellow color. The mothers dip their heads into the long rusty buckets and sink and drink while their babies deform inside them. Innocent, they sleep inside the same poison water and are born broken like me, their lamb limbs curling under them …. I watch them from my window and weep. (99)

She describes the visible – sheep drinking orange-yellow water from troughs – but she also sees the invisible – the relationship between the water and deformed fetal growth. She is able to make a causal connection between 'poison water' and being 'born broken' because she has experienced the same outcome. While Cerezita implies the circumscription of her agency in the fact that she cannot change the fate of the lambs as a parallel to her inability to control her own

bodily consequence, the poetic quality of the observation formally emphasizes the value of seeing, the political possibility that arises in making visible. She later turns to emphasize the political urgency in visibility: "Nobody's dying should be invisible" (139).

As Cerezita employs and transcends her body to make toxicity visible, so, too, does the play as a whole envision the dynamic relationship between the body and toxic place. The drama represents children with cancer to gesture to the ways in which toxic place permeates the body at large in unexpected ways. Mario notes to Cerezita, "Kids' bodies are so vulnerable. They pick up stuff way before adults. They got no buffer zone" (104). The reference to 'buffer zone' implicates the widespread false assumption that "humans are separate from nature, the environment, and other material substances and forces," as Stacy Alaimo points out in *Bodily Natures* (16). Grosz is similarly skeptical of a medical model that frames the body's "immunity to cultural, social and historical factors, its brute status as given, unchangeable, inert, and passive" (*Volatile Bodies* x). While Alaimo is invested in material permeations and Grosz in the social constitutions of the body, both draw out embodied continuity and mutability with the environment. In *Heroes and Saints*, children as bodies with 'no buffer zone' signify the height of embodied mutability, one that defines all of the characters in varying degrees. This mutability transcends the body's consumption of food or capitulation to viruses; it implies that the body and environment are "coconstitutive," to draw on Heather Houser's work on 'ecosickness' literature. Houser thus aims to dissolve the material and conceptual boundaries between the body and the environment (Houser 3). The children's coconstitution with toxic place implicates all of the characters in the play, manifesting Alaimo's suggestion that, "bodies and places are continuous" (11). The death of Bonnie's child further makes visible the precarious nature of the body in place: "She bled through all her openings: her mouth, her ears, her nose … even through her pee

hole, she bled. It was outta control" (131). The passage's emphasis on 'openings' allows us to further consider Alaimo's continuity of body and place. Toxic place permeated the body of Bonnie's child to cause her death, and the child bled "outta control" to suffuse place. The image also recalls Alaimo's note that "potent ethical and political possibilities emerge from the literal contact zone between human corporeality and more-than-human nature" (2). Because body and place are coextensive in the text, the play heightens the stakes of protecting and preserving both against toxic pollution.

The play emphasizes the need for visual representation to shape the political climate, but I argue that it furthermore creates critical and speculative cartography of body and place. Cartography has been a useful trope to describe the work of other queer Chicana environmental justice texts. Platt, for instance, discusses Castillo's *So Far From God* as a form of cartography in dialogue with "'real life' maps" ("Ecocritical Chicana Literature" 90). These 'real life' maps mirror Deleuzian traces, schemas that impose a top-down system of order onto space and rarely capture rhizomatic embodied experience. Mark Monmonier helpfully adds to this definition of 'real life' maps in pointing out that "a map must distort reality" because it selectively represents space on a disproportionate scale (1). He adds, "There's no escape from the cartographical paradox: to present a useful and truthful picture, an accurate map must tell white lies" (1). While *Heroes and Saints* will challenge Monmonier's paradox with its corporeal cartography, it first critiques 'real life' maps by beginning with a map of McLaughlin from the perspective of "the highest point of the overpass" in the drama's setting description (91). From this top-down perspective, the play maps the island of "single-family stucco houses and apartments" amid an "endless sea of agricultural fields" (91). The description heightens the geographical connection between the fields and houses in noting that both have "been perfectly arranged into neatly

juxtaposed rectangles" (91). The hyperbolic distance and impersonality of the map resembles an atlas or agricultural map that represents geometrical shapes with no reference to the people within. Though this textual cartography represents an ordered landscape void of people – perhaps not intended for community – it gestures toward the intended effect of the regulated landscape on its occupants: "each house with its obligatory crew-cut lawn and one-step front porch" (91). Spatial planning and its cartographical schemas here aim to control and exploit people. While the tone of the description implies critique of such cartography, the narrator quickly shifts into an explicitly critical register that foreshadows the resistance seen in embodied experience: "The hundreds of miles of soil that surround the lives of Valley dwellers should not be confused with land" (91). In this sense, the narrator critically reads the map it has just constructed to emphasize that it cannot represent the toxicity of the soil. The text prefigures a later speculative cartographical representation that will map embodied toxicity in dialogue with the impersonal maps that obscure it.

Amparo's map of toxicity resists impersonal maps void of bodies to articulate speculative mapping that will later transform into corporeal cartography. While a critical map deconstructs extant cartography, a speculative map creates new forms of cartography with novel forms and content informed by the knowledge of critical cartography. Scholars emphasize the agential potential of all maps, and speculative maps bear particular weight on the conversation. Cartographer Denis Wood underlines that first and foremost, maps "do work": "Maps sweat, they strain, they apply themselves" (1). Deleuze and Guattari similarly draw out generative possibilities in noting that a map "has to do with performance" (13). Aside from anticipating the map's similarity to the body, these scholars articulate the potential for a map to 'resist' and intervene as a form of work and performance. In *Heroes and Saints*, Amparo creates a map

precisely to agentially intervene in environmental injustice, which she presents to Yolanda and Cerezita: "A chart of all the houses en la vecinidad que tiene gente con the health problems" (129). The characters gather around the map to "see" the health problems with which they are all too familiar (129). Amparo color codes the map: "red dots mean those house got someone with cancer"; blue dots signify tumors; green dots mean birth defects; yellow dots mean miscarriages; and orange dots signify "smaller problems como problemas del estómago, las ronchas, cosa así" (129). Although the women had been aware of the health problems and birth defects throughout the neighborhood, the map objectively connects the problems to illustrate their origin in the toxic place itself. As Yolanda marvels, "Cheezus, it's the whole damn neighborhood" (129). This map does work. Importantly, the dots of the toxic bodies become a metonymical reference to the toxic place that has given rise to the health issues. Importantly, the map not only has political ramifications in making toxicity visible; it is also ultimately constituted by bodies. In finding her place on the map, Cerezita notes, "That's me, the green dot," to which Yolanda responds, "You put us on the map, Cere" (129). The dot signifies her body, and her body begins to textually constitute the map. Dolores, however, points to the synchronic limits of the map in that it does not show the experience of toxicity across time: "I got one baby que eighteen years later I still got to feed and clean and wipe" (129). She emphasizes that "I don' need a chart to tell me que tengo problemas" (129). Dolores rejects the map, partly because it cannot represent the memory of the last 18 years or an experience that extends into the future. While Wood argues that maps do represent the past and so "enable the past to become part of our living … *now* … *here*," Dolores is interested in cartography that can map toxicity and its embodied experience as a diachronic phenomenon that arises in the past and progresses into the future (1). The text

emphasizes the need for a cartography that can represent bodies in becoming, which foreshadows the corporeal map at the play's end.

The drama begins to instantiate a corporeal cartography in which ultimately bodies themselves become maps. In articulating the bodily map, I draw upon Deleuze and Guattari as well as queer theorists influenced by their work. As Wood and other cartographers are interested in what maps 'do,' Deleuze and Guattari are interested in what the body "can do," "in other words, what its affects are" (257). Importantly, they directly compare a body to a map in defining it "*only by a longitude and a latitude,*" which are the sites of its potential movement and potential affects, respectively. Indeed, Deleuze reads Spinoza to construct "the map of a body" through its longitudes and latitudes that meet on the "plane of immanence of consistency, which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed" (*Ethology* 629). Grosz is similarly interested in the openness and becoming of bodies, and she argues that "part of their own 'nature' is an organic and ontological 'incompleteness' or lack of finality, an amenability to social completion, social ordering and organization" (*Volatile Bodies* xi). She, too, describes bodies with cartographical language; they have "physical topographies" and "corporeal mappings"; they are "inscribed, marked, engraved" and constituted by social pressures (*Volatile Bodies*, 27, 62, x). While Deleuze, Guattari and Grosz theorize bodies with cartographical language and theorize maps with the language of embodiment, I argue that bodies can become cartographies. Part of what a body 'can do' is map. The spatial map that the body generates will arise in the embodied experience in place, including the experience of race, gender, sexuality and disability. Corporeal cartography challenges Monmonier's paradox because it holistically, rather than selectively, captures experiential truth as it establishes connections. For Moraga and other queer theorists, memory and desire are bodily truths that

furthermore lend the corporeal map its generative potential; Deleuzian queer critic Margrit Shildrick points out, "to silence or strip sexuality of significance is to damage the very possibility of human becoming" (116). In incorporating embodied memory and desire into a bodily map, Moraga thus redoubles the map's potential for becoming – and for becoming an intervention.

As the text generates its corporeal cartography, Cerezita draws upon the imagery of children who have died of cancer and been erected on crosses in the grape fields to imaginatively map bodies and embodied experience onto the landscape. This attention to bodies and place begins to build out the text's corporeal cartography. She first points out to Juan that the vineyard "looks like a thousand mini-crucifixions" before focusing on the body: "The trunk of each of the plants is a little gnarled body of Christ writing in agony" (134). Cerezita importantly employs a religious metaphor of Christ's crucifixion to underline the affect and injustice of the farm community's bodily suffering in the fields. Juan does not see the connection that Cerezita makes, but she pushes on to map the anatomy of the body: "See how the branches look like arms with the bulging veins of suffering. Each arm intertwined with the other little crucified Christs next to it. Thousands of them in neat orderly rows of despair. Syphilitic sacks of grapes handing from their loins" (134). In mapping the body onto the rows of grapes, Cerezita emphasizes the integral connection between body and place; the 'neat orderly rows' sprayed with pesticides cause the bodily 'despair' of the farm workers. Her attendance to anatomy recalls an earlier moment in the text when she studies one of "Mario's old anatomy books" to learn about the sick neighbors, an act Dolores rebuffs by asking, "what biznis you got with the body?" (112). In this later passage, it is clear that Cerezita has important business with the body because she is able to map the body onto place to illustrate the conditions of co-instantiation: "I see it all. A chain gang of Mexican Christs. Their grey wintered skin, their feet taking root into the trenches the machines have

made" (134). Just as the machines and pesticides have deformed the grape plants into 'rows of despair,' so too has this mechanized and toxic place deformed the bodies of the farm worker community. Cerezita simultaneously maps the body and place to illustrate that the two are not separable but are rather coextensive as "a chain gang of Mexican Christs."

Heroes and Saints' concluding corporeal cartography represents the permeation of place and the body with recourse to the embodied memory that Amparo's map lacks. In the context of bodies in becoming, I use the critical term 'memory' distinctly from Deleuze and Guattari, who see memory as point in the past rather than a line in the middle: "Becoming is an antimemory" (294). I use memory as Moraga employs it, as integral to the process of becoming that situates bodies in relationship to place. Memory is temporally continuous rather than a past point. Cerezita's last monologue goes beyond mapping the body onto place; it heightens the inseparability of body and place and realizes corporeal cartography by mapping the body *as* place: "Put your hand inside my wound. Inside the valley of my wound, there is a people. A miracle people" (148). The body, here, becomes a map of place, as the people of the valley constitute its topography. For the text, embodied memory crucially contributes to the corporeal map. This memory encompasses the time before toxic deaths, the labor to cultivate the fields, the pain of pesticide sickness and deformity; it extends into the future. As Cerezita describes it, this embodied memory arises in place and is symbolized by a river that "runs red with blood," "the same color as the river that runs through their veins, the same color as the sun setting into the sierras, the same color of the pool of liquid they were born into" (148). The text distinguishes memory from history in positioning memory at the site where body and place meet; memory becomes the constitutive and continuous blood and water of both body and place. The text emphasizes that there is agency in mapping place as a body, a body rich with memory and fluid

that defies physical boundaries. It not only instantiates the connection between place and the body; it also gives the body agency to transform place with action. Cerezita continues, "You are the miracle people because today, this day, that red memory will spill out from inside you and flood this valley con coraje. And you will be free. Free to name this land *Madre.* Madre Tierra. Madre Sagrada. Madre … Libertad. The radiant red mother … rising" (148). Here, the text figures the bodily fluid of blood as that which can permeate the land and give rise to place as the body of mother that engenders the body of self. Importantly, the text returns to the importance of futurity, the potential for becoming, in an agential map that incorporates embodied memory. In mapping the body as place, the creative form is able to rename and claim a future at the intersection. We will see in the character Mario that the queer body importantly extends the map of body and place to map the connections from rural to urban place and from environmental to social concerns.

While the central character Cerezita is not explicitly queer in the text, Moraga foregrounds queerness and the queer body in Cerezita's brother Mario. Mario's queerness emerges in the play as he talks with Cerezita and Juan about his gay relationships and begins to engage in a relationship with implicitly queer Priest Juan. He also represents the AIDS crisis in the gay community in the 1980s and emphasizes the importance of familial support to his conservative mother. Mario grew up in the Central Valley and has moved back and forth between urban and rural environments since his youth. While the drama does not depict city spaces, Mario's movement between the Central Valley and San Francisco shapes the drama. Without it, the play might misrepresent the Central Valley's pesticide problems as isolated, rather than systematic – rural, rather than part of an environmental justice agenda that spans rural and urban place. In contrast to the ostensible rural nature of UFW concerns, Giovanna Di Chiro

indeed emphasizes that the "predicament of the 'sustainable' city becomes one of the primary concerns of environmental justice activists," since "the overwhelming majority of African American, Latino and Asian American communities in the United States are urbanized" ("Nature as Community," 314). Mario's presence therefore points to the political, social and environmental relationships between rural and urban sites. He furthermore defines Cerezita's vision (sight and political imagination) as her older brother throughout the play. He fixes her "raite" or manual wheelchair to enable movement early in the play, which the text employs as a crucial moment of comradery, and he later informs her of the reason children are dying and gives her an anatomy book so that she can better understand the body. The text finally figures Mario as the character who builds on Cerezita's speech about the valley as a wound to incite and lead the people to "Burn the fields!" (149). He does so against the sound of machine gun fire, illustrating the courage to rise up against the invisible threat of toxic violence. In dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari, Mario's movement and affect ultimately constitute him as a character whose body becomes an important map of connections and becomings.

Like Cerezita, Mario first foregrounds the importance of visibility to political action, and he furthermore draws visual connections between environmental justice and other forms of social justice. Throughout the play, Mario's interest in and acts of 'seeing' parallel those of Cerezita. For instance, when crop dusters begin to spray at night, Mario not only is the first to witness the change; he also explains the temporal shift to Dolores: "Nobody sees them that way. Nobody that matters anyway" (122). He is able to witness the act and connect it to its political stakes. Similarly, Mario points out Dolores' inability to see his desire for a full life true to his queerness. Before he leaves for San Francisco, Mario asks for his mother's blessing, noting, "I can't put my body in one place and my heart another" (123). Dolores withholds her blessing and denigrates

Mario's queerness: "God made you a man and you throw it away. You lower yourself into half a man" (124). Mario wants bodily wholeness, for his heart and body to be in one place, and Dolores metaphorically cuts his body in half with her words. Though people are dying, sick and deformed as a result of pesticides in McLaughlin, Dolores elides the parallel of toxicity to AIDs in blaming Mario for his illness: "Peepo like you are dying. They got tha' sickness… God makes this sickness to show peepo it's wrong what they do" (124). Dolores' overlooks a connection that Platt points out: "one might borrow a slogan from AIDS services and education activism that links AIDS with other social issues: 'Diseases don't discriminate; people do.' Transposed to environmental racism, it would proclaim: 'Toxins don't discriminate; people do'" ("Ecocritical Chicana Literature," 70). Mario sees and aims to make visible the relationship between the two seemingly disparate social justice issues of queer discrimination and toxicity. Mario indeed expresses his frustration at the limit of Dolores' ability to see: "I want to live, too. I can't make you see that. Your god's doing all the seeing for you" (124). He points out that Dolores can 'see' toxicity but not its connections to AIDS. He aims to make visible forms of prejudice that accompany the experience of both.

If Dolores stands in for the lack of sight in "El Pueblo" or the people of McLaughlin, Mario creates a corporeal cartography that maps the paths between AIDS and pesticides, social and environmental justice, and urban and rural places. Memory, then, is central to the corporeal map and enables him to embody a cartography of spatial and temporal connections. He bridges the rural place and toxic issues of McLaughlin with urban places and social issues more broadly. Before he gets into a passing car to San Francisco, Mario converses with Juan about his embodied memory of queer relationships in McLaughlin: "He was always a gringo. And he'd have one arm draped over the steering wheel and the other around the back of the seat and it'd

never occur to him that anybody lived there between those big checkerboard plots of tomatoes, strawberries, artichokes, Brussel sprouts, and…. Hundreds of miles of grapes" (114). Mario here describes a memory that first manifests the effects of the 'real life' maps in the text's setting – the maps of geometric agricultural plots that obscure human bodies and memories. In contrast to the maps that obscure bodies, Mario then brings attention to the body through his remembrance of highly embodied queer relationships. Indeed, he becomes the bodily connection between the Valley and other places: "He'd be headed home to his woman and TV set and sleeping kids tucked into clean sheets and he'd have a wad of bills in his pocket and he'd think he'd live forever" (96). Mario's memory implies that his body was the stopover site between the road and the city. He emphasizes that he also desires the mobility of the heteronormative "gringo" to shift between spaces precisely because he knows we won't 'live forever.' At the scene's end, Mario gets into a passing car, which brings into relief the limit of Mario's mobility in that he does not have the class and racial privilege to move independently. His memory thus not only brings out the body and employs it to map the paths between places; it also materializes the embodied experience of queerness as a Latino in an overlooked farm community. He maps the connections between rural and urban places, but his mobility to do so is itself contingent. While the scene foregrounds Mario's embodied experience of immobility and objectification as a queer Latino McLaughlin, it also illustrates the imbrication between the experience of abjected queerness and the experience of toxicity, furthering a parallel between urban and rural places. Mario tells Juan of his trips to the city, "I smoke and snort and suck up anything and anyone that will have me" (114). The phrase underlines the permeability of the body and recalls an earlier moment in which Yolanda tells him of the chemicals in the water, "You suck enough of it up through your skin taking those hot baths three times a day" (96). The text draws a parallel between urban and rural

sites and issues through the similarity of Mario's bodily experience in both places. Mario's body is a rhizomatic map of connections and openings, the site where myriad paths meet and depart.

Indeed, Mario's queer corporeal cartography ultimately illustrates not only the paths between binaristic nodes of urban and rural, social and environmental; it also collapses the binaries onto the singular plane of the body. Mario idealizes having "One life, not two," and the emphasis on singularity and similarity permeates his story (113). His bodily narrative thus dialogues with Wood's description of maps, "which achieve their linkages by putting selected things together onto a common plane" (*Rethinking the Power of Maps* 1-2). However, unlike maps that select and thus obscure, the body as map offers the potential to realize Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a plane of consistency that "is the intersection of all concrete forms" (251). They elaborate on the inclusivity of the rhizomatic map: "Forms or subjects, organs and functions, are 'strata' or relations between strata. The plane of consistency or immanence, on the other hand, implies a destratification of all of Nature" (270). Like the rhizomatic map, Mario's embodied experience underlines the intersections, opening and imbrications of the two lives he experiences: the rural and urban lives; the lives affected by both environmental and social justice. He links them on the singular plane of his body. Imbrication, in this sense, invokes the literary meaning 'to overlap' as well as the medical meaning, 'to surgically layer tissue in the closure of a bodily wound.' The language of a bodily wound, seen also in Cerezita's description of the Valley, best illustrates the rhizomatic experiences in the text. Once Mario returns from San Francisco, he sits by the "Sounds of the highway" to smoke a cigarette and talk to Juan. The highway seems a space aside from the Valley, but the bodily experience of it becomes a clear connection between urban and rural places: "This place is strange. Just one hundred yards off that highway, and you're already right smack back into the heart of the Valley" (141). The

scene's beginning foregrounds the inseparable relationship of body to place in the diction of "heart," which recalls Cerezita's language of the Valley as a wound. But if Mario foregrounds the deeply embodied relation to rural place, also emphasizes that the city, while spatially separate from the Valley, has experiential overlap: "The city's no different. Raza's dying everywhere. Doesn't matter if it's crack or …. Pesticides, AIDs, it's all the same shit" (141). For Mario, the body and place, whether urban or rural, have overlap such that the experience of place transforms the body. Because Mario has experienced both places, he links the places on his body, as his body imbricates seemingly separate social issues on one bodily plane. While the comparison between pesticides and AIDS or crack could be inflammatory, I argue that Mario does not conflate the experiences. Rather, he illustrates the overlap between issues, places and experiences in how they arise in institutional structures of class, race and sexuality and similarly wound the body. Yet, to follow the language of imbrication, the overlap furthermore requires a process of healing to fully instantiate the bodily map. Mario turns to desire to reach the generative potential of his corporeal cartography.

While the text focuses on wounds, it also highlights the possibility to recover through the generative connections of queer desire. These recoveries, generated in desire, ultimately constitute the imbrications of the bodily map. Grosz draws on Spinoza to similarly emphasize the generativity of desire: "Desire is the force of positive production, the action that creates things, makes alliances, and forges interactions" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 179). For Mario, queer sexuality indeed becomes a means through which to heal the wounds: "I've always loved sex, Father, always felt that whatever I had crippled or bent up inside me that somehow sex could cure it, that sex could straighten twisted limbs, like … the laying on of hands" (141). While Mario is physically wounded from AIDs contracted in sexual contact, he draws upon religious

language to emphasize the miraculous psychic recovery he experiences in alternative sexuality. Deleuze and Guattari comparably emphasize that the potential for 'becoming' lies in the body's connection to other bodies, in the way its affects can "enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy the body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body" (257). Shildrick foregrounds sexuality in her reading of Deleuze and Guattari and emphasizes that this connection is indeed partly "about an intrinsic vulnerability in which the embodied subject is not only open to the other in an abstract way, but is likely to be in physical contact that is neither wholly predictable nor decidable" (118). Despite this unpredictability, Shildrick underlines the generative potential of queer desire that aligns with Mario's belief in sexuality's curative powers. She asserts, "where the stress is on the multiple possibilities of connection rather than on the putative dangers of contiguity and the risk of touch, then anomalous bodies are no longer a source of anxiety, but hold out the promise of productive new becomings" (125). Grosz also focuses on desire's possibility for becoming in that it is "fundamentally aleatory, inventive" (*Space, Time and Perversio*n 180). Queer desire, while a potential site of wounding, is also that which can fulfill the potential of the corporeal map in closing the wounds to materialize connections. Desire, indeed, comes into being as an assemblage of "linkages and interconnections, and which may encompass both the animate and inanimate, the organic and the inorganic" (Shildrick 124). Desire can be that which stitches together bodily wounds and the tissues of memory to form a bodily map of imbrications rich with becomings.

In this chapter, I have argued that Moraga's *Heroes and Saints* stages mapping as a form of political intervention, ultimately outlining a corporeal cartography that manifests the imbrications of embodied memory in place. The text invokes the trope of visibility in the

character Cerezita, but a closer look at the play manifests its thorough engagement with maps, from a critique of impersonal maps in the setting description to the speculative map that Amparo creates. However, my argument hinges on the text's corporeal cartography. I have argued that Cerezita first draws bodily maps that illustrate the connection between body and place, and I have emphasized that the queer body of Mario becomes a map in itself – a map of imbrications between urban and rural places, social and environmental justice on the singular plane of the body. In my next chapter, I will build on the concept of corporeal cartography and illustrate how in *Fresh Kill*, the body becomes a map not only of urban and rural places, environmental and social issues, but also one that routes the transnational and technological. Media, then, becomes a central form of technology that parallels toxicity in global trade. *Heroes and Saints* is also interested in media; the newscaster Ana Perez speaks first in the play and is continually present in addition to radio and newspaper representations. Moraga's interest in media misrepresentation, staged with Ana's reference to "Hispanic hour" (94) dialogues with Platt's work on women's performances in East L.A. that combat media stereotypes: "The filmic representation of the barrio as violent and dirty not only reiterates stereotypical misrepresentations, it also contributes to the communities' vulnerability to the toxic effects of environmental and other racisms" ("Chicana Strategies of Success and Survival," 62). While Moraga and Platt acknowledge the importance of media representation to ongoing practices of environmental racism, media does not become part of the corporeal map. In this play, media ultimately isolates and misrepresents the body rather than permeates and transforms it. Media is ever present, but it does not traverse the body and embodied memory in Moraga's drama. *Fresh Kill* formally engages with the ubiquity of media – and technology more broadly – and draws a parallel to toxic trade in how it manipulates and penetrates the body.

Body Map with Movement and Machine:
Transnational Toxicity and Technology Routed through the Body in *Fresh Kill*

The film *Fresh Kill* expands the scale of environmental and social issues from the local to the global, and it addresses transnational topics head on. However, it, perhaps surprisingly, successfully shifts its focus to the global while maintaining close attention to the raced and gendered body and its sexuality. Written by *Dogeaters* author Jessica Hagedorn and produced and directed by digital artist and filmmaker Shu Lea Cheang, the film generates a continued exploration of corporeal cartography in this thesis and articulates how such a focus on the body can intervene in extant social structures, in this instance global capitalism, to create alternative futures. A body-centered scholarship might seem counterintuitive to address a global economic system and its vast repercussions. But I invoke Jack Halberstam's queer theory that also foregrounds the body and bodily sexuality despite the fact, or in spite of the fact, that scholarship on global capital has historically relegated both to the sideline and taken "class/global/political as its proper frame of reference" (5). Halberstam specifies that "Edward Soja, Fredric Jameson, David Harvey, and others" have "actively excluded sexuality as a category for analysis precisely because desire has been cast by neo-Marxists as part of a ludic body politics that obstructs the 'real' work of activism" (5). With Halberstam, I assert that the body can be a central site to explore relationships of global capital and its contemporary repercussions and productions, namely toxicity and technology in *Fresh Kill.* Certainly, the body can not only map these relationships; it can also change them through its potential for generative *becomings,* to further express Deleuze and Guattari's concept. According to Deleuzian scholar of the body Elizabeth Grosz, *becoming* has the agency to transform systems, and it is deeply tied to the body: "becoming is bodily thought" (*Space, Time and Perversion,* 134). The body can create

connections with technology, for instance, that effects and affects the future. In this chapter, I argue that the body routes transnational toxicity and technology through its movement and machinic connections. This corporeal cartography engenders the futurity of becoming in the connections and interruptions it makes 'in the middle' that resituate the course of the future.

Fresh Kill charts global capitalism as it affects and infects the body and the environment in a time not clearly present or future. The spatially and thematically dense film is mostly set in a New York that appears to have gone through an economic and industrial collapse. The opening scenes depict animals and humans living together in a literal wasteland of economic decline: Old TVs and garbage line the streets; a person sells poems and condoms. Yet the filmic setting also frequently shifts to the open waters and idyllic island in the Pacific, later specified as Orchid Island off the coast of Taiwan, in a time not quite past, present or future. Throughout the course the film, global capital transforms the island into a site of waste dumping and international tourism. While the film has two primary visual sites, it implicates a global network of places stretching from Africa to South America in its references to toxic trade, corporate greed, Internet space and media proliferation. Film critic Lawrence Chua says of *Fresh Kill*, "Cheang concerns herself with movement," adding, "Her use of cinematic space is less about a rooted territorial reference than a fluid way of exploring routes" (Chua). Lesbian couple Shareen Lightfoot and Claire Mayakovsky anchor the film in New York, as their young daughter Honey first gets poisoned by expensive and toxic fish-lip sushi imported from the Pacific and then goes missing. The couple's genealogically ambivalent family members amplify the queered cast of characters: Eastern European Claire's mother is African American Mimi; Indian American Shareen's father is Native American Clayton Lightfoot; their daughter Honey is African American and ostensibly has an Asian American biological father named Jiannbin "Johnny" Lui, a computer hacker and

co-worker with Claire at the sushi bar "Naga Saki." A Latino friend and sushi co-worker Miguel Flores and two white corporate yuppies, Stuart Sterling and Pam, round out the multiethnic cast. While the lesbian couple and their daughter feature in a central storyline, the plot is otherwise intentionally scattered. Chua points out that the film refuses to separate form from content in that Cheang litters her exploration of toxic trade and media waste with purposeful 'junk' shots that mimic commercial breaks and channel changes. Chua elaborates: "In *Fresh Kill*, intervention, or 'breaking in,' is key to its structure" (Chua). Cheang, then, employs the trope of interruption alongside movement to explore the contemporary experience of global capitalism.

Like *Heroes and Saints*, *Fresh Kill* dialogues with the concept of memory in contrast to amnesia, and that memory is materialized in the body. While memory in *Heroes and Saints* is of the inhabited land in the Central Valley, memory in *Fresh Kill* is the remembrance of consumerism's material excess. Waste populates the film's sets to manifest the material memory of consumption that indefinitely extends into the future, but the film also draws attention to Western society's intentional amnesia of waste and thus of excess consumption. If waste *external* to the body signifies continuous memory in the film, that waste has an important relationship to the body such that the body and the broadcasted body begin to map the memory of matter nevertheless. Broadcast news hosts and Staten Island public access talk show host Mimi break into film shots to remind the New York audience, and the audience of the film, of waste shipped to the Pacific Ocean, Brazil, Asia, Africa and a Staten Island land fill 'Fresh Kill.' As waste disappears from urban disposal sites to disenfranchised global places, including the local place of Staten Island, the hosts map its travel and destination with vociferous commitment. Indeed, Mimi and other hosts' bodily image in broadcast continually surfaces in the film's barrage of clips. Mimi draws close attention to the Staten Island landfill, and she refuses to let spatially removed

waste be forgotten as a point in the past. Her body serves to visualize and map the invisible waste and its movement into the future. The lesbian couple furthermore represent the bodily manifestation of material memory. Their Staten Island bedroom is filled with material excess: stacks of dusty accordions and other musical instruments. These material remnants are, importantly, aurally activated by the body; the resultant music not only recalls the memory of the instrument's purchase but also the embodied memory of the musician's experience that rolls forward in current performance. The body, then, maps the memory of what can otherwise be glanced over as a pile of waste absent an origin, a history or a future. While the women do not vocalize the map of material memory in the way Mimi's broadcast body does, the film highlights their embodied memory of the instruments in a non-verbal form. In one of the film's brief sex scenes, Claire plays a dusty accordion before the camera cuts and pans to the accumulation of used instruments around the room. The body, here, draws attention to material waste and maps its memory through bodily interaction.

If the film highlights the body's ability to map material memory as it extends into the future, in the same breath it underlines the productivity of bodily desire to produce a future. As in *Heroes and Saints*, desire in *Fresh Kill* takes on a Deleuzian import. Deleuze and Guattari are disinterested in Lacanian desire as an infinitely removed lack; rather, they see desire as that which creates molecular connections among the body, other bodies and non-human matter. For Deleuze and Guattari, the Body without Organs (BwO), the body disorganized to generate inclusions and connections, exemplifies desire: "A BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires" (165). The BwO, desire itself, enables the assemblage. For Grosz, desire is thus that which *produces* connections and explicitly engages in futurity. This futurity resides in the possibilities of assemblage rather than the possibilities of reproduction. Grosz

points out that a Deleuzian theory of desire is particularly useful to unpack lesbian desire precisely because, as a scholar she is "much less interested in where lesbian desire comes from, how it emerges, and the ways in which it can develop than in where it is going, its possibilities, its future" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 174). Lesbian desire in *Fresh Kill* is, too, interested in futurity. While the couple have a young daughter, I argue that lesbian bodily desire in the film does not signify reproductive futures but rather signifies the future itself in a cultural moment disengaged with the future. Scholars of global capitalism often posit a negative understanding of the future – one that could only get worse. Cheang certainly dialogues with a negative view of futurity; indeed, one could read the film as inherently pessimistic. However, Cheang engages with the contemporary tension between the power of global conglomerates and the agency of multi-cause activists to work in an ultimately generative direction. The presence of lesbian bodily desire, connection and resultant pleasure in the film signifies its positive engagement with the future – one in which the future can be actively produced by people rather than inevitably happen to people. Importantly, that production happens at the moment in which the body enters the assemblage, into the plurality of "energies, excitations, impulses, actions, movements, practices, moments, pulses of feeling" that constitute desire (Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion* 182). Grosz emphasizes that desire produces more than pleasure; desire can produce the future: "It is an encounter between bodies, which releases something from each and, in the process, makes real a virtuality, a series of enabling and transforming possibilities" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 134). As we will see, the assemblage, for Cheang, moves beyond bodies to cut across the material and technological, further opening up the generative possibilities of the body.

Grosz also describes encounters as 'interfaces,' a term that importantly notes the shift in *Fresh Kill's* theoretical engagement with corporeal cartography from the model of imbrication,

which I associate with memory and desire, to the model of interface, with its associative movement and machine (*Space, Time and Perversion* 183). I have argued that the corporeal mapping seen in *Heroes and Saints* represents imbrications between two seemingly dissimilar binary nodes: Body and place, urban and rural and environmental and social causes. That imbrication had a particular embodied materiality, as it implied wounding and closure of wounds as that which could stitch together issues onto the singular plane of the body. While *imbrication* is still a useful concept to consider in *Fresh Kill*, I take up the concept of *interface* because it represents how the film is interested in the posthuman and the cyborg. By that, I mean that the film explores the limits of human embodiment and asserts that the body serves as an interface for toxicity and technology. This interface is not simply a surface screen; rather it represents the permeability of the human and non-human – including the digital – in the body. *Fresh Kill's* exploration of the interface also aligns with its filmic medium. As scholar Christine Ross describes of the dynamic between body and technology in film:

> video is a technology which, when it takes a tactile approach to the surface (accentuating the electronic fluctuations of skin, and the body's scintillating contacts with the screen), radically undermines not only the conception of desire as lack but also the notion of the body as a unified representation or distinct biological organism opposed to mind, thought, and the machine. When used this way, video reduces to almost nothing the distance between the electronic wash of image, the filmed body, the viewer. (514)

I will argue that *Fresh Kill* foregrounds the body and its 'electronic fluctuations' on the screen to speculate on the body-as-machine – which, too, implicates the viewer. Importantly, the interface of the film screen and the interface of the body represent and enable movement and machinic connections central to Deleuzian *becoming*. Grosz describes this *becoming* as dynamic and connective rather than static and singular: "It is not a question of being … of attaining a definite status as a thing, a permanent fixture, nor of clinging to, having an identity, but of moving, changing, being swept beyond one singular position by a multiplicity of flows" (*Space, Time,*

and Perversion 184). In addition to the recurrent Deleuzian term 'movement,' I turn to the term 'machine' because it transcends even assemblage to establish further connections: Machines "make the territorial assemblage open onto something else, assemblages of another type, the molecular, the cosmic: they constitute becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari 510). The body routes the toxic and technological through its movement and machinic connections, and this map will point to new directions for the future.

If a Deleuzian framework defines the body by its movement and affects, the body's status as an assemblage becomes apparent in that it not only maps external movement but also the movement of toxic material through the body. Deleuze and Guattari highlight this multiple movement of assemblages in the term 'flows': "An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously" (Deleuze and Guattari 22-23). Corporeal cartography thus can route transnational toxicity in the body's movement across literal routes of toxic trade and in toxic movement across the body. Indeed, the body draws attention to and dissolves boundaries between and within places and the body in its visual and metaphorical movement. Grosz helps to elaborate, "Boundaries do not so much define the routes of passage: it is movement that defines and constitutes boundaries. These boundaries, consequently, are more porous and less fixed and rigid than is commonly understood, for there is already an infection by one side of the border of the other" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 131). Her use of the term 'infection' is useful here, because it shifts the focus from movement *of* a body to material movement *through* bodies that ultimately constitute an assemblage. Grosz also thinks of the body itself as a "threshold," one that would be similarly drawn to attention by movement across it (*Space, Time and Perversion* 33). As Deleuze and Guattari use the terms 'rhizome' and 'assemblage' interchangeably, it is worth noting that they, too, think about how

bodies enter into assemblages as their boundaries dissolve: "We form a rhizome with our viruses, or rather our viruses cause us to form a rhizome with other animals" (10). With Stacy Alaimo and others, however, I want to shift the focus of attention from natural viruses to unnatural substances – toxic chemicals, to begin with. Alaimo engages 'movement' as the trope that can link the human to the ethics of inseparability: "the movement across – across time, across place, across species, across bodies, across scale – … reconfigures the human as a site of emergent material intra-actions inseparable from the very stuff of the rest of the world" (Alaimo 156). Corporeal cartography, then, routes toxicity to dissolve the material boundaries between the global North and South and between the human body and non-human matter.

Fresh Kill is deeply engaged with the movement of toxicity across transnational places. Cheang notes in her interview with Chua that the film addresses the "political agenda" of "environmental racism," which is filmically "manifested in the transport of industrial toxic waste to Third World countries" (Chua). David Naguib Pellow tracks such toxic transport through the lens of social science research, pointing out that "nearly 3 million tons of hazardous waste from the United States and other industrialized nations cross international borders each year" (8). The film often visualizes such waste in New York and its Orchid Island site as televisions, further engaging the trope of media, which aligns with Pellow's research on e-waste, "the fastest-growing waste stream of industrialized nations" (186). Importantly, the majority of e-waste is now sent to Asia for 'recycling.' While TVs may not be visibly toxic upon first glance, Pellow points out that electronics are often extremely toxic because of the substances used to create internal parts (187). Toxic substances are released at an even higher rate when they are recycled, as is the process in Asia, since workers have to disassemble electronics, a "practice that creates a massive transfer of hazardous waste produced from North to South and is responsible for

harming public health and its integrity of watersheds" (Pellow 185). While this practice of recycling e-waste is fairly unique to the global South, and particularly pointed for Asia, Pellow points out the parallel the film also draws between environmentally and socially oppressed communities in the global South and in the U.S.: "While I sometimes use the terms global North nations and global South nations, I also include communities of color and poor communities in industrialized nations within the 'South' designation" (Pellow 3).[1] *Fresh Kill* makes the connection between the Fresh Kill landfill and toxic waste dumping in the global South in order to draw and dissolve the boundaries between the global North and global South in its attention to the environmental racism on both fronts.

While the film establishes the link between globally disenfranchised places through waste, it primarily employs bodies to map the movement of toxicity to Asia. The film begins on open waters in the Pacific, as ostensibly indigenous Pacific Islander men row a canoe toward an unknown destination. The shot not only establishes the film's interest movement through the trope of water; the male bodies also metaphorically represent the movement of politically and materially invisible toxicity. The film continually returns to the frame of the men to map the return to transnational toxicity, as bodily act of rowing signifies the continual movement of toxicity across space. The bodies also importantly foreshadow what this movement will ultimately enact: Toxic movement across the body, leading to the public health crises Pellow outlines. As the moving bodies of native Pacific Islanders on open water map the immanent approach of toxic substances, the film contrasts their bodies with the static bodies of Orchid Islanders who represents the multiple toxic arrival. The unnamed bodies, usually glued to

[1] In his 2007 book *Resisting Global Toxics,* Pellow notes, "An estimated 80 percent of computer waste collected from recycling in the United States is exported to Asia, where it is dumped and recycled under hazardous conditions" (191).

television screens or other technological devices, recur throughout the film, and at each return they become more and more clearly associated with toxic presence. The film furthermore connects this toxic presence to the exploitation of tourism. Upon one later scenes, the Orchid Islanders dance in tropical print dresses to radio music translating to "Sway your asses harder. The resort hotel is under construction." Film scholar Gina Marchetti notes of the highly embodied scene, "the supposedly 'untouched' native becomes the raw material for this spectacle" (417). Postconsumer waste gets dumped in the Pacific as the bodies of native Pacific Islanders are turned into 'raw material' to be consumed by tourism and the film. The recurrent bodies act as spatial pins to map the toxic arrival and transformation of the transnational place that might otherwise be absent from the film.

The film employs bodies to map the movement of toxicity across space, and it also emphatically attends to the movement of toxicity across bodies. Pellow notes matter-of-factly that "human-made toxic substances" produced in ever increasing quantities since World War II "pervade our environment and reside in all of our bodies" (26). Indeed, the material reality he notes is inevitable when the United States alone "produces nearly 6 trillion pounds of chemicals annually" (Pellow 29). If Pellow observes the present state of toxic material in bodily residence, Alaimo attends to toxic matter's movement through the body. Her concept of trans-corporeality indeed hinges on "movement across bodies" (2). She elaborates upon the concept of the body to include the human and non-human, thus foregrounding "interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures" (2). She employs 'flows' interchangeably with the terms 'transit' and 'movement,' which builds out a Deleuzian framework that considers the human body to be in an assemblage, potentially productive, with non-human nature. Her concept also builds upon the understanding of bodily affect as well as movement: "Trans-corporeality not

only traces how various substances travel across and within the human body but how they do things – often unwelcome or unexpected thing" (146). Affect, here, is not concerned with emotion but rather implicates the agential possibility to affect another agent. Matter can affectively move across bodies, and it changes the affective potential of a body upon joining its assemblage. Cheang, too, dialogues with a Deleuzian framework of affective movement; she notes in an interview with Chua upon his comment that she "abandoned static shots," "I always go into space thinking about traveling through it" (Chua). The film reflects her interest in connections and movement rather than singularity and stasis. The body, then, maps movement by and across it – and maps its own related constitution by connections to non-human assemblages.

In *Fresh Kill,* a literal body part, the lips, of a radioactive fish sold transnationally moves through the bodies of humans and animals and causes them to take up continuous movement. In particular, New York cats eat feline food made from the contaminated fish and run away from home, causing mass media coverage of missing pets and subsequent attention to toxic food. Claire and Shareen's daughter Honey consumes the fish lips because of her love for sushi and disappears from home as well, creating a similar media panic – this time markedly homophobic. The similarity of circumstances reveals the connections in and interdependencies of the bodily natures of human and other species. While Alaimo points out that "the most palpable trans-corporeal substance is food, since eating transforms plants and animals into human flesh," *Fresh Kill* takes it to another level, as eating transforms toxic fish into bodily movement (12). Importantly, this movement makes the toxicity visible, as the film establishes early on that the origin and even substance of the characters' food is unknown. A character orders a 'California Roll' of unknown geographic origin in New York, and a restaurant patron subsequently mentions, "I never know exactly what I'm eating." The film does provide glimpses of the fishes'

toxic origin – it cuts to multiple short clips of nuclear fish washed up on the beach, their unnaturally red lips later cut off for consumption. Yet it makes clear that consumers in New York do not have knowledge of this background. Thus, it is the bodily movement caused by the fish consumption that maps the toxic presence of the fish and its insipient transnational movement across the Pacific. In other words, fish consumption causes the animals and child to run away from home, in the logic of the film, and their bodily movement materializes the toxicity as it moves through the body and across urban and transnational space. Toxicity becomes visible to the public in media coverage precisely because of the children and cats' bodily movement. Honey embodies, quite literally, Alaimo's emphasis on movement between bodily natures: "Attention to the material transit across bodies and environments may render it more difficult to seek refuge within fantasies of transcendence and imperviousness" (16). Honey's bodily movement maps the transnational and corporeal transit of toxicity that would otherwise disappear from the map.

Fresh Kill highlights the body's potential to map because of its movement, and the film furthermore makes apparent how the body maps toxicity through its machinic connections to other bodies and matter. When the body becomes a machine, it surrenders partial agency to its constitutive parts, which might include other humans, other species or foreign matter. Deleuze and Guattari frame this de-organization of the singular body as the *body without organs*. As Alaimo points out, these extra-bodily connections may produce unwanted effects. A body without organs could furthermore be understood to be void of agential potency. But I want to embrace a positive engagement with the machine that stems from Deleuze and Guattari's approach, which enables us to imagine generative possibilities in the connections rather than negative closures. As they point out, "The body without organs is not a dead body but a living

body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organization" (30). The BwO is a machine, and a machine, for Deleuze and Guattari, has even greater potential for 'becoming' than movement or assemblage precisely because it shifts the focus of connections from a singular species to plural. In their words, "a machine plugs into the territorial assemblage of a species and opens it to other assemblages, causes it to pass through the interassemblages of that species" (Deleuze and Guattari 333). The machine is the ultimate goal because machines "constitute becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari 510). The bodily machine enriches corporeal cartography because it illustrates the bodily connections to other bodies (human and non-human) and it heightens the potential for the singular human body to produce a posthuman future in coalition with these other bodies, be they matter, media or beyond. Some scholars, including Alaimo, consider posthuman interests in material and technological bodily connections to be mutually exclusive: "Although the bulk of posthumanist theories emphasize a tehno-futurism that melds human and machine, often focusing on information systems, another sort of posthumanism, more hospitable to an environmental ethics, may emerge from evolutionary paradigms that recognize the material interrelatedness of all beings, including the human" (151). However, I argue that the corporeal cartography in *Fresh Kill* generates a model in which the bodily machine can map the technological as well as the biological. In other words, material movement and technological machine are not separate conversations.

In *Fresh Kill,* growing green body parts signify the machine interface between body and toxicity, creating a corporeal cartography that maps the effects and affects of toxic matter as it enters into relationship with the body. Similar to bodily movement caused by the consumption of the toxic fish, the characters who eat the contaminated product, primarily Honey, develop episodes of glowing green skin that makes the toxicity visible on the body. In one scene, the film

visually highlights the toxicity by juxtaposing Honey's glowing green lips against green beans as she raises them to her mouth to take a bite. In another scene, the film highlights its own status as a screen interface that permeates the skin with toxicity as Honey's skin begins to glow green when sitting in front of a glowing TV screen such that toxicity and media become inseparable. While movement could indicate that the toxicity moves through the body and could be subsequently eliminated, the neon skin implies that the toxicity has become part of the body, as the bodily agency shifts from the locus of the individual to the locus of the machine. Indeed, the young girl returns with her grandfather at the end of the film, which implies an end to movement-located toxicity, and the neon green episodes linger to gesture toward a permanent residence of toxicity in the body, to use Pellow's terms, or the transformation of body into more-than-body machine. Here, the affective agency of the body-as-machine is both bodily and material. Jane Bennett has a similar interest in what matter can do, which she conceptually builds with Bruno Latour; matter as an "actant" "is that which has efficacy, can *do* things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events" (Bennett viii). Bennett considers matter in itself to be independently affective rather than "posit a separate force that can enter and animate the physical body" (xiii). In other words, matter does not need the body to activate it. I would like to employ her concept of matter as affective, however, to note how it can enter and extend the concept of the body rather than animate the body. The body is not animated *by* matter; it becomes machine *with* matter. The boundary between body and non-body disappears as it becomes a machine, which enables Deleuzian *becoming* through connections in its generative sense. Food, for Bennett, is a crucial form of affective matter, and it helps to specify the machinic relationship between matter and body: "Food will appear as actant inside and alongside intention-forming, morality-(dis)obeying, language-using, reflexivity-

wielding, and culture-making human beings" (39). She elaborates later, "Eating appears as a series of mutual transformations in which the border between inside and outside becomes blurry" (Bennett 49). If movement draws attention to and dissolves borders between and within places and bodies, the machine destabilizes those borders such that the separate parts form a new whole. Corporeal cartography, then, becomes the interface to map the connections that constitute the newly formed body-as-machine.

The body becomes machine through its interface with toxic matter, and *Fresh Kill* augments the machine further by putting the body in relationship to technological media. Affective matter enters the body to transform it into machine, and so, too does media. The body, then, maps both of these interfaces. Marchetti dives into *Fresh Kill's* own immersion with technology, and she first notes that the film is "saturated with images of mediated communication and new technologies, including cable television, satellite communications, computer networks, and an infant Internet" (408). Indeed, as toxicity permeates the characters' bodies through movement and glowing green skin, technology, too, alters the bodily map. Many of the characters who have consumed the radioactive fish and have green skin also begin to speak in TV-channel-flipping gibberish reflective of technological permeation. Though the linguistic breakdown could appear haphazard, Cheang notes in an interview with Chua, "Language was never wasted. Each line is so precise" (Chua). Indeed, Cheang also elaborates that she and Hagedorn made an early decision that a key point of the film would be to draw a parallel between the dumping of toxic waste and "the dumping of garbage TV programs in the Third World" (Chua). The characters' permeated bodies, then, map the connections between toxicity and technology. But if technology parallels toxicity to enter into the bodily machine and become visible on the corporeal map, its influences are not all toxic. Marchetti notes that Cheang

explores the "contradictions inherent in this communications cacophony" in that media "is the realm of transnational conglomerates and commercial propaganda as well as public access broadcasting and community empowerment" (408). Those contradictions often play out on the body, opening up the machine's negative and positive potential. While the film's temporality is usefully ambivalent, Gail Weiss notes that a body-as-machine, which she terms a "techno-body," "is certainly not a future body but is our own bodies and bodily possibilities to the extent that they are discursively represented, psychologically constructed, and physiologically reconstructed through technological processes" (163). Weiss echoes posthuman scholar Donna Haraway, who argues, "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are all cyborgs" (476). If the body is already the techno-body, the cyborg, which we indeed see in *Fresh Kill*, and this body then maps its assemblages, a key question remains: Beyond making connections between technology and toxicity, how does corporeal cartography of the cyborg body enable *becoming*?

With recourse to the agency of early Internet hacking, *Fresh Kill* represents *interruption* as a way the cyborg body and its map can alter the future. In the film, the Internet and digital media broadly are not only sites in which the body can make connections to activist networks online; they are also sites the body can hack. Johnny, Claire and Shareen hack the online headquarters of the GX Corporation; the African Unity Network hacks into Johnny's Internet surfing to distribute a message of transnational coalition; Johnny hacks back to insert a rolling message "Talk to me Africa." Marchetti notes that this filmic moment, "makes the chat room/E-mail-like exchange between strangers a political call for solidarity against corporations" (411). Hacking, then, is a way to collectively interrupt the corrupt actions of corporate conglomerates. Indeed, Marchetti writes of the film, "Produced when the World Wide Web and the Internet were

first emerging from their military and academic infancies, *Fresh Kill* already offers a vision of computer networks as sites for struggle, disruption, and intervention" (Marchetti 410). Broadcasting networks, in the film, parallel the Internet as sites of possible intervention. Broadcast reports break into film shots; news alerts interrupt broadcasts; public access shows disrupt mainstream messages. These interventions can also be framed as *interruptions* or insertions into the middle of the corporatized Internet or media. In an interview with Chua, Cheang, too, emphasizes the importance of interruption: "You come into the act in the middle…. A lot of that also has to do with television culture too. If you are living in that language of switching channels, you easily dig into things in the middle" (Chua). The contemporary state of media saturation, arguably heightened now by YouTube and online media, can be generative because it enables the body to dive into media *in medias res*. Grosz emphasizes the importance of middles for a Deleuzian framework: "the middle is always the privileged point to begin, why thought is perhaps best captured *in between*" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 134). The *in between* or middles are crucial sites of *becoming* for Deleuze and Guattari. While this is typically attributed to the connections made between two things *in between*, I want to elaborate, too, on the agential possibilities of interruption.

The cyborg body, then, is particularly prepared for these generative interruptions in the middle. The cyborg is able to interrupt the Internet 'in the middle,' for instance, because of its machinic connections or 'middle' between the body and technology. It will be useful to remember that Chua describes 'breaking in' or intervention, in addition to movement, as "key" to the film's structure; technology and toxicity break into the characters, and the characters break into cyberspace and media. I find Deleuze and Guattari's mechanism of *becoming* to be usefully vague in that it allows me to specify that *becoming* can arise in the 'middle' of connections and

the 'middle' of interruptions. I thus turn to another mode of thought to speculate upon the mechanism of *becoming* or futurity enabled by interruptions. In *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past,* Amir Eschel analyzes Hannah Arendt's re-reading of a Kafta parable to consider how natality, as an "insertion" of humans into the world, creates a new temporal trajectory that can change – even create – the future. He extends Arendt's concept of natal birth to *creative* birth to argue that each new insertion of an artistic creation into the world can alter its position toward the future (20). A creative work like a novel, in other words, can re-present the past in order to generate a new relationship to the past as well as the future. I want to push Eschel's extension one step further to argue that an 'insertion' can be any 'interruption' in the middle, and that this interruption can alter the course of the second half – can change the future. However, the interruption need not be a momentous world quake; it can be a stutter that repositions the bodily stance toward the future. Grosz similarly elaborates upon Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming: "Rather than a pure positivity, the jamming effects of thought need not actively produce (new thoughts and new things or assemblages) but may intervene to insert a stammer, a hesitation, a pause within the expected" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 135). These stutters interrupt the linear course of events, thus re-drawing the linear route to change the projected future. In *Fresh Kill*, the channel-surfing linguistic interruptions in verbal expression not only reflect the body's connection to the media machine; these interruptions also change the body's and surrounding characters' position toward the future. Corporeal cartography, then, routes toxic and technological connections and captures the body's interruptions in the middle to enable an alternant future. Importantly, this notion of interruption as *becoming* also aligns with the queerness of the film in that its interruptions do not derive from reproduction, as in Arendt's theory.

Indeed, the film's focus on queer bodies augments its interest in the interruption of linear lines and helps to generate an attention to positionality within cyborg discourse. The film's primary protagonists are lesbians and mothers to the filmic subject Honey, and when Honey goes missing, the film highlights the media's heteronormative and potentially homophobic policing of biological purity and genealogical tracing. Upon reporting Honey's potential kidnapping, TV pundits wonder who the 'natural father' is and ask whether it was a bad idea for two lesbians to have a child in the first place. The film thus engages directly with heteronormative questions of 'naturalness' and genealogical purity and addresses those questions in the turn to the cyborg body and interruptions. If interruptions 'break into' the middle of a line to redirect its future, they are informed, in the film, by queerness that indeed constitutes itself in opposition to the linear "institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction," to draw on Jack Halberstam's work (1). Queerness interrupts, in its politics and its being, systems that privilege heterosexual reproduction, genealogy, and inheritance – systems that recreate themselves along a linear line into a predictable future. Queerness and the queer body, then, not only work in tandem with Deleuze and Guattari, who argue that the "rhizome is the anti-genealogy" (11); they also dialogue directly with cyborg theory, as Haraway argues that cyborgs are "suspicious of the reproductive matrix and most birthing" (49). I argue, in this light, that queer bodies are uniquely constituted to create corporeal mappings of these Deleuzian-cyborg states of being. Theoretical terms aside, queerness challenges genealogy and genealogical purity in the same way that scholars note toxicity and technology blurs the boundaries of the biological body. These models function as interruptions that generate new possibilities. As Marchetti notes that *Fresh Kill* "operates on a faith in … the emancipatory potential of the digital" (409), it is significant that she also argues, "Breaking into cyberspace parallels breaking out of the closet, and queer space

opens up as invitingly as does screen space. A queer questioning of identity is inexorably linked to the promises and possibilities of new technologies" (413). I want to focus on the generative potential of queer and cyborg interruptions as that which can enable alternant becoming.

The doubled interruption of the queer cyborg in *Fresh Kill* is also inseparable from the characters' race and ethnicity, which further articulates the agency of a corporeal cartography specific to non-white and non-heterosexual bodies. The corporeal map captures the specificity of bodies just as the bodies draw the map; the process of interaction between corporeal and cartography heightens its capacity for interruption. Hayles has been a foundational theorist to flesh out the posthuman cyborg, arguing that in this new reality "there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (3). Although her description does articulate the machinic connections between the human body and technology, it obscures the crucial bodily distinctions of race, gender and sexuality. Jennifer Gonzalez alternatively historicizes the cyborg as a hybrid subject inextricable from race: "The hybrid subject is never considered immune from the vicissitudes of fate somehow unable to become accurately assembled into a properly functioning subject or citizen – hence the laws banning miscegenation that were only repealed in the United States in 1968" ("The Appended Subject" 539). The cyborg may interrupt illusions of genealogical purity, but raced subjects have long formed the crux of these conversations and anxieties. While being 'hybrid' has been, for people of color, a mark against inclusion in the citizen body, Gonzalez reclaims the agential interruption of cyborg discourse for 'hybrid subjects': "Hybridity must not be tied to questions of legitimacy or the patriarchal lineage and system of property it implies. Rather, it must be recognized that the world is comprised of hybrid encounters that refuse origin. Hybrid beings are

what we have always been – regardless of our 'breeding'" ("Envisioning Cyborg Bodies" 275). While Gonzalez aims to use cyborg discourse to counter ideologies of racism based on genealogical purity by asserting we are all hybrids, she maintains a focus on the experience of the raced body in the present while working toward a cyborg future. Indeed, the interruption of race and cyborg discourse must happen before an alternant future. An attention to race and ethnicity in cyborg discourse can redefine the mechanisms of interruption and refocus what discourse the hybrid body interrupts. If the cyborg figure at large interrupts biological stasis, then the queer, raced cyborg furthermore interrupts genealogical purity. It is crucial that *Fresh Kill* brings together multiple interruptions through its queer and racially ambiguous family relations. When the media questions Honey's natural father because her mothers are queer, the family's racial otherness is central to the interrogation. Each family member are of a different racial background, and their raced bodies interrupt expectations of genealogical linearity to highlight agentially formed rhizomatic connections. Indeed, their raced, queered bodies form a corporeal cartography that privileges movement and connections and resists genealogy and linearity.

In this chapter, I have argued that *Fresh Kill* provides a model of corporeal cartography that routes toxicity and technology through bodily movement and body-as-machine to enable becoming. The futurity seen in becoming can occur through bodily connections *in between* or through the body's interruption *in the middle* that alters our position toward the future. The film's primary structural devices of fluid connections and 'breaking in' explore the generative space of the middle that can produce futurity. Connections and interruptions, toxicity and technology, movement and machine are not binaristic but are rather integrally entangled. The cyborg theory of Chela Sandoval, critical race and feminist scholar, builds on Donna Haraway and articulates the agential possibilities in these entanglements. Her theory is future-looking, as

she emphasizes that "the metaphor 'cyborg' represents profound possibilities for the twenty-first century" (409). Building on Haraway, she links the resistance enabled in the cyborg figure as in between human and machine with that seen in U.S. third world feminism that figures alternant identities that arise in between hegemonic models such as patriarchy, nation and white feminism. The resistance Sandoval poses is rooted in *differential movement*, or differential consciousness connected to motion and force, the technology through which all other technologies of resistance "harmonically maneuver" (410). She elaborates, "Differential consciousness can be thus thought of as a constant reapportionment of space, boundaries, of horizontal and vertical realignments of oppositional powers" (418). Sandoval generates a vision of resistance that arises in continual movement and machinic connections – connect, interrupt and reconnect. While Sandoval leaves the subject of the resistance open ended, I suggest that the body and corporeal cartography can agentially connect, interrupt and reconnect these boundaries and alignments to develop oppositional resistance and therefore change the future. If scholars are interested in what a body 'can do,' what matter 'can do,' what a map 'can do,' then the body, matter, and map, particularly when put in relation to one another, can resist in order to create. The corporeal mappings of raced and queer bodies, then, are central to this conversation about resistance because they connect and interrupt multiplicitous discourses. Sandoval also importantly situates bodies in place, and Grosz similarly notes, "If bodies are to be reconceived, not only must their matter and form by rethought, but so too must their environment and spatio-temporal location" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 84). I began chapter one by indicating the relationship between body and place, and in the conclusion I will further consider how to read the urban place and resistance of corporeal cartography in *Fresh Kill*.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Cherrie Moraga's *Heroes and Saints* and Shu Lea Cheang's *Fresh Kill* manifest a corporeal cartography in which the body becomes a map of connections and interruptions that generatively engage with the future through the process of becoming. Becoming, in corporeal cartography, means that the map, in its capacity to represent and build the body's relationships to place, unfolds an alternative position toward the future. Though *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* were published in the same year, each work's corporeal cartography takes up a distinct locus. *Heroes and Saints* stages an interest in mapping before positing the body as a map of connections between body and place in the character Cerezita. The drama furthermore imbricates rural and urban places and environmental and social causes on the bodily plane of Cerezita's queer brother Mario. I have argued that embodied memory and desire crucially establish the corporeal cartography in *Heroes and Saints* and position the bodily map as distinct from spatial maps, which, with Platt, we might call 'real life maps.' Bodily maps arise with memory and desire to create connections and thus Deleuzian becomings. The play does have a spatial reference in California's Central Valley and the queer urban places of San Francisco and Los Angeles. Indeed, the play maps deeply remembered roots to these largely local places. In contrast, *Fresh Kill* routes the transnational travel of toxic waste and technology on the body. The body, then, links the transnational places of the Orchid Island in the Pacific, New York City, and multiple countries in Africa and South America. Like *Heroes and Saints*, the body here maps the relationships of rural and urban places, but those places are across the globe from one another rather than a few hours drive apart. While the film engages in memory and desire, it primarily posits the body as a map of toxicity and technology through bodily movement and the body's machinic connections to non-human matter – both biological

and digital. The body of Honey, for instance, manifests toxic fish consumption through her movement away from home and illuminates the bodily permeation of digital media through the linguistic breakdowns that arise as the body becomes machine with media. Together, *Heroes and Saints* and *Fresh Kill* theorize a corporeal cartography constituted by bodily memory, desire, movement and machine. This multifaceted cartography can reveal myriad imbrications and interfaces among the body, place and matter. A bodily map can furthermore intervene in these relationships through the connections it draws and the interruptions it makes to reposition the body toward the future.

The body's relationship to place roots corporeal cartography, and, with scholars of the body, I posit that we can read the body to understand place, including the place of the city. As many scholars of geography, including Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, have read space through its display of societal contestations, Grosz turns to read the body as "the crucial term, the site of contestation, in a series of economic, political, sexual, and intellectual struggles" (*Volatile Bodies* 19). Place and the body are both sites of contestation, and the relationship between the two becomes key. For Grosz, neither the body nor space are passive to the other; the body is not inert and space is not an "empty receptacle, independent of its contents" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 92). Grosz elaborates, "rather, the ways in in which space is perceived and represented depend on the kinds of objects positioned 'within' it, and more particularly, the kinds of relations the subject has to those objects" (*Space, Time and Perversion* 92). The body as subject takes part in creating place through its explicit choices and implicit practices toward space and its objects; the place then recreates the body in a cycle reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*. However, the causal relationship between body and place becomes productively ambiguous in Grosz's theory. It does not matter which produces the other first

because the body and place "produce each other"; their relationship is co-constitutive, as "neither the body nor its environment can be assumed to form an organically unified ecosystem" (Grosz, "Bodies-Cities" 507). If the body is inseparable from place because the two together form a 'unified ecosystem,' it follows that we can read the body as corporeal cartography to gain a greater understanding of place. Of course, we could also read place to further articulate the body, but I want to focus on the bodily map to explore its explicative limits. In "Bodies-Cities," Grosz specifically explores the co-constitutive relationship between the city and the body; she argues that the city is the "condition and milieu in which corporeality is socially, sexually and discursively produced" (508). Indeed, she goes so far as to say the body "does not have an existence separate from the city, for they are mutually defining" ("Bodies-Cities" 507). In this brief conclusion, I want to further linger, then, on the ways in which we can read the city in bodily maps. If corporeal cartography links the affective capacity of what a body, matter and map 'can do,' then how can the bodily map explicate urban form?

To explore that question with an even more specific referent, I turn to the relationship between the digitized urban environment and the cyborg figure, as seen in *Fresh Kill*. Gonzalez provides an initial model for this exploration because she reads the cyborg as indicative of place: "Each cyborg implies a new spatial configuration or territory – a habitat" ("Envisioning Cyborg Bodies" 272). As I have argued, the cyborg figure becomes central in *Fresh Kill* because the figure manifests the assemblage connections among place, the body, matter and digital technology. The film's urban setting, while dated to the mid 1990s in its forms of technology, reflects and creates the cyborg figure. Digital technology permeates the city as it does the body through digital screens, particularly ubiquitous televisions, surveillance screens and the early personal computer. Screens dominant the urban setting, and characters continually interact with

the technology. How can we read the body, then, to explicate the cyborg's urban habitat? Grosz posits the body as a "representational model" or "isomorphism" of the city, "a two-way linkage which could be defined as an *interface*" ("Bodies-Cities" 511). She says earlier that the body is "transformed, 'citified,' urbanized" in the city "as a distinctly metropolitan body" (Grosz "Bodies-Cities" 507). In other words, the body not only maps relationships to the city; the body also maps the city. In that light, since I read the body as an assemblage, we can read the *body* assemblage as the *urban* assemblage. Grosz likewise argues that the relationship between bodies and cities is indeed a one of "assemblages or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or microgroupings" ("Bodies-Cities" 511). The specific assemblage between toxicity and technology read on the body can further index the assemblage of the city and the body's place within it. Architecture and media scholar William Mitchell similarly posits the relationship between the cyborg body and urban place in his book *Me++: The Cyborg Self and the Networked City*. Indeed, he takes up the voice of the 'Me++' body to represent the interfaces between the body and networked city that co-define both: "I consist of a biological core surrounded by extended, constructed systems of boundaries and networks…. The boundaries define a space of containers and places … while the networks establish a space of links and flows. Walls, fences, and skins divide; paths, pipes, and wires connect" (7). Mitchell figuratively reads the cyborg body to understand not only the body's permeation of and by place but also to understand the assemblage of the networked city on its own terms. Corporeal cartography, then, particularly of the cyborg body, can map the body in the city and map the built urbanscape.

Some scholars pessimistically read the networked urbanscape's effects on the body, but I argue that a cartographical understanding of the urbanscape through the body generates a

positive engagement with the future. In "The Overexposed City," Paul Virilio writes specifically about the spatial and temporal implications of a digitized city for the embodied subject. As in Mitchell's work, Virilio argues that digital technology and screens have replaced spatial infrastructure as the boundaries of urban experience:

> Where the geographical space once was arranged according to the geometry of an apparatus of rural and urban boundary setting, time is now organized according to imperceptible fragmentations of the technical time space, in which the cutting, as of a momentary interruption, replaces the lasting disappearance, the 'program guide' replaces the chain link fence. (444).

In other words, technological permeation of the city changes the embodied experience of time and space. In the age of screens, we no longer consider spatial distance or boundaries: "With the new instantaneous communications media, arrival supplants departure: without necessarily leaving, everything 'arrives'" (Virilio 442). Indeed, he argues these boundaries disintegrate as we merge with screens, and our experience of time and space thus collapses to the instant. Virilio clarifies, "Chronological and historical time, time that passes, is replaced by a time that exposes itself instantaneously" (442). Although this removal of boundaries could be potentially rich with opportunities for becoming, Virilio understands this phenomenon in a thoroughly negative sense: "an unbounded expanse appears in the false perspective of the machines' luminous emissions," as distinctions between 'near' and 'far,' 'here' and 'there' "no longer mean anything" (442). I first want to emphasize that in *Fresh Kill's* urban vision, time retains its continuity; the temporal instantaneity of computer hacking does not replace embodied memory that emerges in the past and passes into the future. But if the interface of screens in the urbanscape highlights the machine composed of body and city, material and digital particles, this machine furthermore contributes to agential becoming rather than false perception. This removal of boundaries between body and city, such that we can read the city on the body, generates new connections in

between that can build an alternative future. Mitchell similarly emphasizes the vast possibilities of the urban-body interface: "This is a world of less rigid, more fluid and flexible relationships – of knowledge to action, of shape to materials, and of people to places. It is a world, I shall argue, in which networks propagate the effects of our actions far beyond traditional boundaries" (5). Networks, as opposed to boundaries, aid the interventionist capacity of corporeal cartography to change social and environmental realities. As the assemblage connections of the body and the city extend, corporeal cartography maps those relationship, and the potential for becoming opens up to reconfigure the future.

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