UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Don’t Need You: Conceptual Art, Feminism, and their Discontents

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory, and Criticism

by

Melinda Guillén

Committee in charge:

Professor William N. Bryson, Chair
Professor Alena Williams, Co-Chair
Professor Lisa Cartwright
Professor Shelley Streeby
Professor Mariana Razo Wardwell

2019

The Dissertation of Melinda Guillén is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

_____

_____

_____

_____
Co-Chair

_____
Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

To the next generation of my family: beautiful Tatiana, *it takes strength to be gentle and kind* so please trust your strength always and go where it takes you; Nadia, the artist, (and my mini-me)—there are many songs hidden throughout this work, I hope you hear them and write your own; and to wild little Mikey, ain't nobody worried about you!

It is now your turn to start some trouble!

EPIGRAPH

Love, peace, and harmony?
Love, peace, and harmony?
Oh, very nice
Very nice
Very nice
Very nice
But maybe in the next world

The Smiths

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation (Berlin), The Estate of Lee Lozano, UC San Diego Department of Visual Arts, Getty Research Institute Special Collections, and Laura Schwartz, Visual Arts Librarian at Geisel for combined and varied forms of research support.

I would like to thank my committee for their support and critical insight throughout this arduous and beautifully strange journey. Thank you to my wonderful Chair, Norman Bryson, for your endless support of my ideas, trust in my work, and unfettered encouragement of my institutional deviance! To my Co-Chair, Alena Williams, thank you for your thoughtful and measured feedback, your belief in my project, and recognition of its significance to the field. I would not be at this stage had it not been for your guidance at many a critical moment. To Mariana Botey, thank you for always challenging me and demonstrating that infiltration is not only possible but also a necessity. Thank you to Shelley Streeby for your invaluable critical perspective and for all that you introduced to me in your Social Movements & Culture seminar. I have bountiful appreciation and gratitude Lisa Cartwright for your generous pragmatism and leadership. *Well, the pleasure, the privilege, is mine*!

In the last six years, I have had the good fortune to be among the esteemed "visual rats", my comrades and co-conspirators at every stage of this process: Julian Rogers, Lizzy Miller, Sara Solaimani, Adela Goldbard, Seth Ferris, Kate Clark, Stephanie Sherman, Aitor Lajarin, Trevor Amery, Bill Basquin, Sascha Crasnow, Tim Ridlen, Katrin Pesch, Samara Kaplan, Emily Goodman, Lara Bullock, J Noland, Vincent Pham,

Jonathan Hepfer, Trevor Amery, B+, and Mike Witte. In the same vain, I also highlight some of the wonderful collaborations and projects from during my time here, thank you to: Josh Pavlick and Helmuth Projects, Merete Kjaer, Chris Warr, Kathleen Ryan, Devon Tsuno, Suzanne Lacy, Andrea Bowers, Allison Agsten, Laurie Jo Reynolds, Christina Aushana, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Michelada Think Tank, The Furies panel: Kandis Williams, Yunuen Rhi, Ligia Lewis, Andrea Liu; Space/Time, as well as all those affiliated with *Sensitive Boys* and the Discursive and Curatorial Productions initiative (RIP).

I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to the Muir College Writing Program and Dr. Carrie Wastal, Dr. Marion Wilson, and Helen Mout for establishing a feminist work environment and investing in my personal and professional development. And to my co-instructors and friends Stephanie Fairchild, Mike Morshed, Sophie Staschus, Laurie Nies, Jennifer Huerta, Nur Duru, Luis Sanchez-Lopez, and Jenni Marchisotto. I estimate that I have guided over 700 undergraduate students during my time here, which is overwhelming to consider alongside the ongoing plight of teaching assistants' and part-time instructors' work. I hope I offered each student something valuable, distinct, and memorable, or, at the very least, a sense of the importance of saying 'hello' to one another and hearing the sound of your own voice in the classroom.

I must acknowledge the labor of Kate Edwards for having been on the receiving end of many apologies due to my low regard for standard protocols (my final apology!). I am quite grateful for all that you have done to keep me on track. Thank you also to Yuka Nakanishi and Yolie Torres.

I have endless love and gratitude for my vast circle of friends—near and far—who are the most luminous sources of energy in my universe, my chosen family: Ryan Hartery (my best friend for life, always solid / always there), Matt and Stephanie Fuchs, Joshua Jon Miller, Kara Joslyn, Javier Fresneda, Kyle J Thompson, Kelly Eginton, Anya Gallaccio, Marguerite Hodge, Itza Vilaboy, Ash Eliza Smith, Paul Pescador, Molly Erin Kahr, Chloë Flores, Micki Davis, Marco Negovschi, Paul Tompkins, Sarah Marie Anderson, Jon Crane, Conrad Ruiz, Arturo Gonzalez, Lorena Gomez Mostajo, Akiko Surai, and many others I'm lucky to know!

I draw strength from my family: my father, Porfirio Guillén, has made many sacrifices for all of us and made it possible for me to pursue my dreams. I live my life to make you proud. To my sister, Maria Guillén, you are the most resilient (and stubborn) person I've ever known. To my big brother, Mike, you are the toughest teddy bear, my protector, and I am so glad to be your weird little sister. Thank you also to my mother, Trini O'Rourke, I've inherited your high standards and poker face. Much love to Lauren Talley, Bill and Kris O'Rourke, and to the everlasting memories of my Lola Irene Macaraeg, Barbie Hartery, Tío Dickie y Tío Fernie, Alberta Dye, and my sweet Otto.

To William Darling and Luna Kissy: *this one is different because it's us*.

VITA

2008	Bachelor of Arts, Gender Studies & Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2008	Teaching Assistant, College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada Las Vegas
2010	Curatorial Researcher, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
2011	Master of Arts, Curatorial Studies, University of Southern California
2011	Teaching Assistant, Roski School of Fine Arts, University of Southern California
2012	Writer in Residence, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
2012-14	Teaching Assistant, Department of Visual Arts, University of California San Diego
2013	Graduate Student Researcher, Department of Visual Arts, University of California San Diego
2014-19	Instructor, Muir College Writing Program, University of California San Diego
2019	Doctor of Philosophy, Art History, Theory, and Criticism, University of California San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Don’t Need You: Conceptual Art, Feminism, and their Discontents

by

Melinda Guillén

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, Theory, and Criticism

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor William N. Bryson, Chair
Professor Alena Williams, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines the concurrent emergence of Conceptual Art and varied formations of the feminist movement, often referred to as Second-wave feminism, during the late 1960’s and through the 1970’s in the United States. This study exposes (rather than reconciles) tensions, contradictions, and occlusions in the dominant historical methods and limitations of what constitutes “feminist art” and considers the “failure” of conceptual art. Through textual, visual, and archival methods, I explore concepts of individualism versus collective identity; rebellion and refusal; essentialism and

'womanhood'; rage; sexuality and self-pleasure; and subject and objecthood in three case studies. The first chapter is focused on critic and curator Lucy R. Lippard and her watershed conceptual project *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966-1972*. I cross-examine Lippard's notion of "dematerialization" with Argentinian conceptualist Oscar Masotta's formulation, effectively revealing incompatible political stakes of artistic production and "radicalism" in the United States and Argentina, as well as Lippard's often overlooked (and unfulfilled) socialist feminist politics in the larger schema of liberal feminism. The second chapter explores the concept of "anti-intellectualism" in the life and practice of Adrian Piper and offers new ways to engage with her work, such as *The Mythic Being* (1973-1975), beyond commonplace approaches that are hinged on identity, highlighting Piper's status as an immutable intellectual and her unrelenting follow-through of conceptual art's mandate. The last chapter examines Lee Lozano's wild, intense, and brief career as a painter and conceptual artist, centering her 11 private notebooks and early drawings, as well as her infamous action, *Boycott All Women* (1971); I focus on Lozano's rejection of feminism and eventual drop out from the art world as an unprecedented and often misunderstood pursuit of extreme self-definition at the expense of all other personal, intimate, social, professional, and institutional relationships. This analysis contributes to recent studies on dominant and mainstream forms of feminism uncritically prevailing in art historical discourse and concludes with the urgency of recognizing and redeeming the values of individual subjectivity and refusal of the status quo. As Lee Lozano wrote, "I want to believe I have power and complete my own fate."

Introduction
"The Personal is Conceptual"

> "NYC: A decade of competiveness. Where competition thrives, friends can't exist."
>
> – Lee Lozano, May 1970

The late 1960s is a period in history marked by active protest movements, violence, social uprisings, and significant structural shifts in political systems. Much of this is tethered to the longstanding conflict in Vietnam known as the Second Indochina War or simply the Vietnam War or the Resistance War against America—depending on the location of the historical narrative. For the most part, the US-led invasion and occupation of Vietnam, which lasted from 1955 to 1975, was an extension of Cold War politics against communism. Lasting for two decades and involving the military support to the United States by other anti-communist allies including the Philippines, Australia, and South Korea with additional support by the United Kingdom, Western Germany and Spain against communist allies to Northern Vietnam (and the Viet Cong), which included China, the Soviet Union and Cuba, among others—the conflict caused devastation to South Vietnam (where it was primarily staged) with a casualty count, both military and civilian, in the hundreds of thousands.

In the United States, protests against the war targeted specific aspects of US military strategies brought on by increased military deployment and the switch from offensive military strike tactics into defensive, on-the-ground combat, which quickly increased the number of soldiers deployed and subsequently, wounded or killed. By the

late 1960s, the continued violence in Vietnam came to a head with public outcry over media coverage showing photographs portraying the horrific My Lai massacre on March 16, 1968 in the Son My village in Quang Ngai province in South Vietnam, where a US military platoon executed nearly 400 Vietnamese civilians including men, women, children, and infants and burned their bodies. Almost immediately, demonstrations, protests, and revolts against the war escalated internationally, amidst the backdrop of domestic unrest in the United States, including the Second Wave Feminist Movement, Chicano/a activism in the southwest, protests demanding farm workers' rights, the Civil Rights movement throughout the south, along with increased university student-led anti-war demonstrations and the fight for desegregation.

Also during this period, artists engaged, critiqued, and reflected upon their role in political life. "Dematerialization" and conceptual art, or conceptualism, formed as a response to both the dominance of modernist criticism led by conservative critic Clement Greenberg and those that followed his emphasis on material specificity and "form" over content and to an expanding commercialized art market in an era of increasing anti-intellectualism. Artists such as Hans Haacke, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Adrian Piper, and others produced art that centralized the idea or concept while simultaneously attempting to de-privilege the high status of art objects. Additionally, the transformation of many social institutions across the country, including universities and museums that opened up to larger audiences, was a direct result of critical pressure placed on them by artists, students, activists, and other agitators, intersecting with the desegregation efforts and equal pay activism. This is best (albeit narrowly) represented by the Art Workers'

Coalition and the efforts by many of its associated members, often discussed as radical for establishing new avenues for artists to engage politics, art, and institutions by establishing artist fee structures and free museum admissions day as a gesture toward democratizing the elitist spaces of art.

At the same time, the Second-wave of feminism promoted the mantra, "the personal is political" and the dominant form of feminism—liberal feminism—became synonymous with attempting to eliminate gendered binaries, particularly between the public sphere and the domestic or private sphere. This type of liberal feminist reform opened up opportunities for women in areas of employment but also instituted a type of 'women's liberation' that prioritized the demands of mostly white, middle-class, heterosexual women. This is because the goals were motivated to reform existing institutional structures—employment in patriarchal capitalist settings, compensation in its capital and upward mobility to its rewards, rather than to eradicate them, as was the central tenet of diverse radical feminist thinkers of the time including bell hooks, Angela Y. Davis, Marilyn Frye, Mary Daly, the Redstockings collective and many others.

Radical feminisms during this time were against the grain or beyond the scope of the then newly formed women-focused, liberal feminist organizations like the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) founded in 1966 by Betty Friedan and Pauli Murray and *Ms. Magazine* founded in 1971 by second-wave feminist icon Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pitman Hughes.[12] Feminist philosopher and theorist Marilyn Frye felt that many

[1] There were many women-focused groups and organizations that formed to advance the visibility of women's issues, however loosely defined. In contemporary art, liberal feminist figures such as Judy Chicago were instrumental in reforming studio practice and

of the liberal reforms were ineffective and wrote about the basis of the polarity between reformist and radical politics as one that is belied by systemic assimilation or separatism. In *Some Reflections on Separatism and Power*, Frye wrote, "The theme of separation is noticeably absent or heavily qualified in most of the things I take to be personal solutions and Band-Aid projects, like legalization of prostitution, liberal marriage contracts, improvement of the treatment of rape victims and affirmative action. It is clear to me, in my own case at least, that the contrariety of assimilation and separation is one of the main things that guides or determines assessments of various theories, actions, and practices as reformist or radical, as going to the root of the thing or being relatively superficial."[3] For Frye, radical separation is an ideological counter to patriarchal society and does not end at pragmatic reform but rather, complete transformation.

Although many feminist scholars and activists—then and now—were quick to critique the predominance of white middle-class women with normative interests at the center of the second-wave, contemporary art history has yet to meaningfully sustain such a critique. In fact, other forms of feminism that we know today such a Black feminism, lesbian separatism, Chicana feminism, to name a few, were often dismissed, in the 1960's

---

with Sheila deBretville and Arlene Raven, went onto to found the Woman's Building in Los Angeles in 1973.

[2] As access to affordable printing increased during a massive shift in communications and

[3] Marilyn Frye, "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power" (1978), in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, 2nd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2005), 233.

and 1970's, as radical and/or special-interest, viewed as being at odds with the larger (and more valued) movement, only to later serve as the basis for liberal reforms into law.[4]

Like conceptual art, feminism also attracted women with artistic aspirations that were previously unexplored or acknowledged in the male-dominated art world and were further enticed by conceptualism's engagement with expanded forms of communication technologies such as video, performance, text, and print-based media. If conceptualism could be a medium, feminism would be the message. But as hooks suggests, "What other group of women in the United States had the same access to universities, publishing houses, mass media, money?... As more and more women acquired prestige, fame, or money from feminist writings or from the feminist movement for equality in the work force, individual opportunism undermined appeals for collective struggle. Women who were not opposed to patriarchy, capitalism, classism, or racism labeled themselves 'feminist.'"[5] Feminism was not free of gendered power dynamics and those in its majority lacked a commitment to self-reflexivity in their pursuit of uncritical institutional inclusion and expanding the status quo.

Although conceptualism was an important avenue for critical and politically minded artists, its relationship to second wave feminism, which emerged concurrently, remains piecemeal at best. As such, there continues to be a reductive understanding of

[4] There is an excellent historical examination of the ways in which various radical feminisms became institutionalized culturally and politically in the United States, fitting into liberal and neoliberal modalities presented in *Governance Feminism: An Introduction* (2018) by Janet Halley, Prabha Kotiswaran, Rachel Rebouché, and Hila Shamir.

[5] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 7.

feminism in contemporary art history, which calls for both a more nuanced and expanded discussion of feminist politics in art, as well as a critical exploration of their respective limitations and deeply embedded tensions. How might we reconsider the push for collective identity, in the historical context of the 1960s and into the 1970s and as reflected in the feminist movement (and to a lesser degree, claims made by "art workers") as conditions of exclusion rather than inclusion? In order to respond to such a critical inquiry, it's necessary to start at the beginning: the allure and failure of conceptual art.

Conceptual Art

As the hackneyed story goes, Clement Greenberg first introduced notions of what was to become his formalist model of criticism in the 1939 article titled, "Avant-garde and Kitsch" published in the *Partisan Review*, where he framed avant-garde art as transcendental and dismissed referential or content oriented work as "kitsch."[6] During the period of the Cold War, Abstract Expressionism became the highest form of art with the likes of Jackson Pollock, Rothko, Willem de Kooning, and Hans Hofmann—all of whom were championed by Greenberg's modernist critical model.[7] The prevailing critical position of Clement Greenberg and later, Michael Fried's formalism, was rooted in a privileging of formal qualities – line, color, composition, material – over content, in favor

[6] Clement Greenberg. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." (1939) in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate.* (London: Routeledge, 2000) 48-59.
[7] Much has been written on Greenberg and Fried and their formalist models of criticism and its domination, particularly in the pages of Artforum. For a more comprehensive reading on the topic I suggest Amy Newman, *Challenging Artforum, 1962-1974*, (New York: Soho Press, 2003).

of a highly coded aesthetic form and detached entirely from the artist's intention. Greenbergian formalism dominated critical discourse in the post-WWII period and well into the 1960s until important social and political shifts occurred, including the formation of minimalist and conceptual art. These art practices provided a strict countering critical position to the logic of formalism and its prescriptive aesthetic limitations.

However, within the climate of modernist criticism, there were expansions and experimentations in art production that gave way to conceptualism's formation. It is necessary to outline, in part, a general understanding of these historical antecedents. Art historian Alexander Alberro in his introduction to *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* presents four historical precursors to the formation of American conceptual art in 1966. The first is a form of "self-reflexivity" established in modernist painting and sculpture that "systematically problematizes and dismantles the integral elements of the traditional structure of the artwork."[8] Because much of conceptual art considers all elements of the work—not just the object itself but the process and conditions of production and presentation as well—technical skill, and other formalist concerns are leveled or abandoned. The second criteria is a form of "reductivism" whereby artists challenged the privileging of an artwork's object qualities and reduced them to a near or complete dematerialized state, in order to destabilize the emphasis on visual reception in order to open up the possibility of alternative modes of engagement with art. Closely related to the second criteria, Alberro identifies the "negation of aesthetic content" as the third.

---

[8] Alexander Alberro, "Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977," introduction, in ,*Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), xxvi.

With traceable roots to artist Marcel Duchamp's notion of the "ready-made", the negation of aesthetic content explores art as a form of information and this is evident in many conceptual works that focus on the visual qualities of language and text. The last historical precursor to conceptual art is a question of placement. With the introduction of new information and communication technologies and the expansion of media and networked infrastructures such as television and satellite technology during the 1950's, Alberro notes, "Among the results of this lineage will be the melding of the work with the surrounding architectural environment, and its integration within the context of publicity…"[9] The consideration of placement or location and mode of encountering the artwork is especially significant through conceptualism's history and that of minimalism, land art and more recently, consideration of "site-specificity" particularly explored in performance and socially engaged art today.

Some of the early conceptual artists include Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, and the group known as Art & Language focused on linguistic systems as their starting point. Kosuth's 1969 essay on conceptualism titled "Art After Philosophy" explicates an aesthetic theory by which artists' primary concern should be the nature of art itself as a critical distinction away from linguistic positivism.[10] Kosuth advocated for an avant-garde approach to art making, away from the conventional categories of painting and sculpture, and into other forms of communication. It would be false to assume uniformity among all conceptual artists. In fact, another key figure in the formation of conceptual

[9] Ibid, xvii.
[10] This is mostly a response to the ideas expressed in A.J. Ayer's text Language, Truth and Logic (1936) as noted by Alberro. I discuss Kosuth's "Art After Philosophy" in chapter two.

art, Sol LeWitt emphasized the process of art making over the object entirely because the process levels the pretense of rationality. Process itself, according to LeWitt, does not follow a sequential order that requires intuition, creativity, or any type of rational thought. As noted by Alberro, Kosuth felt as though the audience could either understand the artwork or not; whereas, LeWitt felt as though the audience for art was limitless and multifarious.

Conceptual art endeavored to reflect the status of art as one that is inherently interdisciplinary and impossible to close off into a separate "art world". The particular forms of intellectualism—philosophical, literary, and scientific—expressed in conceptual art of the time are what empowered it to effect change in the institutions in which it was invested. The modernist impulse of criticism during the period was a specialized form of language in which art became encoded and was intended only for those privileged or enlightened enough to decode—namely critics themselves. For conceptual artists, many of whom were writers in their own right, the engagement with other systems of knowledge production, such as literary or scientific associations, was not only necessary in claiming autonomy of their art practices but also, revealing of a significant historical foundation of interdisciplinarity in art production itself.

In 1973, occasional conceptualist Robert Smithson voiced his frustrations with conceptual art's assumed political potential stating, "I think it is time we realized that there is no point in trying to transcend those realms. Industry, commercialism, and the bourgeoisie are very much with us... this whole notion of trying to form a cult that tries to

transcend all this strikes me as a kind of religion in drag."[11] What reads initially as a disinterested dismissal (which it still may be) of his somewhat naïve contemporaries and their radical aims, can also be read as his awareness of the privileged status of art production at the time in the United States, amid much more powerful economic forces in an increasingly oligarchical democratic system. Smithson was not the only one to see the heavy promises made by conceptual art and the unlikelihood of their fulfillment. In fact, when we look back at Conceptual Art, it is often viewed through the lens of failure.

Conceptual Dissonance

> Just as the modernist critique (and ultimate prohibition) of figurative representation had become the increasingly dogmatic law for pictorial production in the first decade of the twentieth century, so Conceptual Art now instated the prohibition of any and all visuality as the inescapable aesthetic rule for the end of the twentieth century. Just as the readymade had negated not only figurative representation, authenticity, and authorship while introducing repetition and the series (i.e., the law of industrial production) to replace the studio aesthetic of the handcrafted original, Conceptual Art came to displace even that image of the mass-produced object and its aestheticized forms in Pop Art, replacing an aesthetic of industrial production and consumption with an aesthetic of administrative and legal organization and institutional validation.[12]

Benjamin Buchloh's "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions" is an exposition of conceptual art's failure from the vantage point of the early 1990s citing that the aims of conceptual art disrupting the

---

[11] Robert Smithson and Alison Sky, "Entropy Made Visible: Interview with Alison Sky," essay, in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 1996), 303.

[12] Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (1990): 141. https://doi.org/10.2307/778941

conventions of visuality and the procedures of object-making only gave way to a "violent restoration of traditional artistic forms and procedures of production". What follows is a curiously narrow detailing of a conceptual art framed as a counter-historical reflection, that promises to skirt the standard art historical processes of relying on long concretized and "self-declared" primary actors as well as foregoing any sort of "scholarly obedience" to the proclaimed agendas of the time, which Buchloh considers "voiced with the (by now hilarious) self-righteousness that is continuous within the tradition of hypertrophic claims made in avant-garde declarations of the twentieth century."[13]

However appropriate Buchloh's mention of conceptual art and minimalism's close relationship and Conceptual Art's overlapping formation based on differences among artists pertaining to the reception of minimalist sculpture—where Sol LeWitt emerged on one level and Joseph Kosuth on another; it still seems odd that Buchloh defaults to the very conventional logic of such primary actors. Perhaps that is more revealing of his own conventional anchoring than anything else. In fact, Buchloh's historical reflection is only concerned with object-making and the loose influences of conceptual art in the process of object-making and not so much with the aesthetic experience as promoted by many conceptualists.

Buchloh's critical process is a curious pairing of all male minimalists with all male conceptualists as a way of illustrating the way in which conceptual artists operated as mere "figure[s] of reference" for minimalist artists emerging around 1965. These pairs include Dan Graham and Sol LeWitt; Mel Bochner and Dan Flavin; Joseph Kosuth and

[13] Ibid, 107-108.

Donald Judd and although his selections are unfortunately narrow, one can recognize the influential exchanges between the artists that Buchloh raises. But, even presently, these examples are quite strange in their deviation from the concerns of Conceptualism when it comes to aesthetic experience and modes of reception and as Buchloh's critique progresses, he remains focused more on the relationship between Minimalism and Conceptual Art than a closer analysis of the various promises, aims, and tensions of Conceptual Art itself. Rather than trace through the Minimalist screen Buchloh situates Conceptual Art within, I will focus the central aspect of his critique and that is the "aesthetic of administration".

Buchloh takes on an early piece by conceptual art primary actor Sol LeWitt, *Untitled (Red Square, White Letters),* (1962) where the surface of the work possesses inscriptions in block letters identifying the color and shape on the work's surface such "RED SQUARE"; "WHITE LETTERS"; "WHITE LETTERS"; and so on in an ordered system of nine squares delineated and contained on the surface of one larger encompassing square plane with the central square completely removed, a spatial void. For Buchloh, LeWitt's overlaying of linguistic and perceptual experiences signals a tautological aspiration, rooted in the positivity legacy of sensorial experience, concluding that not only are such empiricist notions of self-reflexivity derived from a modernist compulsion but "for an artistic practice that internalized positivism by insisting on a purely empiricist approach to vision, there would be a final destiny. This destiny would be to aspire to the condition of tautology."[14] Buchloh posits that LeWitt's aesthetic

[14] Ibid, 115.

experience, however influenced by scientific methodologies and systems, was ultimately a new extension of positivism, further evidenced, in LeWitt's "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (1969):

> 1. Conceptual Artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.
> 2. Rational judgments repeat rational judgments.
> 3. Irrational judgments lead to new experience.[15]

The condition of tautological positivism endemic to conceptual art that Buchloh offers here seems to take issue with not only linguistic visuality—whereby any material visualization of language is still an object and therefore, a bland one—but, also a disconnection from conceptual art's proper formative roots in minimalism. As he later details and in what would seem to be antithetical to the Conceptualist agenda: an emphasis on aspects of objects such as the transparency of painting. Considering LeWitt once more, Buchloh views the "dialectic between pictorial surface, frame, and architectural support by either a literal opening up of the painterly supports… or by the insertion of translucent or transparent surfaces into the conventional frame of viewing…"[16] as "proto-conceptual" and "post-Minimal" art at the same time, in a liminal space that ultimately gave way to not just Conceptual Art but Conceptual Art's ultimate failure: its aesthetic of administration.

In the way that Buchloh views conceptual art as indebted to minimalism (as well as positivism, however subconsciously), he positions institutional critique as what came after the failure of conceptual art with its emphasis on language and a more pointed take

[15] LeWitt in Buchloh, 115.
[16] Buchloh, 131.

on authority and use within the parameters of art, as such. His "aesthetic of administration" is a paradox by which "the critical annihilation of cultural conventions itself immediately acquires the conditions of the spectacle, that the insistence on artistic anonymity and the demolition of authorship produces instant brand names and identifiable products, and that the campaign to critique conventions of visuality with textual interventions, billboard signs, anonymous handouts, and pamphlets inevitably ends by following the preestablished mechanisms of advertising and marketing campaigns."[17] For Buchloh, the fact that many conceptual artists attempted to redefine the relationship or art experience among audience, author, and object (or idea) manifest as a series—and in part due to LeWitt's conception of seriality over the individual and singularly constructed object as well as the dissolving of the object's primacy, however loosely defined—of anonymity or deliberately *un-special* gestures, processes, and materials with especially *unromantic* modes of engagement and info-based presentation, together, all precisely revealed a reduction of the artist to the status of a glorified cataloguing clerk and at the expense of the artwork itself.[18] He concludes, in relief, that conceptual art's "transformation of audiences and distribution, its abolition of object status and commodity form—would most of all only be shortlived, almost immediately giving way to the return of the ghostlike reapparations of (prematurely?) displaced painterly and sculptural paradigms of the past. So that the specular regime, which

[17] Ibid, 140.
[18] Ibid, 141.

conceptual art claimed to have upset, would soon be reinstated with renewed vigor. Which is of course what happened."[19]

Buchloh's final dismissal of conceptual art's primary failure—the inability to completely subvert or dismantle market forces—is not an entirely unique position and is also one shared by many of the movement's leading figures, although often not at the tenor of complete failure. In Alberro's assessment of the political stakes of American conceptual art, the notion that conceptual artists were completely trying to reduce the commodity status of art is quite mythical, he writes, "… artists and dealers had to grapple with the problem of how a collector would be able to purchase and possess a work during the early history of conceptualism, but there was never a moment when they did not seek to market the art."[20] However, the intention or desire to produce outside of the market constraints should not be dismissed because of its undeniably encapsulating competency to function as such. Alberro uses the example of minimal and conceptual artist Robert Barry's work during the late 1960s to illustrate the tendency toward dematerialization as not necessarily without material manifestations or consideration but instead, intersecting with trends in advertising, publicity and a sort of "management" of art. Barry had a close relationship with dealer, curator, and researcher Seth Siegelaub, a dynamic figure in the New York conceptualist art scene. Well versed in the political and economic shifts in the art market, Siegelaub advocated for conceptual and minimalist practices of mostly male artists such as Douglas Huebler, Carl Andre, and Robert Barry while staking claim for

[19] Ibid, 143.
[20] Alexander Alberro, "The Contradictions of Conceptual Art ," in *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 4.

himself within the market by producing secondary reception materials—catalogs and advertisements—that could be collected or sold as an extension of primary dematerialized art. Alberro writes that Siegelaub, "…placed the elements that comprised secondary information within the medium of publicity, enabling the fragments to take on their own value. Paradoxically, the very process of problematizing the intimate connection between the aesthetic and the second information that commonly conveyed it thus came to posit publicity as art…. In turn, the traditional distinctiveness of the aesthetic was lost altogether" and for the financial gain and position of Siegelaub and other promotionally minded and freshly minted organizers and managers of conceptual art.[21]

In all of Buchloh's historical reexamination of conceptual art in the United States from 1962-1969, Lucy R. Lippard is the only woman mentioned and his dismissive condescension is both unfortunate and quite revealing of his own biased limitations. After referring to Lippard as "certainly the crucial exhibition organizer and critic of that movement" he quotes from her 1970 curatorial essay from the exhibition, *955,000*, calling it "profoundly utopian (and now unimaginably naïve)" and includes the qualifier that "artists cannot be held responsible for the culturally and politically naïve visions projected onto their work even by their most competent, loyal, and enthusiastic critics" and that previous historical avant-garde movements, which Lippard "desperately attempts to resuscitate" were in fact, entirely absent throughout conceptual art's history. At the

[21] Alexander Alberro, "Dematerialization ," in ,*Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 122.

present moment, Buchloh's position is embarrassingly sexist.[22] He seems somewhat aware of Lippard's contributions to conceptual art but regrettably unable to take them seriously or at least consider them at the level of the artists he credits as its founders. This is all the more interesting when considered in parallel to his preoccupations with minimalism and inability to directly engage with—rather than simply allude to[23]—the social and political as well as aesthetic and linguistic impulses, desires, and reasons behind the formation of conceptual art. His analysis suffers from a common symptom of conservative art historical reflection, which frames entire movements in isolation, as though the artworks were not produced in broader political contexts beyond the narrow confines of dedicated art institutions and by artists living actual complex lives. Moreover, such willful and bizarre oversights (to say the least) advance exploitative systems of value and competition in the meritocracy of art and at the expense of not only wider representation and contribution by historically marginalized groups but also, dangerously, our ability to even recognize and value the would-be contributions as such.

Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub responded to Buchloh, each writing short letters that were published together in *October*.[24] Kosuth took issue with Buchloh's

---

[22] Lippard's feminist activism is explored thoroughly in the first chapter.

[23] On the work of Lawrence Weiner, he writes, "It is a recognition that materials, procedures, surfaces, and textures, locations and placement are not only sculptural or painterly matter to be dealt with in terms of phenomenology of visual and cognitive experience or in terms of a structural analysis of the sign… but that they are always already inscribed within the conventions of language and thereby within institutional power and ideological and economic investment." Buchloh, 136.

[24] A version of Buchloh's essay was published in the exhibition catalog *L'art conceptuel: une perspective* (Paris: Musèe d'art modern de la Ville de Paris, 1989). Kosuth's response was added to the catalog and was then revised for the second edition along with

cherry-picking of examples, mischaracterization of Kosuth's work *Proto-Investigations* (1965, 1966-1968), and concluded that Buchloh was either "breathtakingly ignorant" of the movement or he "intentionally misrepresented facts" of the movement's history to spurn its validity while claiming a false space of authority over it.[25] Siegelaub's concerns had to do with the selective social and historical framing set forth by Buchloh, especially in Buchloh's honoring of Duchamp's influence as his centralized rationale to assess his limited selection of works. Siegelaub critiqued, "… it is hard to imagine how one can deal with [1962-1969] without mentioning, even in a passing footnote… May '68 or the U.S. War in Vietnam, which marked the period, even the art world."[26] He also mentions that one of the difficult aspects of historicizing conceptual art is due to the fact that "during its development there was no art critic who lived the period and 'promoted' and explained it (with the obvious exception of Lucy Lippard in New York, and to a lesser degree Charles Harrison and Michel Claura in Europe)."[27] This seems to be more of a problem with historical methods and art criticism than it does with the movement itself.

Siegelaub concludes his letter with a "random list of some actors 'missing in action'—dematerialized?—who contributed, in one way or another, to the formation of the art historical moment called, for lack of a better term, 'Conceptual Art'" and identifies over 100 expected names such as Baldessari, Smithson, Serra, Irwin, Beuys;

---

the inclusion of Siegelaub's response. Both responses were reprinted in *October* Vol. 57 at Kosuth's request.

[25] Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, "Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art,", *October* 57 (1991): 154. https://doi.org/10.2307/778876.

[26] Ibid, 155.

[27] Ibid, 155.

groups including Guerrilla Art Action Group, the Black Panthers, the Rosario Group, Art & Project, Art Workers' Coalition (AWC); expanded forms associated with conceptualism such as "Video Art", "Land Art", "Process Art" and "Antiform"; historical moments: May of '68, Kent State, The Bay of Pigs; cultural figures like Godard and even the Beatles, and concludes with "and, lest we forget, the Vietnam War."[28] Though the list was not intended to be exhaustive, Siegelaub does not mention feminism, any feminist groups or faction but does list Lucy Lippard, Christine Kozlov, Hanne Darboven, Adrian Piper, Lee Lozano and other women.

It's not my intention to exaggerate Buchloh's reflection or elevate it but rather I emphasize how such neatly packaged declarations of failure by distant critics are as commonplace in art history as are the tragic occlusions of conceptual art's socio-political context, tensions, and generative moments. That is to say that rather than take the varied shortcomings of the conceptualist project as a site of interrogation, with the intent to maintain or recover its significance as a mode of artistic, cultural, and intellectual production during one of the most tumultuous, violent, yet progressive eras in American history, we regrettably remain hinged on archaic formal analyses or default to the economic logic of the market. Less dismissively, Thomas Crow attributed the failure of conceptual art to meaningfully integrate or align with political activism of the era to the demands placed on artists to dedicate both their time and resources to their careers.[29] Although that may be true to some extent, Crow acquiesces to the status quo and in a way

[28] Kosuth and Siegelaub, 157.
[29] Thomas E. Crow, "Artists and Workers ," in ,*The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 180.

that closely parallels the gendered charge of choosing between "family or careers" because women "can't have it all".

The loose parameters of conceptual art are undoubtedly what made it attractive and meaningful for so many; however, others saw it as obtuse, which came at the expense of specificity, complicated further in the context of larger political power dynamics and their social and historical consequences. Moreover, when key figures of the movement like Kosuth or Sieglaub call for an expanded socio-historical view of conceptual art, they often exclude any mention of feminism. This unfortunate truth seems absurd 50 years later.

By way of disruption, I position my analysis as a counter to such critical impulses.

Flipping the record

In what follows, I will demonstrate how a commitment to one's individual sense of self and pursuit to maintain a sense of dignity was put into crisis when set against the pressures of collective identity set for by the mainstream liberal feminist movement and the competitive rationale of the art world. My examination has two parts: the first is tracing a few threads of feminism and art through the career of critic and curator Lucy R. Lippard, a dynamic figure whose unwavering presence and commitment to establishing a solid intersection of feminism and contemporary art during the 1970's in New York City

is a history so rich and revisited that she has since become a feminist icon at a level typically reserved solely for artists.[30]

The introductory chapter explores Lippard's notion of "dematerialization" as presented in her conceptual book project *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object, 1966-1972,* and compares it to the actions of dematerialization in Argentina as a way of detailing the broader political climate and stakes for artists and cultural producers in and outside of the United States. Lippard visited Buenos Aires in 1968 and considered her trip to be a critical turning point in her political consciousness. Upon returning to the US, Lippard became more involved with political actions and in 1970, she became a feminist. Although she is known for initiating and including feminism into her critical and curatorial work, I examine the ways in which her attempts to firmly establish a "feminist art"—mostly by collaborative means—in the art world subsequently shifted her personal feminist politics from liberal and reformist and into a type of socialist feminism. Yet, despite her best efforts, both the marginalization of feminist art and narrow-mindedness of feminism in art remain. Lippard's work as a curator and critic is often viewed as attendant to art and because of that, her political and creative agency are often secondary to the perceived contributions in the name of art and feminism she has forged. To that point, I'll examine some of her lesser known projects such as her experimental novel *I See / You Mean* (1979) and her frequently overlooked identification as a socialist feminist, as well as her disavowal of conceptualism.

[30] This is, of course, not without issues. I do not intend to valorize Lippard so much as reveal a more complex and often contradictory history serving as a moderate foil to the extremes of Piper and Lozano.

The next part of my analysis is focused on two complicated and adamantly individual artists: Adrian Piper and Lee Lozano. Both artists refused the standard protocol and expectations of what it meant to be an artist, a "woman artist", a feminist, and other externalized pressures. They were both drawn to conceptual art for distinct and individual reasons and also briefly participated in political art groups like the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), with Piper also identifying, at the time, as a feminist and attending consciousness-raising (CR) groups; while Lozano, resolutely and infamously not a feminist, briefly supported the Black Panther Party, marching in support alongside them in 1968.[31] With the exception of some fleeting group associations, Piper and Lozano remained on individualized paths; Piper in the name of self-preservation and intellectual coherence and Lozano in much more self-destructive terms but still with the intent of preventing anyone and anything from controlling her. "Despite Lozano's refusal to participate in group political actions, her conceptual strategies frequently sought to address a world beyond that of a philosophically grounded examination of text and language, and, with works such as *Dialogue Piece* in particular, she sought to explore the broader social, psychological, and lived experiences of others in her immediate orbit…" and Applin astutely identified this shift of perspective as a shared commonality between Lozano and Piper for their desire to "inhabit the public sphere in intimate, subjective, and disruptive ways."[32] I share Applin's view of the unlikely parallel of Piper

[31] Entry from February 16, 1968. Lee Lozano, *Private Book 5* (New York, NY: Karma, 2018).
[32] Jo Applin, "Drop Out, Break Down," in *Lee Lozano: Not Working* (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 2018), 136.

and Lozano as well as the position that both artists were engaging in respective philosophical explorations that continue to be largely misunderstood – the latter for her rigidity, rigor, and output and the former for her iconoclastic and contradictory vehemence.

By the mid-1970s, Adrian Piper continued to make work while also pursuing her Ph.D. in analytic philosophy at Harvard University with a specialization in metaethics. Most scholars, art historians, and artists still position Piper and her work in relation to performance art, blackness, and feminism, whether in or outside of them but still always tethered to one or more of those lineages. In my second chapter, I offer a closer examination of Piper's intellectual prowess as a conceptual artist, analytic philosopher, and her less explored practice in Jñāna yoga. I focus specifically on Piper's concept of "xenophobia" and how art audiences may recognize it in the viewing experience of some of her works made during her concurrent training in analytic philosophy including *Art for the Art-world Surface Pattern* (1976), *Aspects of a Liberal Dilemma* (1978) and her celebrated series, *The Mythic Being* (1975). I examine Piper's reflections on race and gender, as significant points of difference and limitations placed on her work. More critically, I argue that her overlooked status as an intellectual during a period of marked (and continued) anti-intellectualism in the United States contributed to Piper's resolute vow to never return to the United States and also, serves as the basis for ongoing misunderstandings and incomplete categorizations of her work.

The final chapter, "Big Mouth Strikes Again: Lee Lozano's Reducible Self" delves into the artist's turbulent relationship to feminism and her self-perception and

rejection of womanhood—as an identity, unappealing role in society, and faulty group association. I explore her early drawings and paintings of objects and tools and body parts in highly charged sexually violent and violently sexual cartoon-like schemas as well as her series of private notebooks, which served as both the origin point for many of her conceptual pieces as well as the action/piece known as *Boycott* (1971) or Decide to Boycott All Women, where Lozano decided to completely ignore all women around her. *Boycott* was and still is an outrageous and extreme experimentation and it reveals not only Lozano's views of feminism in general but also, her own disassociation and complete rejection of any attempt to impose or trespass into her private world. Although her short career in the art world only lasted from approximately 1962-1972, leaving as a result of *Dropout Piece* (1972), where she declared her final exit from all art world activities and obligations, most art historical accounts mythologize the time from 1972-1982, declaring Lozano's whereabouts as largely unknown until she resurfaced in Dallas, TX at the home of her parents 1982. I dispel the myth and locate Lozano in NYC for much of that decade, immersed in the counter-cultural punk scene and consider her life/work alongside that of other iconoclastic and rebellious figures like radical feminist Shulamith Firestone, lesbian separatist Valerie Solanas, and sex-positive feminist and experimental writer Kathy Acker.

Rebel Rebel

In the early stages of my research, I naively believed it possible to locate, distill, or develop a singular and convenient feminist framework—liberal versus radical

feminism or intersectional—by which to assess the dynamic practices and lived experiences of my subjects, as is often the case when it comes to such projects.

That quickly proved lacking. The constellation of feminist thinkers throughout my study, instead, reflects the expanse of feminist critique that emerged during the second wave and also, the difficulty in tracing them through conceptual art.

I explore essentialism in feminist art. According to Angela P. Harris in her essay "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory", gender essentialism is described as "the notion that there is a monolithic 'women's experience' that can be described independently of other facets of experience like race, class, and sexual orientation".[33] This means that socially constructed identity categories, (race, class, gender, sexual orientation and so on) face forms of essentialism. Essentialism implies that there is an "all encompassing experience" that is shared by all members of any social category. As Harris argues, it is problematic in instances of commonality because of its dismissal of multiple forms of oppression brought on by the complexities of social identity.

Black feminism of the 1970's presented as a response to mainstream feminism; in particular, middle-class, white-dominant liberal feminism for the movement's inability to discuss race and class in the struggle to end sexist oppression. bell hooks writes, "Sexism as a system of domination is institutionalized, but it has never determined in an absolute way the fate of all women in this society. Being oppressed means the absence of choices.

[33] Adrien Katherine. Wing and Angela P Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory ," essay, in *Critical Race Feminism: a Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997), 34.

It is the primary point of contact between the oppressed and the oppressor".[34] Within her argument, hooks discussed the need to acknowledge intersections of identity, specifically race, class and gender, as each carry significant social and political meaning throughout society. "There is much evidence substantiating the reality that race and class identity creates differences in the quality of life, social status, and lifestyle that take precedence over the common experiences women share – differences that are rarely transcended".[35] This represents hook's embodiment of anti-essentialism, a critique of the linear experience of womanhood, often assumed to be shared by all women.

As mainstream feminisms continue to move into political, social, and cultural institutions, touting the concept of "intersectionality", it requires much more critical refinement. Jennifer Nash, in "Re-Thinking Intersectionality" posits,

> If Intersectionality theory purports to provide a general theory of identity, it must grapple with whether [it] actually captures the ways in which subjects experience subjectivity or strategically deploy identity. In particular, Intersectionality has yet to contend with whether its theory explains or describes the process and mechanism by which subjects mobilize (or choose not to mobilize) particular aspects of their identities in particular circumstances.[36]

The choice to mobilize, align, or resist and refuse is central to my analysis. I soon realized that in order to approach the politics of the self, the subject, and individual agency of this particular set of women during the time of collective struggle and identity politics, while also examining the limitations of feminist thought and representation

---

[34] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 5.
[35] Ibid, 4.
[36] Jennifer C Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality", *Feminist Review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 11, https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.4.

within contemporary art, I should reconsider aspects of existentialism, a philosophical tradition committed to ideas of autonomy, rejection, independence and free will against the grain of prescribed and collective social roles and functions. Existentialism's major figures such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus addressed not only the struggles of the individual when placed in societal structures not of one's own devising but also, the absurdity of life itself. For my analysis, I found the existential concepts of freedom and rebellion most beneficial and this is not to suggest that I classify or consider the work of my subjects as existentialist but rather, I find aspects of existential thought helpful in generating a deepened critical understanding of their respective practices; which is to say that I also found much of the current interests in feminist art history and criticism to be reactionary and quite lacking in their scope and concerns, with some exceptions.[37]

Recent feminist philosophical explorations have returned to Simone de Beauvoir indicative of a cultural and political need to re-define and re-examine the self in tumultuous times and with respect to collective struggles. In *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir assessed the social dimension of personal freedom as an imposition and describes "serious men" as resigning their own inherent state of freedom into giving "absolute meaning to the epithet 'useful' which in turn has no more meaning if taken by

[37] I explore aspects of contemporary feminist theory in the conclusion but still maintain that there remains much work to be done in order to create and sustain effective conceptual threads from art history to feminism.

itself than the words: high, low, left or right."[38] For de Beauvoir, individuals possess an inherent state of freedom but it is in their willingness to classify themselves alongside others completely—to give yourself over—that further distances one's self from one's own freedom. It is how control is distributed throughout society via an illusion of choice, otherwise known as false consciousness.

Moreover, Beauvoir explains how an individual's chosen identification with any particular institution further undermines one's freedom, stating:

> For the military man, the army is useful; for the colonial administrator, the highway; for the serious revolutionary; the revolution – army, highway, revolution: productions becoming inhuman idols to which one will not hesitate to sacrifice man himself. Therefore, the serious man is dangerous… Dishonestly ignoring the subjectivity of his choice, he pretends that the unconditioned value of the object is being asserted through him; and by the same token he also ignores the value of the subjectivity and the freedom of others, to such an extent that, sacrificing them to the thing, he persuades himself that what he sacrifices is nothing.[39]

For the serious revolutionary, the revolution is often presented as a collective and shared dream that can be made into a reality by a process of adopting the values of revolutionary struggle and then believing that one is acting in accordance to said values. Ultimately, what belies the intentions of a serious man is a moral imperative and system of belief that is effectively indistinguishable from religion. Of course, this can easily extend to perceptions of feminism, as a belief system or identity, by which one views as first useful and then decides to take on the external, associated attributes of it, in purported pursuit of *equality* but at the expense of their own individual freedom. To some extent, conceptual

[38] Beauvoir's gendered pronouns and signification have not been changed here. Simone de. Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, (1947), trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 2015), 33.
[39] Beauvoir, 49.

art could also be viewed as such a belief system but with less conviction. However, I find it more productive to see the way in which conceptual art's desire to reduce the value of the object, challenge authority, and democratize the field of art as lucrative to many feminists and marginalized classes.

In the groundbreaking text, *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir briefly defines what an "independent woman" (from the vantage point of the early 1950s) is like: self-possessed and economically self-sufficient enough to live autonomously as she "refuses to confine herself to her role as female, because she will not escape mutilation; but it would also be a mutilation to repudiate her sex. Man is a human being with sexuality; woman is a complete individual, equal to the male, only if she too is a human being with sexuality. To renounce her femininity is to renounce a part of her humanity."[40] The double-binding inability for a woman to completely escape the imposition of socially defined and expected codes of femininity is certainly not a new concept and has been, thankfully, expanded upon in the decades following this watershed work. Nonetheless, what is still valuable to consider is that Beauvoir recognized a persisting state of confinement that did not permit for a woman to completely renounce or discard her womanhood as it is socially defined, recognized, maintained, and punished as well—at her own free will.[41]

We will see that this same process of essentialist imposition occurred in the second wave feminist movement, by "women artists" often in their attempt to define a

[40] Simone de Beauvoir, "The Independent Woman," in *The Second Sex*, trans. HM Parshley (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1989), 683.
[41] There is a sea of critique in response to de Beauvoir and the confinement of an essentialist 'womanhood' such as Judith Butler's Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse, Julia Kristéva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined" (1981), and Gloria Anzaldúa's "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness".

'female aesthetic' out of the necessity for visibility, while inadvertently applying and therefore, reaffirming, a sexist logic and system of value. This is how and when feminism in art became a conflation of art made by women with artworks that possessed a recognizable set of predetermined a priori elements, such as thematic representations of *the body*, as a response to the nude, sites of violence, and pleasure centers; as well as the family, motherhood, and domesticity; to critiques of the representation of women in mass media and culture (The Guerrilla Girls, Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman and so on). Even in 1971, at the peak of Lucy Lippard's advocating for feminist politics in contemporary art, she too questioned the essentialist notion of womanhood, asking if there could be such a thing as a "women's art", only to concede by stating, "However, the overwhelming fact remains that a woman's experience in this society—social and biological—is simply not like that of a man. If art comes from inside, as it must, then the art of men and women must be different too. And if this factor does not show up in women's work, only repression can be to blame."[42]

The charge of repressed (essentialized) womanhood is critical and not at all unusual for the time. Lippard's investment was in the social (and publicly) political feminist movement and it aligned with her desire to bring as much of it into the spaces of contemporary art; so much so, that a latent policing of feminism is evident. For as much as Lippard, and others like her, wanted to claim a proverbial *seat at the table*, in this instance, she tacitly extended essentialist notions of "womanhood" by asserting that a

[42] Lucy R. Lippard, "Prefaces to Catalogs of Three Women's Exhibitions (1971)" in *The Pink Glass Swan Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (New York, NY: New Press, 1995), 57.

woman must contend with the imposition of "being a woman" in their work and in a way that would be recognizable as such. While this kind of method of identification was undeniably valuable for some at the time, it's also evident that such a limited set of expectations restricted "women's art" to a peripheral position while also producing a tense relationship with and myopic view of other women artists, or women who happened to also be artists. The confinement of identity, established outside of the individual but imposed upon them was especially troublesome for those who deliberately rejected the imposition, in favor of self-preservation, and was often met with varying degrees of sacrifice and consequence.

However, such circumstances of alienation often led the staunch individual towards rebellion. Albert Camus' extended essay *The Rebel* (1951) explored the concepts of rejection, refusal, and rebellion as necessary reactions to conditions of injustice, "The rebel simultaneously experiences a feeling of revulsion at the infringement of his rights and a complete and spontaneous loyalty to certain aspects of himself… Awareness… develops from every act of rebellion: the sudden, dazzling perception that there is something in man with which he can identify himself, even if only for a moment…"[43] The rebel rejects oppression as a way to affirm one's individual dignity and does so at the risk of one's life, status, perceived stability, and in pursuit of liberation. It is not a naïve condition of denial or resentment. Liberation according to Camus, means to not only be released from oppression but to live in such a way that your spiritual freedom and ability

[43] Albert Camus, *The Rebel: an Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1991), 14.

to express yourself is not impeded, undermined, and otherwise threatened and it typically emerges at the point of loss, ostracism, and confinement. What is crucial to underscore is that the rebel prioritizes their own existence and sense of self over the demands of any external pressure and by any means necessary, for the loss of circumstantial states of existence is a relatively minor toll to exact when weighed against a complete loss of one's dignity.

Although the historical and contemporary archetype of "the rebel", including Camus' formation, is predominately and problematically male, it should not delimit its resonate potential especially in the realm of gender and sexual politics. To that point, Elizabeth Ann Bartlett offers a productive and albeit unlikely synthesis of Camus' rebellion and aspects of feminism, recognizing that one crucial shared commonality between them is the view that "[r]ebellion, in whatever form, is a refusal to be treated with anything less than the full measure of dignity and decency that one's humanity demands."[44]

There are plenty of accounts detailing the value of the individual, the rebel, and identity with respect to coalitional and collective struggles. It is difficult, however, to identify a rebellious thread across disparate art practices and lived experiences while maintaining the integrity of the both the individual and offering something critical and cohesive to the field. As noted by Jayne Wark, women in the 1970's were just beginning

[44] Elizabeth Ann Bartlett, *Rebellious Feminism: Camus's Ethic of Rebellion and Feminist Thought* (New York City, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 44.

to take on subjectivity and 'otherness' seriously.[45] Each chapter of my analysis looks at specific socio-political conditions, or 'situations' to use Beauvoir's term, and places each subject within their respective states of discontent regarding mainstream feminism and the art world: Lucy Lippard's socialist feminism, Adrian Piper in the culture of anti-intellectualism, and Lee Lozano's proto-punk politics of rejection. This is a project intended to recover and maintain the individual and often rebellious spirit of the subjects and respectively frame them within their draws to conceptual art and with varying degrees of engagement or proximity to the larger second-wave feminist movement, in a broader socio-political context.

It is also worth noting that despite passive assertions of conceptual art's "failure", Lippard, after leaving NYC, continued to write addressing subjects and themes previously associated with conceptual art such as land and the environment while continuing to cultivate her own individualized feminist perspective in her writing, without restriction or the need for institutionalized professionalization. However, Lippard did not see the conceptualist project through. All the while, both Piper and Lozano did not abandon the life-as-art process that attracted them to conceptual art in the first place. Piper still identifies as a conceptual artist and Lozano, as we will see, turbulently carried out her conceptual project all the way through until her death in 1999. Lippard considers herself among this more utopian branch of conceptual art because of the "openness to everything extant… we were obsessed with time and space, body and mapping,

[45] Jayne Wark, "Conceptual Art and Feminism: Martha Rosler, Adrian Piper, Eleanor Antin, and Martha Wilson," *Woman's Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (2001): 46. https://doi.org/10.2307/1358731.

perception, measurements, definitions, the literal and the quotidian, and with enigmatic, tedious activities… the kind of unexceptional lived experience that might not be available to those not living it."[46]

For them, the personal was conceptual all along.

[46] Lucy R Lippard, "Curating by Numbers: Landmark Exhibitions Issue – Tate Papers," Tate, January 26, 2012, https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/curating-by-numbers.

Chapter One
"Elusive Success and Possible Happiness: Dissolving Forms and Feminism with Lucy Lippard"

> The personal is political because if we don't know who we are and where we come from we are going to be singularly ineffective at knowing anyone else, at working together for change. On the other hand, the danger in an overemphasis on the politics of the personal is yet another wave of bourgeois narcissism—the trap into which women have already been plunged by a consumer society. Our emphasis on autobiography and self is not, hopefully, about self-indulgence, but about an expressive feminist analysis of our common lives as women. Art can reflect to a larger audience the best that feminism has to offer—not just the aesthetic quality, but caring and content too—elements without which so-called quality is 'merely' aesthetic… by knowing our own days will help us to recognize similar shreds in others' lives, and once this is recognized, it will help us to shed the sexist and classist and too often racist conditioning that has built obstacles between women. Taking responsibility for one's own images and their effect (whether those images are 'abstract' or brutally honest), deciding for oneself whether contact is being made – these are important aspects of art-making that the feminist consciousness-raising and self-criticism techniques make more accessible.[47]
>
> – Lucy Lippard, 1979

By the late 1960s, Conceptual Art in the United States—with New York City as its central playground—had already established itself as an ambiguous, alluring, often naïve but nonetheless expansive (too expansive?) mode of production at the height of the Vietnam War and in one of the most dynamically transformative decades of social and political re-definition in US history. Conceptualism emerged after the postwar period of Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art and the dominance of modernist authoritative critics such as Clement Greenberg. It shared many tendencies with minimalism as well as artists

[47] Cornelia H. Butler, "Women-Concept-Art: Lucy R. Lippard's Numbers Shows," essay, in *,From Conceptualism to Feminism Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows, 1969-74* (London: Afterall Books, 2012), 88-89.

who straddled the line between them. Perhaps one of conceptualism's earliest alluring qualities was the promise of expansion of many of art's narrow channels of production including reaching wider audiences, engaging and representing historically marginalized artists, particularly women and people of color, and accentuating minimalism's emphasis on spatial experience by foregrounding a process of intellection whereby ideas and information become and could possibly superseded the privileged status of the material object. With the plight of desegregation and protests seeking equality throughout the country, it should come as little surprise that many systematically excluded artists also desired to enter into the art world and believed, for various personal and professional reasons, conceptual art to be a viable option for admission.

In her 1967 essay, "Change and Criticism: Consistency and Small Minds," Lucy R. Lippard discussed the role of the critic stating, "Criticism has little to do with consistency; for consistency has to do with logical systems, whereas criticism is or should be dialectical, and thrive on contradiction and change."[48] Lippard started working as a free-lance art critic in 1964 and contributed regularly to *Art International* and *The Hudson Review*. The volume, *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* is a collection of critical essays from the early part of her career. In terms of subject, the essays vary considerably – there's one on Max Ernst and the shift from Dada to Surrealism, formal concerns including an essay, "As Painting Is to Sculpture: A Changing Ratio" and others on artists Sol LeWitt and Robert Mangold. But to discuss Lippard's writing and cultural work detached from the social and political climate of the 1960s, would be a mistake. She was

[48] Lucy Lippard, "Change and Criticism: Consistency and Small Minds," (1967) in *Changing: Essays on Art Criticism*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1971), 25.

an active curator and activist as well as an archivist and mother to a son, Ethan, born in 1964 with her then-husband, artist Robert Ryman. And her tenacious work as a critic during the time was set against the dominating backdrop of formalist criticism, as was the case for many feminist artists and writers. She was born in New York City in 1937 and lived between NYC, New Orleans, and Charlottesville, Virginia. She earned her BA from Smith College and an MA from NYU's Institute of Fine Arts. As noted, she began her career as a freelance critic and began curating exhibitions shortly after. By the mid-1970's, Lippard had already published a dozen books and hundreds of articles on contemporary art, received a Guggenheim fellowship, and was supported by two National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants. Lippard also wrote a column for *The Village Voice* and was a co-founder of both the *Heresies* feminist publishing collective and of Printed Matter, an independent bookstore and arts space, still open today. Notable curated exhibitions include *Eccentric Abstraction* (1966), a group show featuring sculptures by Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman, and others, which introduced the postminimalist aesthetic of process-based work and her *Numbers* series of conceptual exhibitions, each taking titled by the approximate population of the city in which they were held: *'557,087'* in Seattle in 1969, *'955,000'* in Vancouver in 1970, *'2,972,453'* in Buenos Aires, also in 1970. The series foregrounded the conceptualist mode of indexical information presentation while also shifting conventional roles in exhibition making and art production: the catalogs were a collection of loose index cards, blurring the lines between publication and artwork.

In this opening chapter, I examine Lippard's dynamic historical presence and varied contributions to the field of contemporary art, feminism, curatorial practice, and critical writing. She provides an indispensible point of entry into tracing feminist politics and conceptual art, as well as their inevitable fissures. I will address Lippard's conceptual and curatorial book project *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object, 1966-1972* and her concept of "dematerialization" to examine the political stakes of conceptual art along the lines of dematerialization in the United States and in Argentina, which forms the basis of a productive comparison and counter-narrative to ongoing reductive views of art and politics during the time with emphasis placed on the reformist aims of art workers in the United States and limitations of feminism in art.

Next, I will look closer at Lippard's writing practice and feminist politics leading up to and after she left New York City in 1977. Although she is a widely celebrated figure in the narrow confines of feminist art history, we have yet to explore the ways in which Lippard's attempt to bridge feminism beyond its liberal aims and contemporary art were unfulfilled, even when it appears otherwise. To that point, I will detail Lippard's transition from liberal and mainstream feminism to socialist feminism. This period of time marks a significant shift away from conventional arts criticism and curating, when she travelled to England to complete writing her first (and only) experimental novel *I See / You Mean* (1979). Well known for her collective organizing and collaborative efforts, as well as her critical advocacy for conceptualism and minimalism, this section, instead, looks specifically at Lippard's self-governed approach to her work and life as a writer (not a critic) and feminist activist.

Dematerialization: here and there

The article titled, "The Dematerialization of Art" by Lippard and John Chandler was first published in an issue of *Art International* from February 1968. For Lippard and Chandler, "Dematerialized art is post-aesthetic only in its increasingly non-visual emphases. The aesthetic of principle is still an aesthetic… the scientist's attempt to discover, perhaps even to impose order and structure on the universe, rests on assumptions that are essentially aesthetic. Order itself, and its implied simplicity and unity, are aesthetic criteria."[49] This assertion of dematerialized or "idea art" or "post-aesthetic art"[50] was in critical response to the 1960s terrain of accelerated industrialized processes and forms of anti-intellectualism in cultural practices and social spheres. Dematerialization, in this context, specifically means art that emphasizes "the thinking process almost exclusively"[51] and for that, it need not be immaterial per se but rather, operate on a conceptually rich level first and foremost.

Lippard and Chandler conclude their essay with a historical disconnection from the "less is more" ideal extending from the Bauhaus mandate—as a modernist via Greenberg corollary. Pointing to the failure of previous art movements like Constructivism that attempted to use art, architecture, and design as ways of unifying all elements of society and in a somewhat polemic fashion, they finish with the question, "Has an ultimate zero point been arrived at with black paintings, white paintings, light

---

[49] Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art ," in ,*Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 48.
[50] At various portions of the essay, the authors refer to conceptual art or dematerialized art as "idea art", "ultra-conceptual art" and "post-aesthetic" somewhat interchangeably.
[51] Ibid, 48.

beams, transparent film, silent concerts, invisible sculpture, or any of the other projects mentioned above? It hardly seems likely."

Unsurprisingly, the essay received some critical dissention and general rejection. German conceptual artist Hanne Darboven, best known for detailed installation of handwritten tables, charts, and numbers, wrote a statement to Lippard regarding her own practice as an artist in terms of the material elements declaring, "The materials consist of paper and pencil with which I draw my conceptions, write words and numbers, which are the simplest means for putting down my ideas; for ideas do not depend on materials. The nature of ideas is immateriality."[52] Darboven insists that "idea art" is problematic in that ideas themselves are not material, asserting an inherent disconnection between the process referred to by Lippard and Chandler and the product.

British conceptual artist Terry Atkinson also responded to the essay, writing a letter directly to Lippard and Chandler dated March 23, 1968. In it, Atkinson inquires about the metaphorical use of "dematerialization" against the actuality of dematerializing processes. He was somewhat confused by Lippard and Chandler's formulation because it seemed to indicate, citing the Oxford English Dictionary definition, that no actual deprivation of material qualities occurred in the examples of "idea" art provided by Lippard and Chandler in their text. Atkinson continued to state that while he considered the essay an "important document in pointing out some recently developed directions of artistic sensibility… any elucidation, extrapolation, explication, formulation etc. of such a

[52] Previously unpublished letter from 1968.. Hanne Darboven, "Statement to Lucy Lippard, (1968), in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 62-64.

development will itself have to develop and use a far more stringent terminology and dialectic than that…"[53] calling for a more decisive or deliberate conceptualization of "dematerialization." Citing artwork produced in collaboration with artist Michael Baldwin, Atkinson pushes for a more focused formulation of "dematerialization" toward a broad but specific construction of conceptualism as a whole, offering, "The principles of aesthetics are an accepted area of philosophical investigation but the aesthetic of principle is quite another." He continued by speculating on the disparate areas of literary criticism and thermodynamics in accordance with Lippard and Chandler's use of the "aesthetic of principles" by imagining two books titled, *The Aesthetic of the Principles of Literary Criticism* or *The Aesthetics of the Principles of Thermodynamics* and asking, "Would then two books, to be purely speculative, trace the origins of, say, the principles of literary criticism and those of thermodynamics to the same principle of principles?"[54] Lippard would later re-consider her definition of the term while still maintaining an expanded use of it.

[53] Alexander Alberro, Blake Stimson, and Terry Atkinson, "Concerning the Article 'The Dematerialization of Art' (1968)," in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 53.
[54] Ibid, 56.

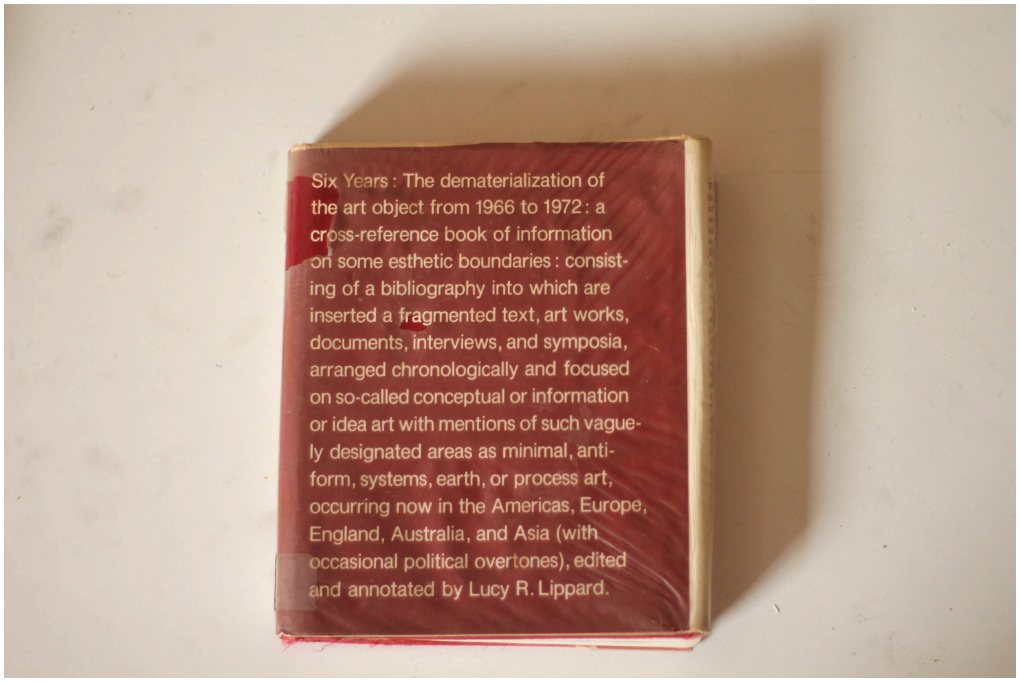

Figure 1.1: Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries* .. (New York: Praeger, 1973). http://cargocollective.com/shitbirthday/Six-Years-The-Dematerialization-of-the-Art-Object-from-1966-to-1972

As an extension of her affinity for archiving coupled with an ongoing desire to challenge the authoritative structures of art, in 1973, Lippard published *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972*. The book endeavored to reorder the logic of historical processes through a chronological listing of entries without adhering to a categorical strategy.[55] In many ways, *Six Years* can be assessed as a discursive, conceptual object in its own right for its resistance to conventional forms of

[55] The index of the book does have a small system for references where entries listed in italics are texts, boldface are works of art, roman numerial page numbers indicate a quotation, italicized page numbers are citations and boldface page numbers are reproductions, single quotation marks indicate exhibitions and group shows are not indexed. Interestingly, the index was compiled by Carl Andre.

presenting historical material in book format. For example, the full title is printed in sans serif white font, across the entire surface of the cover:

> *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972: a cross-reference book of information on some esthetic boundaries: consisting of a bibliography into which are inserted a fragmented text, art works, documents, interviews, and symposia, arranged chronologically and focused on so-called conceptual or information or idea art with mentions of such vaguely designated areas as minimal, anti-form, systems, earth, or process art, occurring now in the Americas, Europe, England, Australia, and Asia (with occasional political overtones), edited and annotated by Lucy R. Lippard*

The book possesses a timely aesthetic quality of its own when considered alongside other text and language based artwork made during the period. The book chronologically lists exhibitions, performances, publication descriptions, essay and interview excerpts, reproduced images of artwork, installation views, text-based art, reviews, diagrams and much more by emerging and established artists and cultural producers between 1966-1972, primarily active in the NYC area such as Robert Smithson, John Latham, Robert Morris, Yoko Ono, Daniel Buren and many others.

It is nonetheless interesting that the book further solidified Lippard's unique contribution to conceptual art by also crediting the term "dematerialization" to her. In the 1973 preface, Lippard states:

> While these ideas are more or less concerned with what I once called 'dematerialization' of the art object, the form of the book intentionally reflects chaos rather than imposing order. And since I first wrote on the subject in 1967, it has been pointed out to me that dematerialization is an inaccurate term, that a piece of paper or a photograph is as much an object, or as "material," as a ton of lead. Granted. But for lack of a better term I have continued to refer to a process

> of dematerialization, or a deemphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, decorative attractiveness.)[56]

Her reflection of the conceptual framework behind "dematerialization" signals its use as mostly metaphorical and as a desire to categorize the varied forms of production occurring in that period that defied conventional art processes in some way. In that sense, dematerialization in the United States could be better identified by what it was not rather than what it actually was, at least in terms of form. Meaning, it was a critical response and attempt to maintain artistic autonomy away from the ubiquitousness of formalism and the susceptibility of over-simplified commodification in the expanded gallery system. Though the desire to exist outside or resist some object-based market trends was purported in much of conceptual art's intentions, dematerialization was more of an experimental strategy that opened up the possibility of more inclusive and diversified art practices rather than a modality to evade, transform, or shift economic structures. This is especially evident when considering one key aspect of Lippard's work in NYC during that time as a critic and curator—her involvement in second wave feminist activism.

Art Workers in the New Left

There are few more referenced examples of reformist political action among artists during this period than the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) from 1969 in New York City. The collective identity of the Art Workers' Coalition was rooted in their name "art

[56] Lucy R. Lippard, Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries… (New York: Praeger, 1973), 5.

worker" that stemmed from an insistence of art as both a form of cultural production but also a legitimate economy, deeply entrenched in and constitutive of just one prong of the profit-driven goals of capitalism and its exploitative labor structure. Additionally, it was important for the members of the AWC to make the complex structure of art economies palpable, which included established artists such as Hans Haacke, Carl Andre, the frequent collaborators Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge and also other types of art workers, whose labor was vested in art contexts but not as artists exclusively. Lucy Lippard's involvement was integral to the critical advancement of the AWC's goals. As noted by art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Primary among the AWC's ambitions was the public redefinition of artists and critics as workers: these art workers asserted that their practices were located within specific social relations, subject to economic imperatives and exacting psychic costs."[57]

The Art Workers' Coalition formed in 1969 in response to the kinetic sculptor Vassilakis Takis' removal of one of his pieces from the exhibition *The Machine at the End of the Mechanical Age*, at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. Takis did not want his work in the show because he felt it no longer represented him as an artist or his practice. However, the piece was part of the museum's permanent collection and Takis was enraged at the lack of congeniality in communicating his concerns to the museum staff. This ultimately resulted with Takis removing the work, with some friends, from the museum's sculpture garden. Using the incident at MOMA as the impetus to come together and address the complex concerns of artistic production,

[57] Julia Bryan-Wilson, "From Artists to Art Workers" in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 14.

ownership and agency, the Art Workers' Coalition held a meeting at the School of Visual Arts on April 10, 1969 called the "Open Public Hearing on the Subject: What Should Be the Program of an Open Art Workers' Coalition" where hundreds attended and over seventy artists, writers, critics, photographers and activists spoke on a range of issues including the Vietnam War, sexism and racism. In her statement at the Open Hearing, Lucy Lippard expressed her critical stake, as an advocate for "artists' civil rights" in the collective efforts of the AWC noting that the group, at that moment, was "very loosely knit" and "constantly changing," but nevertheless, necessary in moving the conversation forward regarding museums' collection policies.[58]

The formation of the AWC was steeped in the political climate of The New Left in the 1960s and 1970s. Comprised of educators, activists, and students, The New Left advocated for reforms concerning social justice issues including women's rights (primarily pro-choice, abortion rights), sexual and gender equality, and decriminalization of drugs, particularly marijuana. The New Left's activities occurred and often overlapped with the goals of anti-war student-led protests, as an expression of First Amendment Rights, and it closely associated with the Hippie movement.

One of the leading thinkers of The New Left was German-American philosopher and political theorist Herbert Marcuse. An affiliate of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, The New Left for Marcuse veered from other leftist groups active in the United States at the time, particularly in its deviation from the Marxist-influenced focus on labor rights and unionization. Instead, The New Left endeavored to achieve liberation by

[58] Lucy Lippard, "Open Hearing (audio transcription)," (1969) in *Art Workers' Coalition: Documents and Open Hearing*, (Spain: Editorial Doble J, 2009), no numeration.

means of social, sexual, and, in some cases, utopic rejection of state-reinforced morality rather than identify simply as "laborers." Marcuse famously synthesized Marx and Freud in his 1955 book *Eros and Civilization*, positing that a socialist society would be one where the performance of the poor (or class oppression) and continued sexual repression would cease to exist in exchange for a "non-alienated libidinal work."[59] But because many of those in The New Left were active intellectuals in the American university system, during a period of racial, sexual, and class oriented institutional exclusion, it is crucial to consider the actions of the AWC and other radical cultural producers of the time as possibly reinforcing longstanding patriarchal capitalist forms of marginalization in the very institutions The New Left wished to transform.[60]

The 1969 publication titled "Documents | Open Hearing" by the AWC is a collection documentation, newspaper clippings, memos, agendas, opinion pieces, letter exchanges, and other types of documentation from various associated members leading up to the infamous public Open Hearing in April of 1969. In facsimile form, the collection begins with the inscription, "Other groups with goals similar to those of the AWC are invited to make free use of the contents of this publication for the purpose of

[59] Robert M. Young, *The Naked Marx: Review of Herbert Marcuse,* Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud, New Statesman, (1969), vol. 78, 7 November 1969, 666-67.

[60] I do not wish to discredit the efforts of the AWC or even those in The New Left nor am I proposing that they were single-handedly responsible for reinforcing marco level class privilege at the expense of working class people for their own gain. In fact, many of those active in The New Left were quite aware of the competitive fracturing of progressive movements as well as their own position of privilege and some methodically used their positions to advance the efforts of other groups in which they were not formally a part.

realizing our common aims"[61] as an assertion of a singular group identity. Additionally, as noted by Julia Bryan-Wilson in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, the AWC was more of a "provisional coalition of disparate individuals", many of who were left leaning politically, although, as she passively glosses over in a parenthetical, "Ironically, racism and sexism would become insurmountable internal problems that led in part to the demise of the coalition."[62]

Although that irony is somewhat lost on me, it's worth citing one particular example of resistance to the liberal aims of inclusion. A group of artists associated with the AWC drafted "minority reports" to express dissatisfaction over the organizational process of the AWC meetings stating,

> On Friday evening of March 21st, a group of artists met to discuss the initial small action planned for the next day at the M.O.M.A. At that time doubts and misgivings were expressed about the specific differences of opinion we had with the thirteen points & the undemocratic procedures of previous meetings. We felt artists were being asked in to amass strength for the support of policies that were decided upon by only a small number of artists… Although we continue to support the artists' protest against the M.O.M.A., we will also continue to object to both the existence of commercial galleries & their connection with museums.[63]

This is a critical statement that demonstrates not only diverging goals within the AWC but also, a desire by some of its members to refrain from the bureaucratic inclusion in

---

[61] Art Workers Coalition, *Documents Open Hearing: Facsimile* (Sevilla: Doble J - ISPART, 2010).

[62] Bryan-Wilson also presents Lippard as a feminist critic and curator among a set of artists except in her book the artists are all white men—Carl Andre, Hans Haacke and Robert Morris. Julia Bryan-Wilson, "From Artists to Art Workers" in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 14.

[63] Benkert, Herdman, Hewitt, Miecznowski in Art Workers Coalition, *Documents Open Hearing: Facsimile* (Sevilla: Doble J - ISPART, 2010).

which the group is most notably known and often viewed as their sole major achievement.

Another significant point of dissention among AWC associates was in regards to racial and ethnic representations in museums. For example, artists Faith Ringgold and Tom Lloyd formed the faction self-identified as the Art Workers Coalition Committee for Black Bloc. They called for black separatism—a purposeful endeavor reacting to systematic and historical exclusion—in the museum and demanded MOMA create a dedicated wing to black artists. In later documents, such demands for specific "identity-oriented" political action was dismissed in AWC organizational meetings, as was captured in meeting notes from attendees. The dismissal is suggestive of a persisting problematic dynamic in majority rule processes. It is likely that a call for a dedicated black separatist wing, for example, was viewed as "special interest" or "radical" and therefore far too limiting for the entire group to adopt which demonstrates how adhering to existing institutional structural logic like the democratic process of majority rule, by design, perpetuates social and political marginalization. These are not isolated incidents.[64]

In some regard, the distancing from labor and class-oriented struggle of the AWC was in favor of obtaining further legitimation (or professionalization) of the "art worker" into its institutionally elite position, not to dissolve the elitism of the institutional apparatus. And while their on-the-ground efforts of organizing do not undermine the urgency of equitable wage, they do, to some extent, instantiate the organizational logic of

[64] Interestingly, Lippard did not include any mention of the Art Workers' Coalition and their associated activities in *Six Years*.

democratic capitalism. That is to suggest that in the period of The New Left, many artists in the United States did not foreground class struggle—let alone race or gender equality—in order to keep their goals "plausible."

However, that is certainly not the case for all of them and was more of an outcome than an intention. As Lucy Lippard wrote in a letter to Martha Rosler in 1977 stating, "I've seen first-hand other artists in Argentina and Australia working with labor unions but in the U.S. the problems are something else and it's hard to remember the unions are as often the enemy as they are the heroes and that the sympathetic 'working class' in the U.S. is really the unworking or non-working class—the unemployed."[65] Lippard's letter points to another important consideration in the critique of the somewhat bourgeois aims of the AWC and that is the institutional character of unions in the United States.[66] If anything, the artists in the United States actively sought economic security and validation of their work as "artists" in purely bureaucratic terms or, rather, the demands that came to pass were representative of a majority interest, which only amounted to institutional reform. This bothered Lippard and many others.

Despite the subsequent disbanding and brevity of their historical moment, the AWC was quite generative. Many of the members went on to form more focused and

---

[65] Bryan-Wilson, 138.

[66] Unionization is a process that conforms to the logic of an institutionalized membership structure that often reproduces or mirrors the power dynamics of the larger system, engendered with patriarchal and capitalist sacraments. Piven and Cloward observed this complication as well, and noted that proximity and location play significant roles in maintaining group activity, writing, "Still, unions are obviously no exception to the oligarchical and integrative tendencies exhibited by formal membership organization. In any case, it was the unique advantages afforded by their location in the mass-production industries that made the sustained organization of workers possible, and these situational advantages are not available to most other working-class and lower-class groups."

issue-oriented groups including Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) and Guerilla Art Action Group (GAAG). By and large, the AWC and other active conceptual and minimalist artists represent a form of "radical practice" specific to the historical conditions of United States and during an era of other major reforms to its political, social, and public domain. Their actions placed necessary pressure on arts institutions to develop equitable fee structures for artists and also, expanded museum attendance by establishing free admissions day. And though their work and contributions are exemplary, it is nonetheless crucial to look at another example of radical practice in a much different political system. Nowhere else is a more palpable foil to conceptualism and dematerialization in the United States than in the actions of conceptual artists in Argentina.

Perónism and Agitation in Buenos Aires

In a 1969 interview by Ursula Meyer with Lucy Lippard, Lippard discussed a trip she made to Argentina in 1968:

> Yes. I was politicized by a trip to Argentina in the fall of 1968, when I talked to artists who felt that it was immoral to make their art in the society that existed there. It becomes clear that today everything, even art, exists in a political situation. I don't mean that art itself has to be seen in political terms or look political, but the way artists handle their art, where they make it, the chances they get to make it, how they are going to let it out, and to whom—it's all part of a life style and a political situation. It becomes a matter of artists' power, of artists achieving enough solidarity so they aren't at the mercy of a society that doesn't understand what they are doing. I guess that's where the other culture, or alternative information network, comes in—so we can have a choice of ways to live without dropping out.

The political transformation that Lippard experienced during her 1968 trip to Buenos Aires has a piecemeal historical narrative. What is known is that she was invited to Buenos Aires as a juror for an exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and subsequently, Lippard curated one of her *Numbers* exhibitions, *2,972,453* (1970, Buenos Aires) from a distance and did not return to Latin America for the opening. The specifics of the "political situation" that Lippard observed in Argentina was entirely different from the social and political realities of art production in the United States, right down to the ability to produce work and potential repercussions.

Argentinian conceptual artists also engaged in the methods of appropriation and re-contextualization of readymade materials as their American counterparts. However, under an increasingly oppressive and militarized political regime, many Argentinian conceptual artists shifted toward more pointed and aggressive interventions. As noted by Alexander Alberro, these artists possessed a "swift shift in focus from a conceptualism that questions the ideological conditions of bourgeois art to an art that questions all the institutions that represent bourgeois culture…"[67] The larger social and political context—not limited only to art institutions—is an important distinction from the actions of the AWC. More importantly, the targeting of bourgeois cultural values can certainly be traced directly into the value system operating in the United States' cultural institutions and art economies.

---

[67] Alexander Alberro, "Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977," introduction, in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), xxvi.

One of the early manifestos outlining the goals of Argentinian conceptual artists of the time is a collectively written document published in 1968 by the Confederacíon General de Trabajo (GCT or "General Confederation of Labor") of the Argentinians in the city of Rosario titled "Tucumán Burns." First published as a mimeograph, the document is credited to members of the coalition Maria Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa, and is a call for revolutionary art that is set within local and international repressive governmental systems, inherently (perhaps, inextricably) political in nature with particular attention to forms of media dissemination. Describing the characteristics of the motivations of the work produced at the time:

> This attitude pointed towards the development of implicit political content in all works of art, and to propose them as actively and violently charged so that the work of the artist would be incorporated into reality with a truly avant-garde and, thus, revolutionary intention. Aesthetic works that denounced the cruelty of the Vietnam War or the radical falsity of American policies would speak directly to the necessity of creating not only a relation between the work of art and the mass media, but an artistic object capable, on its own, to produce modifications as effective as a political art.[68]

The manifesto emphasizes violence as a means to achieve revolutionary transformation and can be understood as a clear contrast to the reformist aims of the "radical" artists in the United States. Citing the actions of collective work in the poor province of Tucumán, Argentina, activists directly responded to the closure of sugar refineries—the economic linchpin of the province, which led to widespread hunger, displacement, and

[68] María Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa, "Tucumán Is Burning: Statement of the Exhibition in Rosario (1968)," essay, in *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Katzenstein Inés (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 319-323.

unemployment and was a plan devised by new and outside economic industrial interests funded by North American capital. It effectively destroyed a longstanding labor union, pushed workers into exploitative and precarious labor conditions and dismantled social—primarily familial—structures and quality of life. The Rosario Group of artists, in response to the situation in Tucumán produced the work titled *Tucumán Arde*, an intervention against the hegemonic operation of mass media and against mass media as a bourgeois product that reinforced class disparity. It included a press conference where the artists presented scathing reports on government officials in addition to facts about the rapid degradation of life in Tucumán. The second part of the media intervention (or media violence, as it was referred to) was the presentation of information gathered and distributed to union halls, student, and cultural centers, appropriating the same audiovisual format as the current exhibition at the GCT in Rosario (and later in Buenos Aires) as a way of presenting a "de-alienation of the media" in line with early avant-garde strategies of political intervention. Moreover, it was a declaration where artists did not consider themselves distinct from laborers and other citizens; a distinction those in the United States struggled with and largely maintained.

Beginning in 1959, the Cuban Revolution ushered forth possibilities of impactful revolt, challenging institutions, and thoughts of utopic possibilities throughout Latin America. For artists, the revolution brought with it a critical re-examination of "form" in its varied iterations. As noted by artist Luis Camnitzer, "This position led to a particular blend of art and politics that can only be understood with the knowledge that, at the time, both art and revolutionary politics were in the hands of the educated middle and upper

classes" and he gives the example that of those that died during the repression between 1964 and 1978, 33% were manual laborers and 64% were intellectuals (half of which were students); a noteworthy contrast to the profiles of American lives lost in the Vietnam War.[69] It is also important to emphasize the role and placement of intellectuals in both contexts. In the United States, conceptual artists fought to maintain an intellectual rigor that operated primarily in elite contexts such as the university system, critical art publications, and museums and galleries. Intellectuals in Argentina, also university educated, theorized their actions in alignment with the class struggle of industrial and farm workers.[70]

Of equal significance, Peronism dominated the political system in Argentina. Peronism was a political movement based on the ideas of populist President Juan Domingo Perón and is a complex structure of occasionally contradictory ideological impulses. He was elected first in 1946 and served into 1955 when he was overthrown. After establishing Peronism as a political movement, he was also re-elected in 1973 and served briefly until his death in 1974. For the most part, Peronism was a populist movement that gained strong support by manual workers and labor unions. Peronists espoused Western capitalism and for that, it is generally thought to be proletarian. The political history of Peronism is much too complex to capture here but it is necessary to discuss it briefly as a form of liberalism and populism, distinct from The New Left politics and its cultural manifestations in the United States.

---

[69] Luis Camnitzer, ,*Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 4.
[70] Anti-intellectualism in the United States is explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

After a period of anarchy and civil disobedience, a type of liberalism was established in Latin America by ruling oligarchies and lead to the development of electoral systems that were controlled by landowners in rural areas and clientelistic networks in urban areas. But as economic development expanded, so did the demand for greater political participation—quite similar in principle to democracy in the West. However, by the 1930s, populism became more radical when the economic regression of the time made it so that the liberal-oligarchical states throughout Latin America were no longer able to absorb or accommodate democratic demands. As discussed by post-Marxist Argentine political theorist Ernesto Laclau, "This led to a sharp chasm between liberalism and democracy which would dominate Latin American politics for the next twenty-five years"[71] including Vargas and the Estado Novo in Brazil, as well as Peronism in Argentina. This marked a shift towards redistribution of social programs and the previous democratic reforms dissolved into anti-liberal regimes that in some cases became overly dictatorial and highly militarized. What remained in this form of populism was an anti-Western imperialist perspective, in favor of the construction of a strong national state in opposition to local oligarchical power.

During the 1960's, a type of "Peronism-without-Perón" took hold in Argentina with Arturo Frondizi's rise to presidency—a nearly predetermined election, guaranteed early by the backing of Perón's followers. Trade union activity was legalized in the country, which ushered in a period of conflict between the general secretary of metalworkers Augusto Vandor and Perón and his most radical followers over the trade

[71] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason (2006)* (London: Verso, 2018), 219.

union project because of its "progressive integration of Peronism within the existing political system, with Perón becoming a purely ceremonial figure, and the actual power within the movement being transferred to the union leadership."[72] This form of populism, with its empty signifier leader, fragile unity of the people, and provincial conflict set the conditions for the institution of a military dictatorship. In 1966, General Onganía began his regime that dissolved all political organizations, repressed union activities, and intervened into the university system. The regime effectively closed down all avenues to voice social demands, necessitating for the people what Laclau describes as, "some kind of violent reaction entirely outside the institutional order [which] would be the only possible response to this political blind alley."[73] For artists, the ongoing and rapidly increasing tension produced by the militarized repression was met with the expanding consciousness of failures in the populist system and lead to what Camnitzer describes as, "[t]he experience of repression, awareness of severe socioeconomic inequality, and opposition to the Vietnam War converged to trigger the intervention of art into politics in a more explosive way. Even artists originally distant from social issues became politicized."[74]

[72] Ibid, 219.
[73] Laclau, 222.
[74] Luis Camnitzer, "Tucumán Arde" in *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). 61.

Dematerialization in Argentina

Returning to the concept of "dematerialization," in an essay titled "After Pop, We Dematerialize: Oscar Masotta, Happenings, and Media Art at the Beginnings of Conceptualism", writer and researcher of Latin American Art Ana Longoni with scholar of Latin American Film Mariano Mestman discuss the Argentinian formulation of dematerialization, stating that Lippard claims to have been the first to write on the subject (in the United States) in 1967. Like Longoni and Mestman, I am not motivated by a desire to claim or award dematerialization as a concept to either Lippard or Masotta and instead, I am more interested in the specificity in its use during the same period with disparate political intentions. What is clear is that dematerialization in Argentina was less concerned with a debate on the absence or reduction of materials in an insulated art conversation and rather, as Masotta articulated, a "moving on to materials hitherto not considered artistic (from discarded objects to fragments of nature; from people to signposts of reality; from the most austere and elemental forms to scientific disciplines like mathematics, logic and sociology).[75]

Lagoni and Mestman also state that while the works, ideas, and methods of conceptualism primarily in New York and Paris were certainly exchanged with artists in Argentina through cross-national platforms such as exhibitions, tourism by cultural producers—including Lippard's visit to Buenos Aires in 1968—and publications, the Argentinian context was decidedly distinct. And though the media interventionist tactics

[75] This is summarized from the essay by Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, "After Pop, We Dematerialize: Oscar Masotta, Happenings, and Media Art at the Beginnings of Conceptualism," in *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-garde*, ed. Inés Katzenstein (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 157.

of the Rosario Group and others can be read similarly to other conceptual and post-conceptual artists in the United States, such as Martha Rosler, Jenny Holzer, and Dan Graham, their political motivations were not the same and are worth exploring comparatively.

To start, Masotta encountered the term "dematerialization" from an article republished in the *New Left Review* in February of 1967. Russian Constructivist El Lissitzky wrote the article in 1926, discussing the possibility of artist interventions into books and other types of communication technology. He wrote that dematerialization was a necessary endeavor during the time because it possessed a "liberating energy" that could be sited in the pages of print media, dematerialized from object-oriented production, in favor of a more interventionist and nuanced artistic gesture. Such gestures were in line with both Russian avant-garde ideals of Lissitzky's time and also, appealing to the focus on media intervention held by many Argentinian conceptual artists. In July of 1967, Masotta presented a lecture at the ITDT titled "Después del pop, nosotros desmaterializamos [After Pop Art, We Dematerialize]" and heavily cited from the 1926 essay.[76] Sartrean existentialist philosophy and Hegelian Marxism influenced Masotta, like many Latin American artists and intellectuals, and his lecture opened with a quote by Sartre and also one by Lissitzky. The Sartre quotation states, "'He devoured her with his eyes.' This sentence and so many other similar ones illustrate quite well the enthusiasm common to realism and idealism according to which knowing is eating" and is followed directly by Lissitzky, stating:

[76] Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, 157.

> The idea moving the masses today is called materialism, but dematerialization is the defining characteristic of the epoch. For example: correspondence grows, so the number of letters, the quantity of writing paper, the mass of material consumed expand, until relieved by the telephone. Again, the network and material of supply grow until they are relieved by the radio. Matters diminishes, we dematerialize, sluggish masses of matter are replaced by liberated energy.[77]

The purpose of dematerialization, according to Masotta, "is easy to discern: to compare a communicational work and a Happening to allow for the comprehension of the distinctive characteristics of the operations and the 'materials' that constitute them. The cycle proposed at the same time an 'anti-optical,' anti-visual aesthetic: the idea of constituting 'objects' but with the goal of speaking not to the eyes, but to the mind."[78] As in the United States, dematerialization in Argentina, in this instance, was also more of a conceptualist strategy than an actual dissolution of material altogether. In line with the re-evaluation of form that concerned many Latin American artists after the Cuban Revolution and influenced by Lissitzky advocating for typography and design of books as an art form because of their circulation reach to wider audiences, Masotta as well as the Rosario Group planned their interventions to expose the hegemonic function and manipulation of information by mass media.

As previously noted, Lippard and Chandler initially presented an expansive use of dematerialization that was largely akin to "idea art" and as indicated by Terry Atkinson, their conception as such in 1968, did not actually require art to be in an immaterial form

---

[77] Qtd. in Oscar Masotta, After Pop, We Dematerialize (Excerpts). Ibid.
[78] In his footnotes, continued, "I say this with perspicacity since the ten pages by El Lissitzky are more than thirty years ahead of Marshall McLuhan's 'thesis.' Oscar Masotta, "After Pop We Dematerialize (1966)," essay, in *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Katzenstein Inés (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 214-215.

or any form at all, for that matter. For the most part, American dematerialization endeavored to go against the grain of an increasing anti-intellectual climate and criticize the high value placed on objects but was also, from its inception, against the function of "totalizing art" as evidenced by the Bauhaus example Lippard and Chandler provided. That is another important difference because dematerialization in Argentina was devised as a strategy to infect mass media hegemony towards revolution not reform. It is also interesting to note that Masotta did not intend alignment of his call for dematerialization with the aims of Constructivism, in fact, he stated that it was only one passage by Lissitzky that caught his attention, "Of all El Lissitzky's nervous and lucid paragraphs, one in particular fascinated me…" Be that as it may, Lissitzky's passage is of Constructivist philosophical origin and in that regard, so is the root of dematerialization for Masotta. Moreover, the Constructivist ideology, distinct from but nonetheless influential to other movements including the Bauhaus, advocated for a totalizing, utilitarian art and social system (heavily perforated by communist ideals) and rejected the notion of autonomous art.

Six Years

In the new introduction for the second edition of *Six Years*, Lucy Lippard discusses the political character, or lack thereof, in conceptual art and reflects on its apolitical stance writing, "With a few exceptions, the art was apolitical, but in an art world that still idolized Clement Greenberg… that denied even the presence of political concerns, and offered little or no political education or analysis, Conceptual artists—most

of whom were then in their twenties and thirties—looked and sounded like radicals. Now,… their art looks timid and disconnected in comparison to the political activism… and the activist art…, much of which is Conceptually aligned. The prime exceptions were GAAG (Guerilla Art Action Group) and the work of Uruguayan expatriate Luis Camnitzer."[79] It is also worth noting that Lippard included entries of work by Luis Camnitzer and the members of the Rosario Group in *Six Years*. Although Lippard's feminist epistemological critique is evident in the presentation of the book, it is limited by its Western audience. Moreover, while such important inclusions of the conceptualists in Argentina should not be overlooked, they unfortunately lose their political specificity in the decontextualized, chronological ordering of the book.

Decades later, when interest in *Six Years* resurfaced, Lippard discussed dematerialization as a term that she came up with, which had more to do with her own interests in publishing and formal experimentation, having previously used the term "ultra-conceptual" in 1967. Noting that Henry Flynt used the term "concept art" previously, which she contends that she did not know about and Flynt felt "ripped" off, as did "a Latin American critic (Oscar Masotta) who had used the term 'dematerialization' around the same time; I'd never heard of him until the 90's, when someone accused me of borrowing it from him. These competitive claims and counterclaims seem kind of silly to me now."[80]

---

[79] Lucy R. Lippard, "Escape Attempts", *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries...* (New York: Praeger, 1973) xiii.
[80] Lucy Lippard and Antony Hudek, "Number Shows," Number Shows | | Flash Art, 2011, http://www.flashartonline.com/article/number-shows.

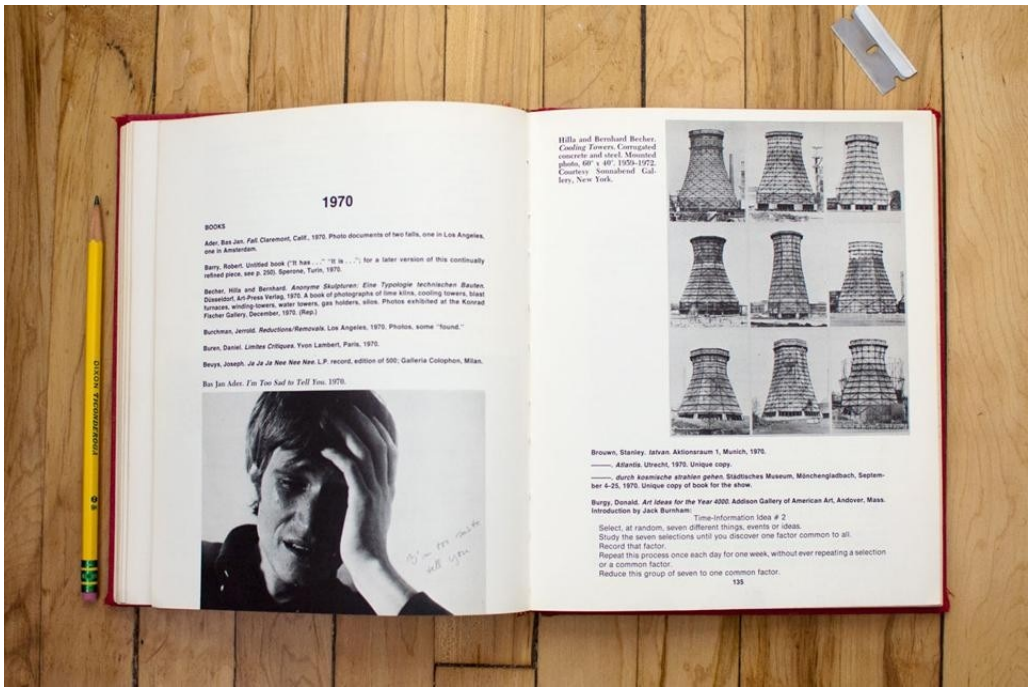

Figure 1.2: Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries* .. (New York: Praeger, 1973). Photo by Zachary Sachs. https://www.domusweb.it/en/art/2013/01/15/materializing-six-years-.html

If read as a feminist text, the organization of the content in *Six Years* operates as a type of feminist epistemological critique of a particular hierarchical structure of historical processes by revealing overlap and connections across distinctions in the field—formal, thematic, interpersonal, and others. This includes presenting art, writing, and other forms of cultural production by those viewed as peripheral and marginal in the male-dominated, Western art world alongside those in the privileged center, "Blurring the lines of formal production was typically a method reserved for artists, most often male, while the supportive roles in the art economy such as curator, organizer, gallery staff and other

clerical positions were often occupied by women and systematically valued as feminized labor." The mode of indexing and data collection associated with conceptual art is also an epistemological method concerning theories of knowledge and the production of knowledge, which intersects with aspects of feminist thought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. By critiquing the foundation of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge (and even form), *Six Years* addresses processes of exclusion as well as inclusion into distinct fields of thought and areas of art production with an understanding that patriarchy creates limited forms of knowledge while also perpetuating hierarchies and marginalization.

Self-reflexive and discursive conceptions of 'location' is key in more recent feminist epistemologies, particularly the concept of feminist standpoint, developed by feminist postcolonial philosopher Sandra Harding and others, as well as feminist and science studies scholar Donna Haraway's notion of "situated knowledge" which offers a model of *knowing* from the conditions of women's experiences. Haraway, whose work is focused on science, technology and gender as a way of critiquing the methods of the so-called "hard" sciences and the pretense of a pure objectivity. She discussed the feminist criticism of Marxism and explained how, despite the gendered blind spot of certain areas of Marxism, "[It] was still a promising resource as a kind of epistemological feminist mental hygiene that sought our own doctrines of objective vision… Marxist starting points offered a way to get our own versions of standpoint theories, insistent embodiment, a rich tradition of critiquing hegemony without disempowering positivisms

and relativisms and a way to get nuanced theories of mediation."[81] I see *Six Years* as an attempt to challenge specific art historical and art-making tendencies at the time, employing a systems-based approach commonly used by (and reserved exclusively for) conceptual *artists* and with the intention to challenge dominant hierarchies by presenting the catalog from Lippard's self-reflexive position as a feminist curator and writer.

Even in its limited naiveté or highly edited selection process, *Six Years* is significant as an attempt by a feminist curator and critic to produce a conceptual object while also demonstrate "how two fields usually understood as attendant to art-making—criticism and curating—were themselves as radically altered and reconfigured by the development of Conceptual art as was art-making itself"[82] as described by Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin, co-curators of the 2012 exhibition *Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art* at the Brooklyn Museum. However necessary it is to point out Lippard's role as a critic and curator in the formation of conceptual art, there is nonetheless a strange missed connection by Morris and Bonin and others which continuously fails to further interrogate how any form of feminism—including Lucy's—could have factored into the "radically altered" status of criticism and

---

[81] Standpoint theory or a self-reflexive and critically aware position of the researcher or producer of knowledge can be tied to sociologists as early as Max Weber in *The Methodology of Social Sciences* (1949) though the pursuit and desire to obtain a type of objectivity in research methodologies.
present today. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" (1988), in *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*, ed. Joanne P. Sharp and Linda McDowell (London: Arnold, 1997), 121.

[82] Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin, "An Introduction to Six Years," introduction to *Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art*, ed. Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), xvii.

curating that they credit entirely to conceptualism, despite many conceptual artists' own admitted failure of the movement.

Setting aside the odd choice to "materialize" a selection of works listed in *Six Years* as a curatorial premise, it is all the more revealing or suggestive of narrow individualized modes of institutionalization. In this context, Lippard's validation as a critic and curator was manifested as a solo gallery exhibition, placing her in the privileged status of artists regardless of the degree to which the entire production is counter-intuitive to the source material's logic. Instead, the institutional validation as a leading advocate of conceptual art in the United States is presented to Lippard as a white female critic and curator only and not as a feminist critic and curator. The mention of feminism is present in the catalog but it is not framed as inextricable from her then-status as a critic and curator and subsequently, Lippard's feminism and any potential specific explication of how feminism (and in what way) informed her advocating for conceptual art are inconsequential to the reaffirming celebratory project of her authorial role in US-based conceptual art.

Much has been written about conceptualism's failure to eliminate the primacy of fine art objects and de-mystify the opacity of their value and circulation in the expanded art market. For Lippard, she felt as though its failures were vested in the inability to reach broader audiences and a complete lack of political self-reflexivity by its producers and advocates including herself. In the first issue of the independently published and collectively edited *Heresies: a feminist publication on art and politics* from January

1977, Lippard opens her essay "The Pink Glass Swan: Upward and Downward Mobility in the Art World" stating,

> Conceptual art's democratic efforts and physical vehicles were cancelled out by its neutral, elitist content and its patronizing approach. From around 1967 to 1971, most of us involved in conceptual art saw that content as pretty revolutionary and thought of ourselves as rebels against the cool, hostile artifacts of the prevailing formalist and minimal art. But we were so totally enveloped in the middle-class approach to everything we did and saw, we couldn't perceive how that pseudo-academic narrative piece of that art-world-oriented action in the streets was deprived of any revolutionary content by the fact that it was usually incomprehensible and alienating to the people 'out there,' no matter how fashionably downwardly mobile it might be in the art world. The idea that if art is subversive in the art world, it will automatically appeal to a general audience now seems absurd.[83]

Of course, the insularity of the art world is a common and ever-present mode of critique by many "political" artists, historians, and theorists. But what is important in this example is Lippard's inward criticism of the movement she advanced, a movement that is largely credited to male artists like Sol Lewitt, Joseph Kosuth, and others with her attendant position as curator and critic at the time. These and other critical reflections and admissions of failure by Lippard complicate the praise of conceptualism's political efficacy, as least as it pertains to the status of art workers. It is also indicative of a much broader structural tendency in art history and cultural production that I only speculate has to do much more with sustained low level class consciousness (as artists of this period did not align with class-oriented struggles or union organizing), reformist aims that stifle

[83] Lucy R. Lippard, "The Pink Glass Swan: Upward and Downward Mobility in the Art World" (1977), in *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (New York: New Press, 1995), 122.

potential transformative possibilities, and a longstanding commitment to individual authorship and its bourgeois rewards.

Feminist Schisms

Citing the 1974 anthology *Class & Feminism: a collection of essays by The Furies*, Lippard expressed her desire and hopes for a feminist art that was distinct in its political aims and necessarily separatist. The Furies, a lesbian feminist collective, centered the perspective of working-class women and identified how the lack of substantial class analysis was the women's movement's most overlooked problem to the point of its willful invisibility. Nancy Myron in her text "Class beginnings" wrote that the middle-class majority in the movement could not recognize class difference and often rationalized it, "[They] will go through every painful detail of their lives to prove to me or another working-class woman that they really didn't have any privilege, that their family was exceptional, that they actually did have an uncle who worked in a factory."[84] Such guilt-ridden offers of false equivocation were further obscured in the art, often resulting in a middle-class passivity that tacitly reinforced the upper middleclass values prevailing in the art world and the continued belief that art could exist in a vacuum detached from political implications.

[84] Nancy Myron, "Class Beginnings," introduction, in *Class and Feminism: a Collection of Essays from the Furies*, ed. Charlotte Bunch and Nancy Myron (Baltimore, MD: Diana Press, 1974), 6.

It is quite telling that by the mid-1970's, Lippard was highlighting a substantial disjunction between class-consciousness and the status of women in the art world.[85] She noted that for middle class men and women in art, the tendency to "dress down" was apparent in order to maintain some mythic association with visibly working class attire and mean while, actual working class men and women in the art world tended to spend a sizeable amount of limited income on articles of clothing in the bourgeois spatial confines of art institutions as a way "to forget the rats and roaches by which even the cleanest tenement-dwellers are blessed, or the mortgages by which even the hardest-working homeowners are blessed, and to present a classy façade. Artists dressing and talking 'down' insult the hardhat as much as rich kids in rags do, they insult people whose notion of art is something to work for—the pink glass swan."[86] Lippard isn't addressing the value of art objects or the number of women artists represented by a particular gallery (or not), instead her observations are about the ways in which maintaining the status quo as it manifests in the art world is one of exceptional fantasy and a significant visual of the leveled difference produced by the myth of the middle class. It is a structural analysis distinct from the white liberal feminist canon that champions her while simultaneously omitting her criticisms of and deviations from it.

Lippard also felt that the division between Marxism and feminism was a significant hindrance toward the development of a class conscious-based separatist feminist art, writing, "… dissatisfaction with Marxism's lack of interest in the 'woman

[85] I recommend: "The Main Enemy: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression" by French radical feminist Christine Delphy.
[86] Lippard, Ibid, 124.

question' make me wary of merging Marxism and feminism. The notion of the non-economic or 'vertical' class is anathema to Marxists and confusion is rampant around the chicken-egg question of whether women can be equal before the establishment of a classless society or whether a classless society can be established before women are liberated."[87] Lippard's skepticism of whether or not the vertical class of women in the economic strata of Marxism would actually lead to emancipation for feminists was a commonly held reluctance in the women's movement and even in the limited spaces of political groups in the art world, she noted that groups such as Art & Language, who identified as Marxist, were ironically unwilling to even consider their sole use of male pronouns in their publications.[88]

Lippard concludes her essay with some untoward optimism about the possibilities of a feminist art stating, "Despite the very real class struggles, I feel strongly that women are in a privileged position to satisfy the goal of an art which would communicate the needs of all classes and sexes to each other, and get rid of the we/they dichotomy to as great an extent as is possible in a capitalist framework. Our sex, our oppression and our female experience—our female culture, just as being explored—offer access to all of us by these common threads."[89] Here she is expressing a form of under-valued or perhaps, undiscovered production that is inherently from the lived conditions of women at the intersection of class and gender in patriarchal capitalism. In this way, Lippard's desire for

[87] Lucy R. Lippard, "The Pink Glass Swan: Upward and Downward Mobility in the Art World" (1977), in *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (New York: New Press, 1995), 124.
[88] Ibid., 126.
[89] Ibid.

a socialist feminist art is a type of "situated knowledge" but one that must be articulated through a class-conscious (materialist) framework—which has yet to happen.[90]

Feminist Self-Criticism

In the May-June of 1974 issue of *Art in America*, Lippard wrote about her visit to the Los Angeles Woman's Building, which was co-founded by artist Judy Chicago, designer Sheila DeBrettville, and feminist art historian Arlene Raven in 1973, reflecting, "What is perhaps most interesting is that art is the focus of such a place as the Woman's Building… The less an alternative structure is in competition with the commodity art world, the better. I sadly doubt if New York, whose art world is too large, too powerful, too competitive, will ever succeed in having a single-focused center like the Woman's Building…" and continuing on with an astute deflection of naysayers (one of Lippard's many anticipatory critical talents) by stating, "Those who denounce such situations as "separatist" should just get a glimpse of the sense of purpose and the relaxed exhilaration at the Woman's Building. There, everything seems possible—including a non-separatist future."[91] After connecting with feminist artists and cultural producers in California, Lippard returned to New York and formed the Heresies collective.

---

[90] Janet Halley offers valuable explanation of the way in which liberal feminism and dominance feminism came together within legal contexts while also pushing out materialist and socialist feminism, resulting in a "de-skilling" of feminism's critique of economic distribution. See *Governance Feminism: An Introduction* (2018) and Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (2004) for more thorough analyses.

[91] Lucy R. Lippard, "The LA Woman's Building" (1974), in *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (New York: New Press, 1995), 84.

Meanwhile, her transition, or refinement, as a socialist feminist also corresponds to a major shift in her interests as a writer, activist, and feminist. She became ambivalent toward the term "critic" on a few occasions and that is all the more illuminating given the masculine association of critics as a profession. In 1976, she acknowledged that, "All through [the essays in] *Changing*, I say "the artist, he," "the reader and viewers, he" and worse still – a real case of confused identity – "the critic, he."[92] In this case, Lippard's feeling of gendered exclusion enabled her to reevaluate her own role as a critic while she also expanded her curatorial work, collaborations, and feminist activism.[93] Where formalism endeavored to isolate the critic (as the informed decoder of art) and the artist (as some quasi-divine creative genius)– the methodologies of Lippard's feminist art criticism, instead, embraced contradiction, collaboration, and eschewed the false notion of critical objectivity. And even in the face of dismissive sexism. On one such occasion, Clement Greenberg complained about the quality of writing by many "lady art critics" and whined about how "someone like Miss Lippard can be taken seriously".[94] Greenberg's complaints came after Lippard called him out publicly at a lecture, "… he was a vicious son of a bitch and I didn't like him and I didn't like the way he dictated stuff to artists, and I finally stood up against him…, which was a really good thing for

[92] Lucy Lippard, "Changing Since Changing," (1984) in *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art*, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 30.
[93] This is deduced from Lucy Lippard's interview in Amy Newman, "Schisms" in *Challenging Artforum, 1962-1974*, (New York: Soho Press, 2003).
[94] Clement Greenberg, interview, *Montreal Star*, November 29, 1969, quoted in Lucy Lippard, "Prefaces to Catalogues", 41.

me. And he thought I was a silly little girl."[95] When Lippard introduced herself to Greenberg after the lecture, he chauvinistically remarked, "Oh you're Lucy Lippard. I thought you were a schoolteacher from the Bronx."[96]

As revealed by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Lippard also received a scathing anonymous letter in 1970, belittling her work as a critic, feminist politics, personal relationship, participation in AWC, and even going so far as denigrating her as a mother. The letter mockingly impersonates Lippard, addressing her son, Ethan:

> It's so UNFAIR, darling. If only the Museum of Modern Art had given as much space to a show of your daddy's work as they're giving to Bill de Kooning's,.. WE might have made it in the big time… And, Ethan darling… it's all so UNFAIR. Just because they're hung up on this silly old bourgeois, old-hat, liberal notion of quality… And that's why, darling, your mommy became an intellectual prostitute.

Radical feminist writer, sci-fi author, and literary critic Joanna Russ' biting, sarcastic, and irreverent book *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (1983), covers the various ways in which women are reduced, dismissed, mocked, tokenized, and otherwise judged as artists against the male-centered and defined standards of "greatness" in art and literature. Russ offers the work as a "sketch of an analytic tool: patterns in the suppression of women's writing."[97] Most relevant to Lippard's experience is what Russ calls the "Pollution of Agency" strategy, explaining, "An alternative to denying female agency in art is to pollute the agency—that is, to promulgate the idea that women make themselves

---

[95] Lucy Lippard and Rupert White, "Lucy Lippard on Place, Places and Conceptual Art," Art Cornwall (Falmouth University College, May 22, 2010).
[96] Julia Bryan-Wilson, Art Workers, 162.
[97] Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983). 5.

ridiculous by creating art, or that writing or painting is immodest… *She wrote it, all right – but she shouldn't have*."[98] Of course, both Greenberg's berating of Lippard by "reducing" her down to the level of a schoolteacher—a feminized occupation, less valued for its "pink-collar" status is the type of elitist sexism that is regrettably unsurprising from the likes of someone like Greenberg. While the anonymous letter's multi-tiered misogyny is quite expansive: infantilizing in tone, attaching Lippard to her partner at the time, mocking her as a mother, coupled with the gall to incorporate her young son by name, and concluding with a cheap insult at sex workers.[99] The attempts to pollute Lippard's agency was a direct consequence of her audacity to work as a critic.

Rather than reform or expand the role of the critic, as she had attempted to do for much of her early career by publishing in major art publications, Lippard felt that she no longer needed to maintain such institutional tethers, pressures, and expectations. While many "lady art critics" of the era such as Barbara Rose, Rosalind Krauss, and Annette Michelson wrote for *Artforum* in the mid-1960s, and eventually followed the trajectory of art criticism's professionalization and its alignment with academic institutions, Lippard continued her Do-It-Yourself (DIY) approach rather than seek full institutional security.

The first issue of *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* was published in January of 1977; a year after the collective itself was founded. The quarterly independent magazine ran from 1977-1993 and covered an expansive reach of topics such as: music, sex, environmentalism, racism, food, satire, and education and many

[98] Ibid, 24.
[99] Such letters reveal the brimming sexism embedded in American life, masked with anonymity, the example can be considered the grandfather of the "troll" in present date internet misogyny. Qtd. in Julia Bryan-Wilson, 162.

others. The editorial collective also included an impressive roster of artists, scholars, musicians, and writers and the original founders included Lippard, Joyce Kozloff, Miriam Shapiro, Michelle Stuart, Mary Beth Edelson, and Elizabeth Weatherford.

The first issue is wide in scope and exploratory as a way to establish the collective's identity. From the editorial statement: "The editorial collective of this first issue of Heresies shares not a political line but a commitment to the development of coherent feminist theory in the context of practical work. The time for reformulating old positions or merely attaching sexist is past. Now we must take on the most problematic aspects of feminist theory, esthetic theory, and political theory… The role of the arts and the artist in the political process is our specific arena. By confronting the very real differences in our own attitudes towards art and politics, which reflect those in the wider feminist community, we have uncovered networks connecting a broad range of forms and ideologies."[100] The issue includes submissions by Barbara Ehrenreich on socialist feminism, Eva Cockcroft on the mural movement in the California, and an essay on lying by Adrienne Rich. There is also poetry, photographs, and artworks among the issue's 116 pages.

In Lippard's individual editor's note, she takes a marked direct and confrontational tone, explaining her identification with socialism, "… living in a capitalist country without a strong Socialist Party provokes an irresistible urge to kill time as a liberal feminist. Even though I'm aware of the dangers of opportunism, reformism, co-optation, and all the slimy horde, I often find myself working for reform rather than

[100] Heresies Collective, ed., "Editorial Statement," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, Issue 1, January (New York, NY: Fine Arts Building, 1977), 1.

revolution because I can't bear to see nothing done."[101] There is a palpable anger and frustration in Lippard's urgent framing of the political terrain of the US at the time. It is true that socialism was more touted as an ideological framework among the diminishing small pool of leftist intellectuals and within the feminist movement, now understood as largely a liberal reformist operation, socialist feminism was often dismissed as impractical.

Barbara Ehrenreich's opening feature article "Toward Socialist Feminism" attempts to synthesize socialism and feminism, with the former's obvious roots in Marxism and the latter's reluctance of integration, and demonstrate the ways in which a socialist feminist agenda endeavors to destroy class and sex domination by eliminating dependency on the capitalist patriarchal class. She points to the blind spots of both respective movements and calls for an identification as socialist and feminist—individually—undertaking the respective commitments of both, and in full awareness of their limitations. She writes, "… there are crucial aspects of capitalist domination (such as racial oppression) which a purely feminist perspective simply cannot account for or deal with—without bizarre distortions, that is. There are crucial aspects of sex oppression (such as male violence within the family) into which socialist thought has little insight…"[102]

In many ways, the premiere issue of *Heresies* reflects Lippard's investment to cultivate a socialist feminist agenda in contemporary art, or at least, in the areas where

[101] Lucy Lippard, Ibid, 3.
[102] Barbara Ehrenreich, "Toward Socialist Feminism" in *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, Issue 1, January (New York, NY: Fine Arts Building, 1977), 7.

political acuity existed. However, even in the first year of the collective's fourth issue, internal struggles surfaced. As noted by Catherine Morris, "Charges of racism within the Heresies Collective and frustrations about the exclusivity of its editorial board were publicly aired in response to the third issue, 'Lesbian Art and Artists'" and the editors received a letter by the Combahee River Collective taking the publication to task for their selective editorial process and the exclusion of women of color.[103] Almost at the outset, *Heresies* encountered some of Ehrenreich's aforementioned "bizarre distortions" which led to their publishing of the Combahee River Collective's critical letter in the 4th issue, and the announcement that they would publish an issue focused on "Third World Women", which came out in 1979, Issue 8; which was followed by "Racism is the Issue", Issue 15 (1982) with submissions by artists Lorna Simpson and Lorraine O'Grady.[104] Complicated divisions and the dismissal of race and ethnicity was not only limited to liberal reformists. In 1978, radical lesbian feminist Mary Daly published *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* which argues that patriarchy operates like a religion and possesses ritual practices intent only on ensuring complete oppression of women. *Gyn/Ecology* has a noteworthy mode of address, given Daly's dual doctoral degrees in

[103] Catherine Morris, "Struggling for Diversity in the Heresies," in *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85: a Sourcebook*, ed. Catherine Morris and Rujeko Hockley (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum, 2017), 185.

[104] I don't include this criticism to undermine the intent of the founders but instead, offer it as an example of how few publishing opportunities were available to various forms of feminism and that, many of them purporting to resist replication of white, middleclass, liberal reformist politics ended up doing precisely that. This is further underscored by the apparent disconnect by white socialist feminists of the 1970's from the indispensible lineage of Lucy Parsons, a Black feminist, abolitionist, anarchist who was an active member of the International Labor Defense group in 1925 and later, the Communist Party—a fierce advocate for workers' rights.

sacred theology and philosophy, she presents her argument as a counter-scripture to the dominant patriarchal mandate with an emphasis on recovering the spiritual, sexual and mystical aspects of being that are evacuated in the subjugation of women as patriarchal possessions and the re-telling of patriarchal history. She writes,

> In the process of encountering and naming the Male-Factors who freeze process into processions, hoard knowing within professions, and kill creativity by possession, I point out clues which, as they are recognized, disclose the living process which has been hidden, caricatured, captured, stunted, but never completely killed by the phallocentric Sins. These clues point to a force which is beyond, behind, beneath the patriarchal death march—an unquenchable energy… We transmute the base metals of man-made myth by becoming unmute, calling forth from our Selves and each other the courage to name the un-nameable.[105]

For Daly, the telling of history is a patriarchal myth, and the process of maintaining the prominence of its varied myths is continuously re-inscribed. It is a system that must be refused on every level.

The chapters of the book are arranged in three distinct thematic passages—The First Passage: Processions, where she takes to takes Christianity and the myth of a postchristian condition. The Second Passage: The Sado-Ritual Syndrome: The Re-enactment of Goddess Murder is an attempt to provide examples of patriarchal gynocide on a global scale including marriage in India, Chinese footbinding, African female genital mutilation, the witch hunts in Europe during the Middle Ages and the formation of modern American medicine. The Third Passage: Gyn/Ecology: Spinning New Time/Space is a call for a specific separatist program by moving into what she refers to as the "Otherworld", a state that involves, "the dis-spelling of the mind/spirit/body pollution that is produced out of man-made myths, language, ritual atrocities, and meta-rituals such

[105] Mary Daly, "The Metapatriarchal Journey of Exorcism and Ecstasy," introduction to *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Toronto: Beacon Press, 1978), 34.

as 'scholarship,' which erase our Selves… It involves speaking forth the New Words which correspond to this deep listening, speaking the words of our lives."[106]

Daly's refusal is a rejection of Westernized Christian values toward the construction of a reality by self-possessed women separate from men as a necessarily extreme disruption of patriarchy. Like many radical utopic visions, Daly's is narrow in its scope while also completely totalizing. As part of her praxis, while teaching at Boston College from 1968 to 1999, Daly refused to teach male undergraduates in her upper division feminist courses (they could attend the introductory level classes) and instead, offered them opportunities for individual meetings. Her separatist action resulted in a lawsuit by two male students in 1998, a subsequent removal of her tenure status and a bureaucratically imposed verbal agreement with the college by Daly to retire early.

There are many criticisms of Daly's separatism and her refusal to adopt more palatable or pragmatic politics. Her work was also criticized for its essentialized and ethnocentric view of women's oppression, as well as her later works, in which she rejected transsexuality by dismissing it as an attempt by men to reproduce sexual oppression and their dominance by men becoming women—something she felt was not possible. However, what I find important about Daly's separatism was her refusal to compromise or reduce her radical lesbian feminist politics to maintain a position within a patriarchal institution.

Audre Lorde, in response to *Gyn/Ecology* made an important criticism of Daly's work. Published in the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical*

[106] Mary Daly, "Prelude to the Third Passage" in *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Toronto: Beacon Press, 1978), 315.

Women of Color, Lorde's "An Open Letter to Mary Daly" raises issues regarding the presentation of non-European women in Daly's book, particularly where women of color are presented solely as victims. Lorde addresses Mary Daly as a peer, first noting the necessity of Daly's critical position in *Gyn/Ecology* while also critiquing its limitations, particularly Daly's discussion of non-white women in the context of victimization or reductive decoration. Such oversights are often unintentional but are nonetheless problematic and regressive and that is clearly why they should be confronted. She writes, "I began to feel my history and my mythic background distorted by the absence of any images of my foremothers in power. Your inclusion of African genital mutilation was an important and necessary piece in any consideration of female ecology… But to imply, however, that all women suffer the same oppression simply because we are women, is to lose sight of the many varied tools of patriarchy. It is to ignore how those tools are used by women without awareness against each other."[107]

Audre Lorde is an important figure and I must admit, I do worry that in the current expanded use of "intersectionality" that her critical poetic vitality is being reduced or co-opted (again) by white liberal feminists as an extension of white liberal domination in progressive politics despite how incongruent that system is to the feminist future that Lorde endeavored to construct. On the fraught subject of anger, Lorde delivered the keynote address at the National Women's Studies Association in 1981, opening with, "My anger is a response to racist attitudes and to the actions and

[107] Audre Lorde, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherrìe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldùa (New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983), 95.

presumptions that arise out of those attitudes. If your dealings with other women reflect those attitudes, then my anger and your attendant fears are spotlights that can be used for growth in the same way I have used learning to express anger for my growth."[108] She's clearly responding the racist social stigma of anger, particularly black female anger, as threatening, baseless, illogical, irrational, and violent. In a room filled with other feminists—however loosely defined—Lorde used the keynote moment as a mode of contact, and similar to Piper, Lorde rejected the prefigured expectations of the keynote address and instead, made it an opportunity to confront the politics in that particular space, at that particular moment.

Her address listed multiple examples of patriarchal racism enacted by other feminists in institutional contexts and also drawing attention to classist assumptions and false comparisons made by those in privileged positions stating, "If women in the academy truly want a dialogue about racism, it will require recognizing the needs and the living contexts of other women. When an academic woman says, "I can't afford it," she may mean she is making a choice about how to spend her available money. But when a woman on welfare says, "I can't afford it," she means she is surviving on an amount of money that was barely subsistence in 1972, and she often does not have enough to eat." She more sharply elevated the politics of the room with naming a condition of institutional disjunction regarding access, "Yet the National Women's Studies Association here in 1981 holds a conference in which it commits itself to responding to

[108] Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 124.

racism, yet refuses to waive the registration fee for poor women and women of color who wished to present and conduct workshops."[109]

Surely, such a disparity could and is often addressed by academic and art institutions which both share this history of critically unchecked operations many of which are often antithetical to each site's promoted program of inclusion, diversity, and progress. We do see now that many adopt policies, recalling the Art Workers' Coalition, of "pay as you wish" and other measures for waiving admission fees like "free museum day" and so forth. However, a simple liberal policy reform is not at the core of Lorde's critique. Instead, she was refusing any expectation that her potentially tokenized presence as the keynote speaker address would somehow translate into a celebratory feminist and united sisterhood. As in her response to Daly, Lorde refuses to accept prescriptive forms of feminism within identified feminist spaces and areas of discourse. She does not appeal to pity but instead, emphasizes difference and the critical recognition of difference as an indispensible tool for resisting the ways in which patriarchy is internalized.

Lorde wrote to Daly, "This dismissal stands as a real block to communication between us. This block makes it far easier to turn away from you completely than to attempt to understand the thinking behind your choices. Should the next step be war between us, or separation? Assimilation within a solely western-european herstory is not acceptable."[110] Here, Lorde powerfully demonstrates how a matter of difference and

---

[109] Lorde, "The Uses of Anger", 126.
[110] Audre Lorde, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherrìe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldùa (New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983), 96.

disagreement (as well as the pain of unintentional occlusion and reinforced marginalization) is often met with division and dismissal. This type of reaction is socially embedded and at the ready in everyday white patriarchy, so much so that it is internalized as the only way to address matters of difference. It's an expected outcome that serves the larger divisive politics of dismissal and competition in patriarchal capitalist logic. But instead, Lorde's letter shows us that another form of criticism is possible without insult or claiming authority over anyone else but one's self. And these positions need not be reconciled for the immediate comfort of anyone involved.

I See/You Mean

After starting the Heresies, Lippard briefly moved to the United Kingdom from 1977-1978 to focus on finishing her first experimental novel (started years prior), *I See / You Mean*, which was finally published by a small California based press, Chrysalis in 1979. The cover design of the first and only edition is a map of wave currents, with flowing directional arrows indicating movement, cycles, and variation—a common conceptualist aesthetic.

Lippard has stated repeatedly that the process of writing and publishing this novel is what started and solidified her identification as a feminist and it is when she began to write for herself. Although it is a work of fiction, it's still very much in line with conceptual art's use of language, system, and information presentation and is, in some ways, an extension of Lippard's chronological ordering like *Six Years*. The book resists linear narrative, though it is possible to follow some of the major events that occur to the

novel's central characters: a writer, an actor, a model, and a photographer, all referred to be the letters A, B, C, and D. A seems to be the character that is imbued the most with aspects of Lippard's life: she's married to D—the artist, has a son, argues with her partner, and gets a divorce. While not intended to be autobiographical, given the span of time the book's drafting covered, a blurring of life and work is apparent between Lippard and A, "As I was writing her, or she was writing me, which is what it felt like, a lot of stuff started to seep through the cracks of my resistance of the women's movement."[111]

The characters argue and debate over feminism, war, politics—marco level concerns—while also maintaining everyday exchanges and common experiences such as jealousy and anxiety—on the ground, micro level realities. Similarly concerned with the formal constraints promoted through modernism in visual art (the pictoral plane, the frame, the cube), the novel's form also dissolves the conventions of the page, looping through pieces of information from disparate sources. This is deepened by the lack of formal citation in Lippard's use of block quotations—again, shifting the authority of the written word and its epistemological implications. In her author's note in the back of the book, Lippard explains, in part, her system, "italicized fragments, as well as occasional sentences and phrases, have been culled and collaged from a range of 'found material'… on oceanography, weather prediction… teenage crime, feminism, palmistry, Pre-Columbian magic, and the horoscopes of friends."[112] If *Six Years* can be viewed as Lippard's subjective offering of her immediate social and professional world, *I See / You Mean* is a similar conceptual presentation of her personal, interior space:

[111] Lucy Lippard qtd. in Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 156.
[112] Lucy Lippard, *I See/YouMean* (Los Angeles, CA: Chrysalis, 1979), 20.

Internal things are those which are represented, and external things are those which represent.

Black and white, square.
Young man, left hand around his penis, standing before a mirror, right hand holding a camera. Head above chin cut off by the top margin. In the background a mattress on the floor, dark cover rumpled and pulled back from a line of white sheet. His lips are parted, not in a smile.

Perhaps a more authentic anguish adheres to forbidden photography.[113]

Lippard had always maintained a creative writing practice and only began free-lance writing on art to support it. She worked on the novel throughout the 1970's and the book's back cover reflectively reveals, "I started writing and realized I was ashamed to be a woman. Then I had to find out why. Then I got very angry. The fragmented and visual form came out of contemporary art and the conflicting emotions of 1960s political confrontation; they suggested a new way to put things back together—an open-ended, female way that didn't pretend conclusions."[114] In her detailed biography on the book, among the usual bits of information and in standard third-person, she includes, "As a feminist-socialist, she has been active in dissident artists' groups and co-founded several women's art organizations…"[115] It's crucial to consider the political, personal, and conceptual process behind the novel. It is unfortunate to me that Lippard's creative writing is often overlooked in the general overview of her work—she is most often known by what she did for artists, for conceptual art, and for the feminist movement in art but rarely for what she has done for herself and by herself.

---

[113] Ibid, 62.
[114] Back cover of Lucy Lippard, *I See/YouMean* (Los Angeles, CA: Chrysalis, 1979).
[115] Lucy Lippard, Ibid.

In feminist art historian Pollock's important collection of essays, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, she describes her methodological approach of feminist revisionism as a confrontation of "… the ghettoization of feminist studies in art history because of an exclusive focus on art made by women, [which] underplays feminism as a comprehensive perspective from which to reconsider the very constitution of the study of all of art's histories."[116] And yet, for the most part, feminist inquiry remains at a position that is relegated to occur at a moment that is "after the fact" of any real or perceivable historical shift in the field. Feminist revisionism, in my view, is a specific form of social art historical inquiry and is a mode of critique that situates art history, its narratives, and methods of producing history as a patriarchal operation.

And for the most part, the existing literature on feminist revisionism examines the canon of art history along a gendered logic of exclusion and supremacy: Mary Kelly's *Reviewing Modernist Criticism* (1984), Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (*1975) and Linda Nochlin's *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (*1971), just to name a few. Much of this work explores the exclusion of women artists from the historical record and therefore, endeavors to create either an alternative canon of art produced by women—which seems sadly still necessary to accomplish (for some) but it is not the only critique that is necessary. The monological means by which women have been excluded from the canon of art history is much more complex than a simple binary

[116] Griselda Pollock, "Preface" in *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London, England: Routledge, 1999), xiv.

logic. Pollock identifies the problem as a hegemonic structure, in that it operates at a near subversive level. "It is not yet clear whether feminism can be incorporated or whether it will itself develop forms that radically resist and provoke the hegemonic…" she continues, "A bit of newness and controversy may actually keep the discipline alive and so will be permitted, but always at the margins."[117]

For Pollock, there are three feminist engagements with the canon of art history—the exclusion of women, devaluation of feminized production, and the third, which I find the most relevant. She explains, "It implies a shift from the narrowly bounded spaces of art history as a disciplinary formation into an emergent and oppositional signifying space we call the women's movement which is not a place apart but movement across the fields of discourse and its institutional bases, across the texts of culture and its psychic foundations."[118] Rather than attempt to locate feminism within art history, it's more productive to situate art history as cultural production within the larger dynamism of not only the women's movement but public life as well—a place in which the long-held forms of bourgeois exclusivity in art, as promoted in modernist criticism, is not commonly located. By the end of the 1970's, Lippard did precisely that but not without some inconsistencies.

As suggested by Sabeth Buchmann, we may view Lippard's activities defined by and through conceptualism and feminism as an "attempt at quasi-institutional self-

[117] Griselda Pollock, "Introduction", in *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London, England: Routledge, 1999), 12.
[118] Ibid, 26.

organization" which aligns nicely with Lippard's admitted DIY ethos.[119] We might also consider her expansive and experimental modes of production, shifting feminism, activism, and collaboration less as concentric circles and more like a mosaic of discontinuity; reflected in her tendency to instigate—Heresies, Printed Matter, Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D)—and keep moving. However, her consistent ebb and flow also signals a degree of disavowal, not wanting to lead a movement from the center in full cognizance of the demands and exacted tolls those positions require while also wanting to avoid the trappings of institutional inclusion, unlike many other critics of her generation. As Stephanie Cash assessed, Lippard's self-awareness as a critical method did not "induce her to be more focused in her opinions or critical writings."[120] Her advocacy for conceptual art waned, like many others, and moved on to "new or trendy movements" rather than see through the project of conceptualism and her own championing of dematerialization.

---

[119] Sabeth Buchmann, "Introduction: From Conceptualism to Feminism," in *From Conceptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows, 1969-74* (London: Afterall Books, 2012), 15.
[120] Stephanie Cash, "The Art Criticism and Politics of Lucy Lippard (1994)," in *Feminism-Art-Theory: an Anthology, 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 239.

Chapter Two
"You Stand Corrected: Adrian Piper's Radical Personhood"

> I have gotten kicked out of the art world twice: the first time in 1970 when it became generally known that I was a woman; the second time in 1974 when, after considerable exposure in group shows of women artists involved in second-wave feminism, it became generally known that I was African-American. After that happened, I had plenty of time, privacy, and solitude to pursue my artistic interests, ... research in philosophy and… my yoga practice.[121]

Adrian Margaret Smith Piper was born September 20, 1948 in New York City. She was an academically ambitious student with interests across various disciplines in the arts and humanities. While enrolled in the School of Visual Arts, she also took classes at City College of New York in philosophy and by 1968; she was already producing conceptually grounded art in group exhibitions in the United States and Europe, as well as publishing pieces in Vito Acconci's *0 to 9* conceptual magazine. Her early work engaged with systems theory, aligned with the more intellectually oriented group of conceptual artists. In the beginning years of Piper's art practice, she formed what would become a lifelong friendship with fellow conceptual artist Sol LeWitt. She was influenced by LeWitt's notion of "self-reflexive content" where the object's primacy is unique only in consideration of the object as a particular point of articulation within the schema of a larger conceptual system. This idea is key in Piper's discussion of her own work in which she uses her body as "a conceptually and spatiotemporally immediate art object to my person as a gendered and ethnically stereotyped art commodity."[122]

---

[121] Adrian Piper, "On Wearing Three Hats (1996)," Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2007, http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteNGBK3Hats.pdf.
[122] Adrian Piper, "The Logic of Modernism (1992)," in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , vol. II (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 213.

In one example, Piper's *Concrete Infinity Documentation Piece* (1970) was made when she was just 21 years old. The work is a collection of 57 sheets of grid paper in which Piper documented her daily activities, recording the banal details of her body's bowel movements, phone calls placed, and her weight, restricted to the month of June. In addition to the diary style, handwritten daily accounts, are self-taken photos of the artist. Each photograph is captured with little attention to technical skill or composition as Piper stares blankly beyond the viewer, sometimes naked or obscured in an out of focus haze, in many of the shots. The individual sheets of paper are framed in thin, black frames mounted as a grid in clean rows with even spacing, which creates a complete, patterned plane rather than highlight any individual page. To engage with the piece is to confront the artist's intentions first and foremost, rather than approach the work with some predetermined aesthetic criteria. Piper's critique of form and focus on her body as a system remained a constant in many performances, videos, and text-based works as well as a continued writing practice that addresses her own work and critical pieces of art, its values, methods, and politics. But centering her own body in a complex exploration of its object-ness against the increasing political tumult of the Vietnam War, student rebellions, and feminist and civil rights movements proved much more complicated and fraught for Piper than it would have for other artists because of her gender and ethnicity and their associated limitations.

When Piper refers to her first rejection in the art world in 1970 as a result of others (read: men) becoming aware of her status as a woman, she also meant it in regards

to her own identification as a feminist. It's all the more interesting that just four years later, she would, upon reflection, experience ostracism from the mainstream feminist movement and its small overlap in the art world because of her racial identity. Though she remarked that her compounded marginal status made it possible for her to focus on her three work trajectories: art, philosophy, and yoga—it also indicates a degree of steadfast self-preservation that drives her life and work to the present day. During her time *away*, Piper completed her Master's in 1977 and Ph.D. in Philosophy in 1981 at Harvard University, specializing in metaethics and Kantian rationalism and holding teaching appointments at esteemed schools including Wellesley College, Harvard, Stanford, and Georgetown universities.

Conceptual artists of Piper's generation were known for their explanatory texts, detailing ideological, intellectual, personal, and political perspectives, often presented as the work or tethered to it. Piper considered the interstitial and indispensible textual part of the artistic process as "meta-art", the conditions and procedures in and around the production of the artwork.[123] By the late 1980's, the art world shifted its focus (as it often does) towards representation and Piper was brought back into the fold, becoming a celebrated figure for identity politics in contemporary art—a double-edged sword of recognition, tinted with ahistorical amnesia, sans full comprehension. By this I mean to suggest that her status in art history pigeonholes her work in the limited and marginal

[123] It's important to clarify that Piper's self-theorizing of her work typically manifest as text reflections, which she considered to be inextricable elements of her artworks. She referred to this process as "meta-art" in what should be understood as the artist's discursive approach to art-making, as well as an intellectual product unparalleled by many of her contemporaries at the time.

spaces permitted to black and feminist performance art and by doing so, her work remains considerably misunderstood, with some very recent expansive exceptions.[124] Reductive views of her practice are especially unfortunate given the high volume of output she has authored about her own artistic practice, philosophical work, and other critical essays. For example, Fred Moten recently wrote about Piper's work as "tracing the boundary between critical philosophy and racial performance… in order to critique racial categories and to investigate what happens when the visual singularity of a performed, curated, or conceptualized image is deployed in order to move beyond what she calls the 'visual pathology' of racist categorization."[125] I do not aim to dismiss the value of Piper's contribution to such marginal areas within the canon but I do recognize their limitations. How might we examine Piper's conceptual operation, against the grain of its primary receptive modalities, and reinterpret her contributions to contemporary art history beyond the realm of identity politics? I believe such a process requires two essential components. The first is to take Piper precisely at her word—the act of listening is a feminist art critical methodology—which is much easier said than done, particularly with her audacious tendency to issue corrections to publishers of off-mark reviews and

[124] A few of the notable exceptions to the norm will be explored in this chapter and are primarily the result of her recent major retrospective, *A Synthesis of Institutions,* at the Museum of Modern Art in 2018 and its corresponding exhibition publications.
[125] Fred Moten, "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality," in *In the Break: the Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 234.
.

essays of her work, including completely rewriting her own Wikipedia page and also providing interviews only on a highly selective basis.[126]

The second approach that I offer to reinterpret Piper is within the broader political context of increased anti-intellectualism in the United States during the 1960's, which effectively carried over from the McCarthy era. Most of the focus on identity politics, the Vietnam War and their respective thin lines through conceptual art are hinged on a rotating stock of recognizable identifications. It is my contention that the weak status of intellectuals, especially among artists, and the problematic conflation of intellectualism with academic elitism resulted in an additional and often overlooked circumstance by which structural and institutionalized forms of discrimination, already compounded by the conditions addressed in identity-based social movements, were inscribed. Piper's early commitment to disciplinary mastery and development as an intellectual superseded her desire to align with groups based on identity alone.

Art After Philosophy

In 1969, conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth published a three-part canonical analysis defining conceptual art, "Art After Philosophy" in *Studio International.* Both widely contested and accepted, Kosuth's formulation of conceptual art extended from the Kantian philosophical tradition of universalism, indebted to the positivist philosophy of A.J. Ayer. Kosuth insisted that art of this kind had a tautological analytic quality, as

[126] See: *Adrian Piper Didn't Like Her Wikipedia Page—So She Built a Subversive New One From Scratch* https://news.artnet.com/art-world/adrian-piper-wikipedia-page-1269659

opposed to "synthetic" art, which referenced worldly subject matter—politics, historical events, daily life— and was, therefore, non-universalist, reactionary, and simplistic. [127] He writes,

> Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context—as art they provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, *he* is saying that a particular work of art is art, which means, is a definition of art. Thus, that it is art is true a priori… what art has in common with logic and mathematics is that it is a tautology; i.e., the 'art idea' (or 'work') and art are the same and can be appreciated as art without going outside the context of art for verification.[128]

He notes that the function of art and view of art as having its own identity was first established by Marcel Duchamp with the "ready-made" shifting the focus away from aesethetic recognition of art, to a conceptual logic, "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually."[129] In the second part on his analysis, Kosuth continues his argument reducing the primacy of art objects and includes a list of conceptual artists and others working in that mode, as evidence of the conceptualist program already taking shape. He notes Sol LeWitt as setting the pre-conditions for conceptualism in LeWitt's influential centering of the environment in the experience of art (a shared tendency with minimalism) and cites other artists working in "conceptual formats" such as Christine Kozlov, On Kawara's postcards, Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, as well as noting younger artists developing a *purer* (that is to say, not

---

[127] Kosuth, seeking some degree of authorial claiming and purity, also considered existentialism and phenomenological philosophy subpar, calling them both "continential". Joseph Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy (1969)," essay, in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 159.
[128] Italic emphasis mine. Ibid, 165-169.
[129] Ibid, 164.

transitioning from another mode like minimalism) conceptual art practice including Saul Ostow, Adrian Piper, and Perpetua Butler.[130] For Kosuth and artists like Lawrence Weiner, Hanne Darboven, language was essential. Conceptual art was an analytic proposition, self-referential (and therefore deterministic) and process-driven, but not just any process, an intellectual one. The operation of Kosuth's conceptual art seemed expansive but its founding was not only reactionary to formalism but also, entirely rooted in the false opposition of analytic as universal and self-referential i.e.: objective, and the synthetic as political, provincial, i.e.: subjective.

We have the benefit of historical reflection to see Kosuth's claim of art picking up where philosophy (declared dead) left off and that, more critically, how Kosuth was clearly motivated to replace the dominance of formalist criticism, so much so, that he was not necessarily cognizant of the ways in which he was in fact extending much of its logic. Recalling Lippard's criticism of Art & Language's use of the male pronoun exclusively in their publications, and despite the fact that Kosuth lists women among the conceptual ranks, he also uncritically defaulted to gendered identification of artists. As noted recently by Frances Colpitt in "The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art", Kosuth's anti-formalist strategies paradoxically "resulted in work with considerable formalist dimensions."[131] Although many artists associated with conceptual

[130] Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy", 174.
[131] Frances Colpitt, "The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art," essay, in *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice*, ed. Michael Corris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 33.

art also wrote about their practices, processes, and ideas—Kosuth's text became the foundation of the intellectual base in conceptual art.

For all of Kosuth's initial dismissal of subjectivity and the "synthetic", it is interesting to note that during the 1970's, Kosuth became aware and uncomfortable of his "ethnocentricity as a white male artist", while studying anthropology at The New School. His discomfort with his own art career success in the political tumult of the era, eventually led him to spend time in Perú with the Yagua people and with Aborigine tribes in Australia. His experience is detailed in "The Artist as Anthropologist" (1975). His own personal identity crisis reveals the inherent limitations of his initial proposition for conceptual art and its over-emphasis on objective universalism in a vacuum.

Identity Is the Crisis, Can't You See?

In a previously unpublished text from 1967, Adrian Piper defended the pursuit of a "pure" conceptual art and the objective principles of art that Kosuth and other intellectual artists promoted. But rather than employ simplistic oppositional logic, Piper, somewhat earnestly, synthesized the object – subject dialectic by offering an intuitive system of approaching it, "I think that the best thing an artist can do for his creative development is allow his intuitions as full an actualization as possible—unhampered by ultimately unavoidable limitations of personality and material… I have found that the

best way for me to deal with my subjective limitations is in the process of conceptual formulation… Only the intuitive is truly unlimited."[132]

Sol LeWitt was one of Piper's early supporters and closest friends. Piper notes his influence on her work, particularly in LeWitt's emphasis on the idea as a simple gesture that can become complicated, but need not necessarily be so. In "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art", LeWitt explained,

> Conceptual art is not necessarily logic. The logic of a piece or a series of pieces is a device that is used at time only to be ruined. Logic may be used to camouflage the real intent of the artist, to lull the viewer into the belief that the he understands the work, or to infer a paradoxical situation (such as logic vs. illogic). The ideas need not be complex. Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. In terms of idea, the artist is free to even surprise himself. Ideas are discovered by intuition.[133]

LeWitt emphasized the process and intuition of the artist as the starting point for conceptual work and that the idea's primacy contained elements of chance and change that were both necessary and unavoidable. Unlike Kosuth, LeWitt was not concerned with "categorical imperatives" and instead, felt that there was inherent and subjective value in the intuitive process of art and that value was to be discovered by the artist for the artist's continued process, rather than disseminated as credence. Known for his

---

[132] Piper, "A Defense of the 'Conceptual' Process in Art" in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 37.

[133] Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), reprinted in , in *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 13.

thoughtful generosity, openness, and gentle advocacy, LeWitt was uniquely unconcerned with authority and power compared to many of his contemporaries.[134]

Where other conceptual artists were looking outward, beyond themselves, to either expand the form and audience of art or inherit the role of philosophy and attempt to form an avant-garde (Kosuth), Piper's draw to conceptualism was and arguably still is, entirely rooted in her Self – as an object and as a system. However, her investigations of the self would prove much more difficult on both artistic and intellectual fronts. While Kosuth was afforded the choice to examine his own identity in terms of race, class, and gender, the same privileges were not extended to Piper.

Nizan Shaked's exceptional analysis on the relationship between conceptual art and identity politics in the United States offers a productive position from which to consider Piper's subjective and anti-essentialist operation. Noting that the political form of identity politics emerged from the Civil Rights movement and is in general, is aligned with a sort of appeal for recognition or acceptance into the nation-state, and more broadly, "identity" served as the basis of radical politics ranging from communism in the Black Panther Party, and radical queer politics' notion of the "anti-identity". The term 'identity politics' itself is meant to describe the "historical reality of a divided and segregated United States, where the economic conditions of minorities left no other choice but to protest within the confines allowed by the democratic state."[135] Shaked uses the term "identity to designate the shared characteristics and identity politics as the

[134] I address LeWitt's friendships and advocacy of women artists in the conclusion.
[135] Nizan Shaked, *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2017), 36.

political action taken under that nomenclature" and also considers identifying markers not as belonging to the subject but rather, reflective of a set of particular relations "which take place in a field, where subjects have a certain level of agency, but so does the undergirding socio-economic system, thus that the agency of subjects is influenced by how they are positioned within this matrix."[136]

There are many criticisms of the essentialist dimension of identity-based political struggles from within movements (as seen in Lippard's shifting feminism and issues within the Heresies collective), as well as a rejection of identity as possessing any potential political value, often serving as a blind spot in the criticism of art. Or worse, as Jennifer Doyle explains, "The deep suspicion of identity politics… may originate in an awareness of the problem of liberal formations around difference (e.g., its fetishization), but it has yielded a rather strange situation in art criticism in which the mere presence of especially race as an interpretive factor is enough to wipe out a work's difficulty and the complexity of its relationship to its context."[137] In foregrounding the dynamics of complexity, Doyle explicates the way in which the field of art criticism maintains not only a selective sense of judgment but also one that is, in her example, a historical extension of racist logic on two grounds: the artist's race/ethnicity becomes conflated

---

[136] Of course, this is expanded in other areas of postmodernism and poststructuralist thought, as noted by Shaked in her Introduction to *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2017). 8.

[137] Doyle traces the suspicion of identity politics through critics Hal Foster and Claire Bishop. Jennifer Doyle, "Feeling Overdetermined: Identity, Emotion, and History, in *Hold It against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 95.

.

with the artwork's critical potential and the work becomes, regardless of conceptual intent, a representation or reflection of the artist's identity. She continues, "The artist ends up performing a kind of ideological service work in spite of herself, educating and helping audiences to work through their own racism… Worse, the work's politics will be put through a distortion chamber, and its critical dimensions will be reversed… resolving the work's difficulty by pointing to the artist's identity as its ultimate meaning."[138] The reductive trap of conflating the artwork with the artist, on the basis of status-quo defined identity, does not leave much room for any marginalized artist, to contribute, critique, or expand the field of art once they are relegated to a peripheral position, and charged with the task to expel their own time and energy towards reconciling the shortcomings of a general art audience—often uncritical and unaware of their own subjective foundation in systemic hierarchies—with the hopes of recognition as an artist. Rather than attend to these conditions or assimilate into them, Piper's conceptual motivations were not biographical for the sake of biography or "visibility" but rather, her subjective intuitions became the basis of her conceptual project, with a desire to expose the underlying rationale of many systems of power—which she considered an intellectual and individualized operation that could be located within the matrix Shaked suggests but only in addition to the primacy of her own intellectual process. Piper writes,

> Euroethnic postmodernism's attitude of mourning assumes our arrival at the end of the art historical progression, and therefore the impossibility of further innovation indigenous to it. This means, in particular, that innovations that occur outside of that progression, or by those who are not accepted into it, cannot be acknowledged to exist as innovations at all. Accordingly, the normative category of originality against which art within the Euroethnic tradition was judged is

[138] Ibid, 95.

> replaced by the purportedly descriptive categories of anomaly, marginality, and otherness. These aesthetically non-committal categories can be deployed to acknowledge the existence of such innovations without having to credit them normatively as innovations at all.[139]

Piper reveals the perpetual state of marginalization as a condition within the larger system of art history and its historical processes. It is not that she doesn't identify as a black woman artist, she does, it's that the subjugated status of black women artists is a negated status. That is to say, Piper's actual point of contention is not that black women artists should be elevated to the status of celebrated white male artists but rather, the logic of "originality" is reinforced by the acceptance of difference from outside and within the "non-committal" categories of identity. However, Piper's career is deeply situated and understood within the context of identity politics in the 1960's onward, as well as the institutionalization of multiculturalism that followed, which reinforced the marginal otherness of identity by inclusion, rather than exclusion. In general, multiculturalism became a veneer of celebrating difference while also foreclosing upon the roots of oppression and xenophobia, eliminating specificity. Looking back at the 1960's through the 1970's, as many of conceptual art's leading figures acquiesced to the demands of the market and returned to object-oriented conventional art making, while others left the art world to join more direct grassroots political movements, Piper, an unwavering intellectual, continued to make conceptual art while also pursuing her Ph.D. at Harvard University in analytic philosophy.

---

[139] Adrian Piper, "The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists' (1990) in *Feminism-Art-Theory: an Anthology, 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 60.

The Intellectual Other

Adrian Piper's 2018 MOMA retrospective, *A Synthesis of Institutions*, is the largest retrospective—occupying the museum's entire sixth-floor special exhibitions gallery, and its scaled down version at the Hammer Museum, demonstrate the scope of her enduring output. As a result, there are countless reviews, new studies, and other publications focused on her career adding to her extensive reception history. Diarmuid Costello, who specializes in post-Kantian Continental Aesthetics and the philosophy of art, contributed to Piper's retrospective reader and attempted to chart the relationship between her philosophical work and art practice. He appropriately notes that the art world has yet to grasp the neo-Kantian qualities of Piper's philosophy given the art world's ongoing but vague acknowledgment of Piper's scholarship. Costello asserts that Piper's engagement with issues of race and xenophobia is "just one instance, albeit a privileged one, of a much broader concern with empirical acculturation. This is a concern that ramifies well beyond issues of race."[140] It's important for Costello to highlight the "beyond" issues of race as it pertains to Piper's work. For the most part, her contribution to art history follows the historical development and view of multicultural institutionalized inclusion: she is now valued due to the conflation of her race and gender with the political concepts of race and gender addressed in her artwork. Instead, Costello is one of the few art historians and philosophers who attempt to distill Piper's philosophical work for an art audience.

[140] Diarmuid Costello, "Xenophobia, Stereotypes, and Empirical Acculturation: Neo-Kantianism in Adrian Piper's Performance-Based Conceptual Art." *In Adrian Piper: A Reader*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 169.

At the outset of his analysis, he intended to set aside the conventions of monographic art writing, pointing to its longstanding limitations, "Many commentators in the art world are obliged to take these connections between her art and philosophy largely on trust, because they lack the training to do otherwise. This has restricted serious debate about these connections' nature, extent, and true significance of Piper's practice to date."[141] However, Costello elects to challenge Piper's words and claims about her art and philosophy (and deliberately occludes: her yoga practice) in order to assess "success" and although Costello and I are similarly uninterested in reproducing the art world's tendency of identifying a theoretical or critical concept and simply importing it into the art-making process by reductive quotation, I do, however, feel there's more work and attention to be paid by taking Piper at her word.

Costello proceeds to identify a "polysemic" dimension to Piper's work, explaining that her art and its relation to the work's formal properties "could (and should) be better marked than they have been" and reiterates (and thus reveals one level of his own critical preoccupations) that it is a significant part of the "function of artistic form to make a range of possible meanings nonexclusively available, otherwise there would be no reason either to make or experience the work."[142] The multi-dimensional interpretive quality of Piper's work (in reference to *Funk Lessons*, among others), according to Costello, is aligned with Kant's conception that "works of art are indirect presentations of ideas in sensible form."[143] Whereas, Piper's *My Calling (Card) #1* also follows through

[141] Costello, 171.
[142] Ibid, 180.
[143] Ibid, 180.

with the Kantian principle, highlighting that work is the process and its material existence is secondary to its conceptual form.

In an impressive, if not just simply daunting, synthesis of Piper's major works across her entire career with Kantian (or Neo-Kantian) principles, Costello constructs an unprecedented distillation of the philosophical dimensions—aesthetic, epistemological, and moral—through the works. Faulting many other art historical engagements with Piper and Kant as over-led by a "rush to content", that is, to look at the content of the artworks and neither their own immediate experience of the work nor even their subjective interpretation of it. He writes, "… the self-evidence of Piper's subject matter can often mislead. Her work's deeper significance, as distinct from its explicit subject matter, is not nearly so obvious or determinate. I am not convinced that Piper's works even have determinate meanings… and this is a good thing."[144] This also points back to Piper's intentions in 1967, her attraction to conceptual art, where she posited that one way to deal with subjective limitations was to invest in a conceptual formulation, a process of development. That is to say, intuitions are the only limitless and indeterminate qualities in existence, and that even personhood or "the human" is an idea. Costello concludes:

> … we go wrong if we make our limited empirical self-conceptions prescriptive for what we are prepared to countenance as another human being in the full sense. This speaks to the weight that attaches to the idea of the person in both Piper's and Kant's philosophies. Given this, Kant's conceptions of works of art as indirect expression of ideas provides a rich resource for thinking about the possibilities of indirectly communicating what lies beyond any individual's limited conceptual scheme. It is perhaps for this reason that Kant writes that the unified aesthetic attributes of a work of art 'yield' an aesthetic idea in the mind of

[144] Costello, 205.

> its recipient, by enlivening their power of cognition… the twin poles of intelligibility and sensuousness in the domain of aesthetic production… provide a fertile starting point for understanding how one might promote xenophilia through art.[145]

I appreciate the consideration of how the intuitive processes of both intelligibility and sensuousness together offer a possible point of entry to Piper's larger conceptual operation while also highlighting the ways in which many of the critical interpretations, both celebratory and dismissive, share a deficient logic. This is not to suggest that Piper's work should remain free of criticism but rather, how can one consider their own engagement with her practice if they do not even attempt to comprehend the intuitive process—both hers and their own—in the experience of the work? And in this sense, the gendered logic prevailing of intelligibility (rationality) versus the realm of the sensuous (emotional) reinforces incomplete interpretations of her artwork, regardless of whether one is lauding a work for its sensuous qualities—as reflected in many well-intentioned inclusions of Piper and her work into identity-based areas of the canon: primarily feminist art and black performance art. Similarly, the inability to recognize, or sometimes, the outright refusal to even consider the intellectual qualities in the work and consider them as an opportunity or challenge rather than a threat (which speaks to the waning standard of critical engagement among art audiences), is an enormous oversight in Piper's reception history. I'm not suggesting that her artwork requires a foundation in analytic philosophy in order to grasp it. However, I do find the categorization of her work as only a signifier for race and gender with little to no self-reflexive thought on the

[145] Costello, 215.

viewer or critic's part beyond the work's subject or, worse, the tendency to categorize Piper's practice as only autobiographical, woefully lacking. However, there are also far more troubling interpretations of her work, as we will see.

An Open Letter to Donald Kuspit (1987)

In 1987, art critic Donald Kuspit wrote an essay intended for Adrian Piper's retrospective exhibition catalog for the show, Adrian Piper: Reflections 1967-1987 at The Alternative Museum in NYC. Kuspit's text, titled "Adrian Piper: Self-Healing Through Meta-Art" a paternalistic and patronizing ad hominem rant so feverish, it's difficult to parse out whether or not Kuspit understood the basic methods of conceptual art at all. Unsurprisingly, Piper declined to include the essay in the catalog and in turn, Kuspit published it in an issue of *Art Criticism*—where he worked as an editor. His attempt at dismissive and authoritative condescension is completely undermined by his inability to provide the reader with any semblance of informative critical context. Instead, he attacks Piper on such oddly contradictory points including conflating her work with her personhood, accusing her of both intellectualizing to dramatically incompatible extents: self-assured yet anxious, over-confident but still ambiguous and uncertain. He writes, "In Piper, ambiguity and anxiety are resolved through aggression, but the aggression is a vicious circle that leads back to them. Piper cannot escape the labyrinth of her spoiled self. Neither intellectuality nor aggression—aggressive intellectuality—is a way out… The more aggressive Piper becomes, the more she tightens the noose of anxious

ambiguity around her psychic neck."[146] It seems as though some of the contradictory and overwrought accusations that repeat through Kuspit's essay indicate some oscillation between deploying the tools of sexism—infantilizing and pathologizing Piper as a person— and applying the codes of racism by declaring both the work and Piper aggressive and all in order to collectively undermine, recalling Jennifer Doyle, the complexity of the work, by declaring there is none, as well as undermining Piper's agency. He concludes, "The ideal of complete interpretability is a kind of magical thinking, another form of the infantile illusion of omnipotence (so pervasive in philosophy)… Does Piper unconsciously yearn for the empathy of an audience—for an audience that can transcend its own analytic tendencies after exercising them, and care for the object of its interest, see it as a subject? Would Piper than have her sense of herself as an active subject—an integral being—restored to her?"[147]

Piper wrote a letter in response and it was published in *Real Life* in the winter 1987 issue. "An Open Letter to Donald Kuspit" is an exhaustive correction and substantial rebuttal to Kuspit. Piper's published letter contained her original private response to Kuspit after receiving his submission. Rather than take a defensive position,

[146] The original article was published in 1987 in *Art Criticism* and re-published in 2019 by the populist art magazine Whitehot, coinciding with Piper's retrospective, with no critical context, and an error noting the publication date as 1979. See: "Adrian Piper: Self-Healing Through Meta-Art (1987) by Donald Kuspit," Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art, 2019, https://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/meta-art-by-donald-kuspit/3996.
[147] Ibid.

Piper offers a list of considerations and corrections (factual, grammatical, and syntactical) to Kuspit on the basis of "intellectual standards I assumed we both shared."[148]

For example, citing Kuspit, "Page 12: 'Both [the problems of interpretive control and of transformation] have more than a hint of the narcissism—solipsism?— that motivates Piper's activity." And her response, "Which is it? Narcissism and solipsism are very different conditions (I have a paper on narcissism and moral alienation coming out in The Journal of Philosophy sometime this month, if you'd like to see it… For the record: if you mean 'solipsism', you may be right; if you mean 'narcissism,' you are wrong."[149] Piper's letter considerably exceeds the time and effort that Kuspit dedicated to his initial essay. This is another facet of Piper's critical work: the depth of her engagement is often unparalleled; particularly when it comes to those with thinly veiled motivations and unchallenging (and unfounded) claims.

Maintaining the voice of intellectual rigor and suggestive revision, Piper summarizes her take on Kuspit's essay,

> In this essay so far, you have described me as obsessive, tortured, self-abasing, insecure, incoherent, overwrought with anxiety, sick, narcissistic, hysterical, aggressive, intellectually exhausted, alienated, repressed, anorexic, and exhibitionistic. Later you add that I am schizophrenic, anguished, wracked with contradictions, self-defeated, and infantile. Don't you think this is a bit much? The impression it gives is that you are indiscriminately throwing every possible psychopathological term at me that you can think of in order to discredit the intellectual validity of my writing. It does not speak well for your assessment of your own critical contributions that you think you need to do this.[150]

---

[148] Adrian Piper, "An Open Letter to Donald Kuspit (1987)," in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism , vol. II* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 113.
[149] Ibid, 116.
[150] Ibid, 121.

Piper also mentions a phone conversation between her and Kuspit that took place after her initial response to him, per her request. In the conversation, Kuspit expressed discomfort with the above quoted section from Piper, noting that he did not appreciate the way in which she speculated as to what motivated him to pathologize her, by making suggestions into his own mental, emotional, and professional state. She responded, "You were clearly angry that I had some inferences about your frame of mind from your writing. I was surprised at your anger, because your essay does exactly the same to me, except without bothering to discuss any evidence for the inferences you make."[151]

Kuspit's original essay and Piper's detailed refutation are both intense to read through. Kuspit's is, of course, an unfortunate attempt to assert a sense of his own authority over Piper's art, writing, and personhood. But what bothered him so much? It seems as though it was her intellectual rigor and the fact that such intellectual fortitude is embodied in a black woman artist that triggered Kuspit, which Piper convincingly exposed.[152]

After the exchange, Piper made two pencil drawings using the exchange as subject matter, *Kuspit Extermination Fantasy* (1987) and *Kuspit Strangulation Fantasy* (1987). Both drawings are dryly humorous and use the stylistic conventions of magazine illustrations, one presenting Kuspit as an overgrown cockroach, extinguished by a

[151] Ibid, 25.
[152] This is further supported by Piper noting, in her original response to Kuspit, an instance where Kuspit stated on the phone to her that he would need to "somehow 'get past' my being so 'smart and articulate' in order to 'maintain' your 'critical integrity". Ibid, 112.

pesticide can marked "meta-art" while the other visualizes an especially hyperbolic (with violent undertones) portion of Kuspit's essay.

The correspondence resurfaced again in the essay "Ways of Averting One's Gaze", written in 1988. Piper's examines the way in which cultural racism, as the system by which xenophobia pervades, operates in art criticism. She focuses on two examples, Kuspit's essay and a review by Elizabeth Hess "Ways of Seeing Adrian Piper" in *The Village Voice* from May 26, 1987. In a footnote, she asserts, "Those who worry that I may be unfairly lifting the following quotes out of context are encouraged to consult [the] articles. They will find that, on the whole, Kuspit tends to portray me as neurotic, whereas Hess (a white woman), inclines more to portray me as stupid and malevolent."[153] Of course, this also recalls Joanna Russ' point on the pollution of agency when creating work reveals a "woman…as abnormal, neurotic, unpleasant, and hence unlovable."[154] The easy dismissal is not only a concern of gender but also race and other intersecting identity markers (imposed, accepted, or otherwise internalized) with the consequences felt on both on the level of dismissing one's work, while completely undermining the totality of their being.

The Mythic Being (1973-1975)

In the fall of 2013, Adrian Piper pulled her work from an exhibition at NYU's Grey Art Gallery. The show, titled *Radical Presence: Black Performance in*

[153] Adrian Piper, "Ways of Averting One's Gaze (1988)", in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism, vol. II* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 134.
[154] Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983), 25.

Contemporary Art consisted of all black artists. Documentation of Piper's well-known series of street actions, *The Mythic Being* were part of the exhibition and in the catalog the series was described by Naomi Beckwith as "a seminal work of self-fashioning that both posited and critiqued models of gender and racial subjectivity." However, Piper asked that her work be removed from the exhibition and explained in a letter to the exhibition curator Valerie Cassel Oliver, posted to the switched off monitor that had once displayed the piece, "I appreciate your intentions. Perhaps a more effective way to 'celebrate [me], [my] work and [my] contributions to not only the art world at large, but also a generation of black artists working in performance,' might be to curate multi-ethnic exhibitions that give American audiences the rare opportunity to measure directly the groundbreaking achievements of African American artists against those of their peers in 'the art world at large."[155]

[155] Robin Cembalest, "Adrian Piper Pulls Out of Black Performance-Art Show -." ARTnews. October 25, 2013. Accessed 2014. http://www.artnews.com/2013/10/25/piper-pulls-out-of-black-performance-art-show/.

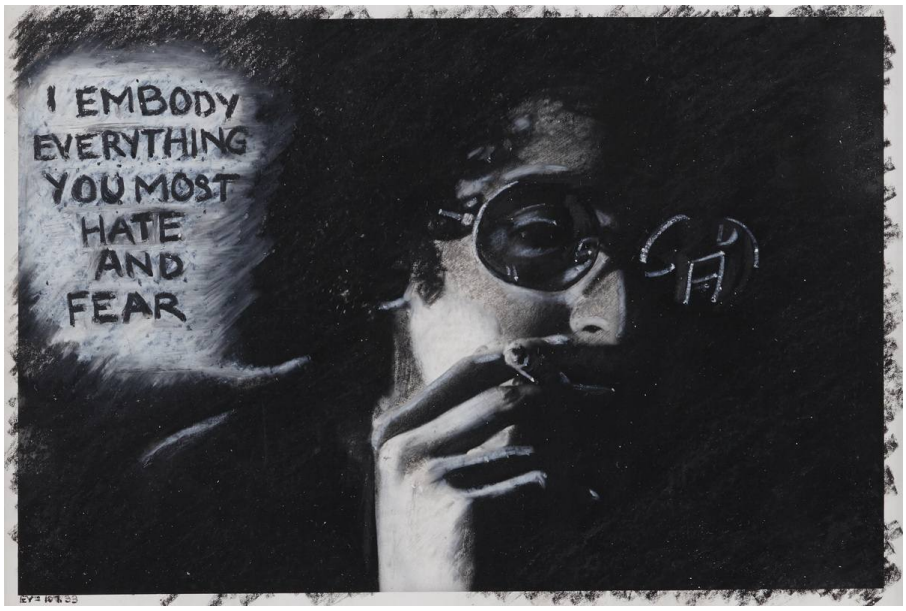

Figure 2.1: Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being: I Embody Everything You Most Hate and Fear,* 1975, 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm). © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-adrian-pipers-massive-moma-survey-will-force-face-prejudices

The Mythic Being (1973-1975) is one of Piper's best-known conceptual works and is celebrated as a critical black performance art piece. Piper developed a performative entity—the mythic being—described as "seeming opposite: a third-world, working-class, overtly hostile male."[156] She would walk around the streets of New York City, embodying the persona with much bravado, reinforced in costume: she would wear an Afro wig, moustache, large mirrored sunglasses, and smoke a cigar and strut about as "an avatar of stereotypical representations of black men."[157] Piper had several monthly public appearances as the mythic being while also maintaining a journal in character. From

[156] Adrian Piper, "The Mythic Being: Getting Back (1975)" in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism, vol. I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 147.
[157] Ibid, 147.

them, she would publish selections of text and run them as advertisements in *Village Voice*, seventeen total, from September 1973—February 1975. Using expanded methods of communication media—television and in print—was a common mode of dissemination among conceptual artists. For Piper, she wanted to reach a wider "non-art-world public" and "art-world-specific public of artists-participants simultaneously".[158] Documentation of the street performances and works on paper addressing aspects of the embodiment reveal also some of the racialized and gendered underpinnings: *The Mythic Being: Cruising White Women* (1975) and *The Mythic Being: Getting Back* (1975) respond to stereotypes of black men as sexually predatory and violent, while also highlighting both the fantasy of revenge as well as the fear of violent retribution toward white people. *The Mythic Being: Let's Have a Talk* (1975) goes beyond readily available stereotypes and instead, presents a contrasting reflective interiority, where the shadowed alienated object-subject addresses the viewer gently asking, "Let's have a talk… to bring us closer… as close friends do: come nearer: may I stroke your back?" The persona confronts the viewer, not with stereotyped aggression, but with his desire for intimacy and friendship.

Piper approached the work as a way for her to explore aspects of her identity that were not readily available, "the fact that I am black because many people do not realize that, but also that I have a very strong masculine component to my character."[159] For the most part, as noted by Cherise Smith and Uri McMillan, *The Mythic Being* remains the most celebrated work by Piper, but mostly and easily as a "think piece on race and

[158] Ibid, 148.
[159] Ibid, 148.

racism" and not in difficult and complex terms, as a "bodily and psychological experiment in transcending the boundaries between subjecthood and objecthood to become an art object."[160]

It is true that Piper's extensive archive of writing can easily overwhelm and lead one to take the text as a guide to the work but that would be too easy; however, that does not make Piper's writing arbitrary either. In terms of *The Mythic Being*, she maintained extensive preparatory notes (in listed journal format) and also, detailed notes and process oriented reflections during each cycle of work, which were published in 1976. It is interesting to note that Piper includes the following epigraph to her "Notes on the Mythic Being I-III" by Jean-Paul Sartre from his acclaimed existentialist work *Being and Nothingness*, "A person frees himself from himself in the very act by which he makes himself an object for himself."[161] Although Piper has reiterated her conceptual operation of her own personhood (as a subject and object) through an investigation of the self in respect to the systems of power she is immersed—racism and sexism—art criticism often only stops there.

However, John P. Bowles' thorough engagement with *The Mythic Being* is of notable exception. Bowles places the work within the socio-historical context of the Black Panthers, radical black feminism, and sexuality. First framing the work as

---

[160] Uri McMillan, "Plastic Possibilities: Adrian Piper's Adamant Self-Alienation," in *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2015), 101.
[161] Jean-Paul Sartre qtd. in Adrian Piper, "Notes on the Mythic Being I-III (1974)," in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , vol. I (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 117.

emblematic of Piper's larger anti-essentialist approach, he cites an interview between art critic Laura Cottingham and Piper asking why *The Mythic Being*, conceived as an example of confrontational blackness, was not modeled after Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, or another woman associated with the Black Panthers, a question Piper is said to have refrained from answering directly.[162] In addition to Piper anti-essentialism, it is also likely that she would not want a recognizable association to the Black Panthers because of possible untoward derailment. Additionally, Bowles notes that women within the party had to fight against sexism among the party's members and by the time Piper was preparing the work, the party's strength was already waning in the public eye due to internal struggles, police and government infiltration and persecution, "Because the mainstream media, the New Left, and the Black Panther Party itself created a conventionally sexualized image of the Panthers, Piper could not have dressed as one of the Panther women without reiterating the very image her Mythic Being work critiques."[163] If anything, Piper's focus on cultivating a male persona reflects her desire to suspend (but not quite transcend) the boundaries of race and gender, as objects.

One significant and complex (unresolved) element of *The Mythic Being* concerns sexuality and sexualized stereotypes associated with blackness. Among the preparatory notes, Piper wrote: "3. Felt really horny. If I'd had a cock I would've surely had an erection. But I couldn't keep my mind on it for very long periods of time because of the

[162] John P. Bowles, "'Acting like a Man': Adrian Piper's Mythic Being and Black Feminism in the 1970s," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 3 (2007): 627. https://doi.org/10.1086/510921.
[163] Ibid, 629.

mantra."[164] Piper's reflection of the first time walking in public and experiencing increased libido while dressed in costume is almost comical in its hyper-aware sexual ineptitude. But it also draws back to the allowances, consequences, and restrictions of sexual expression as they intersect with race and gender.

In Angela Y. Davis' widely acclaimed, critical exposition of radical black feminism, *Women, Race & Class* (1983), she exposes the inefficiencies in and surrounding the struggle toward black liberation, including racism within the women's movement, sexism within civil rights, the erased historical foundation of the anti-slavery movement's contribution by black women, as well as an economic analysis of domestic work from a non-bourgeois, working class perspective. Davis also advocates for communism and reproductive rights. In one chapter, "Rape, Racism, and The Myth of the Black Rapist", Davis addresses increasing reports of rape in the United States, as widespread epidemic, "After ages of silence, suffering, and misplaced guilt, sexual assault is explosively emerging as one of the telling dysfunctions of present-day capitalist society."[165] She demonstrates that while there is a noted increase in reports and accusations of rape, many go unreported, however, of the reported, black men are indiscriminately accused and convicted. The myth of the black male rapist (as well as the image of the black woman as a whore) is, of course, rooted in slavery and as Davis notes, both myths are resurrected in times of black resistance. She writes,

---

[164] Adrian Piper, "Preparatory Notes for The Mythic Being (1973-1974)," in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , vol. I (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 104.
[165] Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1983), 172.

> The myth of the Black rapist continues to carry out the insidious work of racist ideology. It must bear a good portion of the responsibility for the failure of most anti-rape theorists to seek the identity of the enormous numbers of anonymous rapists who remain unreported, untried and unconvicted. As long as their analyses focus on accused rapists who are reported and arrested, thus on only a fraction of the rapes actually committed, Black men—and other men of color—will inevitably be viewed as the villains responsible for the current epidemic of sexual violence… But why are there so many anonymous rapists in the first place? Might not this anonymity be a privilege enjoyed by men whose status protects them from prosecution?[166]

These racist myths, or stereotypes, examined by both Piper and Davis possess tragic ramifications. While dressed in costume, Piper accessed a facet of repressed (and oppressed) sexuality that was indeed phallocentric but still arousing nonetheless. The complexity of the moment is one of layered tension: sexualized and racialized, public and private, as well as operating at the level of both self-conscious object-hood (manifesting the black male in public) and subject-hood (the interior conceptual reflection, distracted by the mantra). In 1998, Piper would later reflect that while in costume, she was treated (or perceived a marked difference in how others treated her) as a black man and that is was "incredibly unpleasant," and she also noted that white women would move train cars and clutch their purses, "the usual bag of tricks."[167] Much of her surprise at the shifted treatment must have also come from the fact that many people in Piper's professional and social circles did not consider her to be black.

---

[166] Davis, 199.
[167] Adam Shatz, "Black Like Me: Conceptual Artist Adrian Piper Gets Under Your Skin," in *Lingua Franca*, vol. 8.8, (New York City: November 1998), 48.

Passing

In 1991, Piper wrote "Passing for White, Passing for Black", originally commissioned as a feature for *Harper's Magazine*, the text reveals the ambiguity of Piper's racial identity and how she was often mistaken for white and when she revealed that she is of mixed heritage, she was subject to a number of alienating, demoralizing, and humiliating exchanges by her colleagues in academia and the art world. Piper takes her "passing" status as a point of analysis to explicate the undergirding logic of racism, difference, and xenophobia in the United States. Because she experienced many circumstances in which she was thought to be either white or black, thus denying her personhood of its wholeness, she arrived at a critical observation:

> I believe that the perceptual and cognitive distortions that characterize any form of racism begin here, in the failure to see any such act of racist aggression as a defensive response to one's perceived attack on the aggressor's physical or psychological property, or conception of himself, or of the world. Once you see this, you may feel helpless to be anything other than who you are, anything or anyone who could resolve the discord. But at least it restores a sense of balance and mutually flawed humanity to the interaction.[168]

Piper reveals that she had always personally identified herself as black (or "colored" as it was used before 1967) and that her upper-middle-class upbringing placed her in both predominately white schools and later, more integrated and progressive school environments. At home, four adults raised Piper, an only child, her mother Olive, father Daniel, maternal Uncle Sydney, and maternal grandmother Margaret. She notes that her parents believed or hoped that sustaining a creative and challenging environment for her

[168] Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black (1991)," Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2009, http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/Passing.pdf, 3.

would somehow protect her from experiencing racism and to some extent, they were right, at least for a time. It wasn't until Piper entered academia that she reached the "full force of racism" where she experienced the deep peculiarities of her passing appearance, as an anomaly, and made her subject to a series of odd, well-intentioned, but racist nonetheless interactions with colleagues: one person openly speculated about Piper's desire to not bear children as, somehow, resulting from a fear of hers that her children would come out darker in skin tone; another instance where a colleague consulted her on the topics of envy and resentment, surmising that she would know about it because she's black; and the list goes on.[169]

Piper included various quotes between paragraphs (not directly integrated) throughout the text from a selection of literary representations, historical and anthropological studies on race and racial classification in the US, with particular attention towards the one-drop rule, mixed racial heritage and appearance and miscegenation. Among her selection is: Charles Waddell Chestnutt (1858-1932), a white passing African-American author and political activist in the Post-Civil War South; John Howard Griffin, a white journalist who underwent dermatological alterations to darken his skin to pass as a black man in Texas for his book, Black Like Me (1960); F. James Davis' *Who is Black?: One Nation's Definition,* Virginia R. Dominguez's *White By Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (1986); *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965); and others.

[169] Ibid, 7.

Piper was less interested in the effects of racism and practical steps to reform it through policy—the primary tenet of identity politics—that much is clear. Rather, she was motivated by examining the underlying logic of racial categorization, its historical developments, and most importantly, the way in which they become lodged into an individual's perception of self, their perceptions of other people, and those perceptions become actions that in turn, come together to reinstate systemic racism. She also makes it clear that the work of identifying and confronting one's own racist perceptions, while it can be dealt with on an institutional level, is best served when taken up by an individual and should start with one tracing their own genealogical records. Piper then details portions of her family line, revealing that her father's sister was the first black woman to attend college and the first to go on to medical school at a "particular Ivy League" university; she married into a white family of considerable social, political, academic influence, resulting in her severing her ties completely with her maternal side, so as to live her life passing as a white woman, an longstanding wound in her family's history.[170]

Pushing passed the self-elected estrangement of her aunt and the pain it caused to her family, Piper initiated a new pursuit into her family's history, worth citing in full:

> So tracing the history of my family is detective work as well as historical research. To date, what I think I know is that our first European-American ancestor landed in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1620 from Sussex; another Jamestown, Virginia in 1675 from London; and another in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1751, from Hamburg. Yet another was the first in our family to graduate from my own graduate institution in 1778. My great-great-grandmother from Madagascar, by way of Louisiana, is the known African ancestor on my father's side, as my great-great-grandfather from the Ibo of Nigeria is the known

[170] Piper, Passing, 9.

> African ancestor on my mother's, whose family has resided in Jamaica for three centuries.[171]

By excavating her genealogical heritage, Piper not only demonstrates a significant contemplation of the status of blackness and gender in her own life but also how race and gender, in particular, operate in the United States—as faulty categories of classification. More critically, she details her own identity with the hope to entice others to do the same work – to know a personal history against the grain of under-thought and uncritically examined identity categories and their stereotypes. To not only know and understand but to also begin at the level of self-identifiable personhood.

With analytic precision and detachment, Piper isolates the instances of racism in her professional and social life and examines them for their deficient xenophobic logic. It is understood that racial categorization in the United States is an economic system, to "restrict goods, entitlements, and status as narrowly as possible, to those whose power is already entrenched. Of course this institutionalized disentitlement presupposes that two persons of different racial classifications cannot be biologically related, which is absurd."[172] She elaborates with examples of how even the mere suggestion to a white person of their possible and likely black ancestry (or even its reversal of white ancestry among black people) is so ill-received and unpleasant, that one should not do so lightly. Distilled to its essential components, the perception of race, as explored by Piper and many others, is predicated on a system of power and its maintenance. She writes, "For whites to acknowledge their blackness is, then, much the same as for men to

[171] Ibid, 12.
[172] Ibid, 15.

acknowledge their femininity, and for Christians to acknowledge their Judaic heritage. It is to reinternalize the external scapegoat through attention to which they have sought to escape their own sense of inferiority."[173]

La Güera

Feminist poet and scholar Cherríe Moraga also addressed the tensions of passing for white. In the widely acclaimed anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* (1981), Moraga explains how for the most of her early life, she was treated as white, "Born with the features of my Chicana mother, but the skin of my Anglo father, I had it made" and that it wasn't until she came out as a lesbian, appearing more butch as time let on, that things started to change for her. The over-reliance on appearances—skin tone and gender performance reflected in clothing, style, and demeanor—gives way to discriminatory violence on multiple levels: in public, where dykes are beaten as well as *visibly* brown and black people and in private, causing divisions and estrangement in families and relationships. Unlike Piper, Moraga was the first of her family to attend college and become a scholar but similar to Piper, she has had to negotiate racial identification in academic institutional settings. Moraga reflected, "I must acknowledge that, physically, I have had a choice about making [the claim to color], in contrast to women who have not had such a choice, and have been abused for their color. I must reckon with the fact that for most of my life, by virtue of the very fact that I am white-looking, I identified with and aspired toward white values, and that I rode the

[173] Piper, Passing, 18.

wave of that Southern Californian privilege as far as conscience would let me."[174] Moraga insisted on the need for a more complex view of identity and the way in which white supremacist thinking is transposed into the feminist movement and an acknowledgment of privileges and oppressions.[175]

Piper's intense investigation into her own personal history is not presented as a matter of artist autobiography for the sake of autobiography but rather, is offered as a set of information, synthesized intuitions, regarding the self and power within larger systems of differences. In *Self Portrait as a Nice White Lady* (1995), we see an apt demonstration of logic anomaly: the title suggests one, comparatively harmless stereotype while the composition is much more confrontational. Piper presents herself looking at the viewer directly, with a red (the color of both anger and passion) background, accompanied by the thought bubble: "Whut Choo Lookin At Mofo?"—another stereotype of African-American diction. The work recalls the style established much earlier in *The Mythic Being* but with palpable refinement: the male alter ego is gone and replaced with the steely gaze of resolved personhood, reflecting back at you what you were prefigured to see and can choose to examine, or not. As she concluded in "Passing", "So no matter what I do or do not do about my racial identity, someone is bound to feel uncomfortable. But I have resolved that it is no longer going to be me."[176]

---

[174] Cherrie Moraga, "La Güera," essay, in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (New York, NY: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), 33.
[175] The concept of 'intersectionality' is indebted to the call for expanded analyses by Moraga and other radical women of color feminists of the late 1970's and 1980's.
[176] Piper, 29.

Figure 2.2: Adrian Piper, *Self-Portrait as Nice White Lady*, 1995, Black and white autophoto with oil-crayon drawing**,** 18 ¼" × 14 ¼"46.4. The Studio Museum in Harlem; © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin Photo: Marc Bernier. https://www.studiomuseum.org/node/60854

Anti-intellectualism in the United States

In 1996, she reflected on the purported intellectual status of conceptual art in the 1960s—an attractive draw for many philosophical and critical artists at the time—and its immediate shortcomings. She wrote:

> Some of the more theoretically inclined men of that group defined conceptual art in terms of its purported relation to analytic philosophy. They later claimed to have rejected this affiliation because of analytic philosophy's oppressive institutional structure within the academy. I saw their rejection differently… I saw that they would have needed to acquire a great deal more advanced training in technical skills of logic and semantics in order to pursue their artistic investigations in the philosophy of language. They said that they repudiated analytic philosophy for political reasons. To me it looked as though they

> repudiated it because it was too demanding. And the more completely I embraced it, the more decisively they repudiated me and it as well.[177]

As noted earlier, Piper experienced attempts to pollute her agency and discredit the complexity of her work not only because of racism and sexism but also because she is an intellectual. It's important to underscore the intellectual marginalization that Piper experienced in both art and in academia—as is painfully detailed in her recent 2018 memoir. Art historian and critic Maurice Berger acknowledged the foreclosure of Piper's contribution to conceptual art, noting that in the 1960's Piper was showing at a major gallery, Paula Cooper, and, "yet as a black woman, she could never have gotten the kind of coverage that white men got in that period. It was not even remotely possible. Nevertheless, her work was as 'cutting edge' as anyone's in that period…" and continues to note that Piper was a protégé of Sol LeWitt, engaging in the forms and theories of minimalism, while making complex conceptual work. And because of her rigor, he concluded, "Adrian is the classic story of art world racism and sexism, of the art world's need to repress what it found disturbing or what it felt competitive with."[178] We have yet to fully grasp the expanse of such discriminatory practices. I now turn to one significant cultural dynamic of the 1960s that remains curiously unexplored and yet is still pervasive today; one that may also assist in the clarification of discrimination that Piper faced.

Historian Richard Hofstadter's excellent critical analysis *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* from 1963 explores the political and intellectual conditions in the United

---

[177] Adrian Piper, "Some VERY Forward Remarks", in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , vol. I (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), xxxvi.
[178] Maurice Berger, interview, qtd in Amy Newman, *CHALLENGING ART: ARTFORUM* (New York, NY: Soho, 2000), 423.

States during the 1950s, at the peak of the Second Red Scare where fear and hegemonic paranoia during Senator McCarthy's crusade against alleged communists successfully embedded a distinctly American brand of cultural and intellectual suspicion, which the American public and the Left has yet to fully contend with and of course, is far from, as today's political landscape suggests, transforming. For Hofstadter, the persuasive expanse of anti-intellectualism became so diffused in society, that it was easy for it to connect with other methods of control. He wrote, "Anti-intellectualism first got its strong grip on our ways of thinking because it was fostered by an evangelical religion that also purveyed many humane and democratic sentiments. It made its way into our politics because it became associated with our passion for equality."[179] The period immediately following the Cold War, as Janet Halley explained, is also when the intellectual base of Marxism and socialism in the United States failed to recover.[180]

Hofstadter goes on to examine the distinction between perceptions of intelligence and intellect as "intelligence is an excellence of mind that is employed within a fairly narrow, immediate, and predictable range; it is a manipulative, adjustive, unfailingly practice quality—one of the most prominent and endearing of the animal virtues… Intellect on the other hand, is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of the mind. Intellect evaluates evaluations and looks for the meanings of situations as a whole."[181] He continues, "We know that there is something about intellect, as opposed to professionally

[179] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (London: Cape, 1964), 23.
[180] Janet E. Halley et al., "Which Forms of Feminism Have Gained Inclusion?," in *Governance Feminism: an Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 35.
[181] Hofstadter, 25.

trained intelligences, which does not adhere to whole vocations but only to persons. And when we are troubled about the position of intellect and the intellectual class in our society, it is not only the status of certain vocational groups which we have in mind, but the value attached to a certain mental quality."[182]

Hofstadter's structural analysis focuses on the largest institutions in the United States: religion, democracy, employment (namely, business and technology), and education. Each section offers a broad point of entry into anti-intellectualism, starting with misconceptions and myths about intellectuals in the US: from suspicion, apparent elitism, and impracticality, and how those myths work together with core American ideology: meritocracy, Christianity, populism, and egalitarianism. Although Hofstadter doesn't perform a thorough analysis of race, gender, or class, his distillation of anti-intellectualism is nonetheless impressive.[183] Anti-intellectualism, Hofstadter argues, is hegemonic and is so subversive that it is rarely identified as such and commonly mistaken for another perception or motivation to which it is often linked. He writes, "It would also be mistaken, as well as uncharitable, to imagine that the men and women who from time to time carry the banners of anti-intellectualism are of necessity committed to it as thought it were a positive creed or a kind of principle. In fact, anti-intellectualism is usually the incidental consequence of some other intention, often some justifiable

[182] Hofstadter, 26.
[183] Some of these points are raised but only briefly. For example, in the section on education, he writes about the status of teachers and notes that it is a profession held mostly by women while administrators (principles, superintendents) are usually men. "The American masculine conviction that education and culture are feminine concerns is thus confirmed, and no doubt partly shaped, by the experience of boys in school." Ibid, 320.

intention."[184] We've seen this already with Kuspit's personal attack on Piper, threatened by her intellectual capacity first, and acted upon by the available tools of racism and sexism at his disposal, in order to salvage his (perceived and real) position of authoritative superiority.

One of his significant concluding points regards the waning intellectuals' view of mass culture and their ambivalence of either intellectual alienation or conformity. At the end of the nineteenth century, expanding institutionalization established new avenues for intellectual careers: universities, libraries with collection holdings suitable for advanced research; proliferation of the press with magazines and journals that could provide not only paid writer positions but also cultivate and sustain public discourse; and the expansion of governmental bureaucracies requiring specialized training in science, letters, and the humanities.[185] The new opportunities gave intellectuals a choice: either join into the structure ("sell out") and work in service to the powers that be or refuse on the shaky ground of "authenticity" resulting in further alienation, without much in between. He concludes:

> One of the major virtues of liberal society in the past was that it made possible such a variety of styles of intellectual life—one can find men notable for being passionate and rebellious, others for being elegant and sumptuous, or spare and astringent, clever and complex, patient and wise, and some equipped mainly to observe and endure. What matters is the openness and generosity needed to comprehend the varieties of excellence that could be found even in a single and rather parochial society.[186]

---

[184] Hofstadter, 22.
[185] This is important to raise as a historical development. Of course, such expansions and new opportunities were made by and for the benefit of those already in power. Hofstadter, 409.
[186] Hofstadter, 432.

There are many ways we can make productive use of the issues Hofstadter raised. It's also worth noting that such attacks against the university and its casting of doubt among the intellectual class of society (faculty and students) coincides, unsurprisingly, with the fight for de-segregation of the time. Although Hofstadter defaults to defining the intellectual as only male, the "openness and generosity" he claims is necessary to recognize excellence as such is only possible when the individual possesses an often destabilizing critical capacity of self-reflection required to do so.

Young, Gifted, and Black

Figure 2.3: *The Mythic Being: Doing Yoga,* 1975. Six silver gelatin prints, each 8" x 10" (20.3 x 25.4 cm). Detail: #1 of 6. #7506.1. Photo credit: James Gutmann. © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. http://adrianpiper.com/art/the_mythic_being-doing_yoga.shtml

Recalling Lippard's frustration over the lack of class-consciousness, or the invisibility of class, in the art world, the status of intellectuals in the United States is similarly obscured. So much so, that the more Piper moved into the recognizable institutional locations of intellectual status, she experienced discrimination for it by her art world colleagues. Piper later addressed her practices in art, philosophy and yoga,

> … the philosophy community's rationalism and the art community's openmindedness balance the yoga community's intermittent anti-intellectualism. From the perspective of art and philosophy, the yoga community seems protected, isolated, and unworldly; rejecting of interrogative dialogue, resistant to moral complexity, and overly respectful of authority. On the other hand, the yoga community offers a perspective from which the art and philosophy communities seem so preoccupied with chasing transient and illusionary goods that they seem simply to miss the basic point of being on the planet in the first place.[187]

Piper considers all three activities as indispensible aspects of her existence, defining elements of her personhood, where she can engage rigorously in a rational process of self-reflexivity. They are all distinct practices and come together in her body as "the greatest personal fulfillment. It's better than sex."[188]

Two common misconceptions, at least from the vantage point of art history, is that Piper's yoga practice is a more recent development in her life and work, and that her yoga practice is some sort of hobby—which is somewhat ironic given the longstanding stereotype of art as an impractical hobby. Piper began practicing yoga in the 1960's and it has influenced both her work in art and philosophy. The yogic meditation technique known as "samyama" is what enables her to confront the thematic content of much of her art work—crude racial stereotypes that require her to undergo an intense deployment of

[187] Piper, "On Wearing Three Hats", 120.
[188] Ibid.

"certain psychological, theatrical, or literary devices for heightening the viewer's self-awareness of her immediate and present relation to the work."[189] Piper follows the yogic tradition of Vedanta philosophy, which is one of the six Hindu schools and even within its small community in the United States; Piper's focus on Jnana Yoga is narrower. The path of Jnana is known as the most difficult path in yoga because of its emphasis on analysis, scholarship, where the mind is trained to inquire about nature and existence in order to transcend the mind's identification with its ego. She notes, "Since Vedanta places a high priority on the values of receptivity and insight into everything life has to offer, it is generally less resistant than art or philosophy to perceived anomaly, and correspondingly more welcoming of all my activities."[190]

Her critical engagement with Kant's Rationalism thesis is not an alignment with Kant but rather, a critical passage through Kant, or Neo-Kantian as Costello indicated. In an article for the *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* anthology, Piper describes the Kantian Rationalism Thesis (KRT) as both archaic and weak in its original articulation but that, in more precise and useful terms, the KRT basically states that, "if we do not experience something in such a way as to allow us to make sense of it in terms of a set of coherent concepts that structure our experience, *whatever those concepts are*, we cannot consciously experience that thing at all… Kant is saying that if we do not

[189] Piper, "On Wearing Three Hats", 124.
[190] Ibid, 118.

organize cognitively the data of our senses according to consistent and coherent rules, we cannot be rationally unified subjects."[191]

Kantian rationalism has been widely critiqued, especially by postmodernists and feminists, for its attempt to account for a systematic universal. This particular thesis is no different for in its desire to align or enact Kantian rational self-preservation; one ultimately rejects the possibility of anomaly or disruption in fear of recognition of unknown and unfamiliar concepts. In other words, personhood can only be recognized in another social being if they possess—what we recognize, according to Kant—basic *a priori* qualities such as "consciousness, thought, rationality, and agency."[192] She explains, "The concept of rational personhood thereby supplies simultaneously the principles of cognitive organization, self-identification, and recognition of other rational persons in Kant's system. To be a person is to be a self-consciously rational and unified self that manifests its rationality in action."[193] This simple construct is put into crisis when one's rational (subjective) coherence of personhood is threatened or disrupted by an anomaly. The result is a fear-based motivation extending from the recognition of an anomalous and unknown entity, otherwise known as xenophobia.

[191] Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism (1991)," Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2007, http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteXen&KantRat(1991).pdf, 5-7.
[192] Ibid, 26.
[193] Ibid, 25.

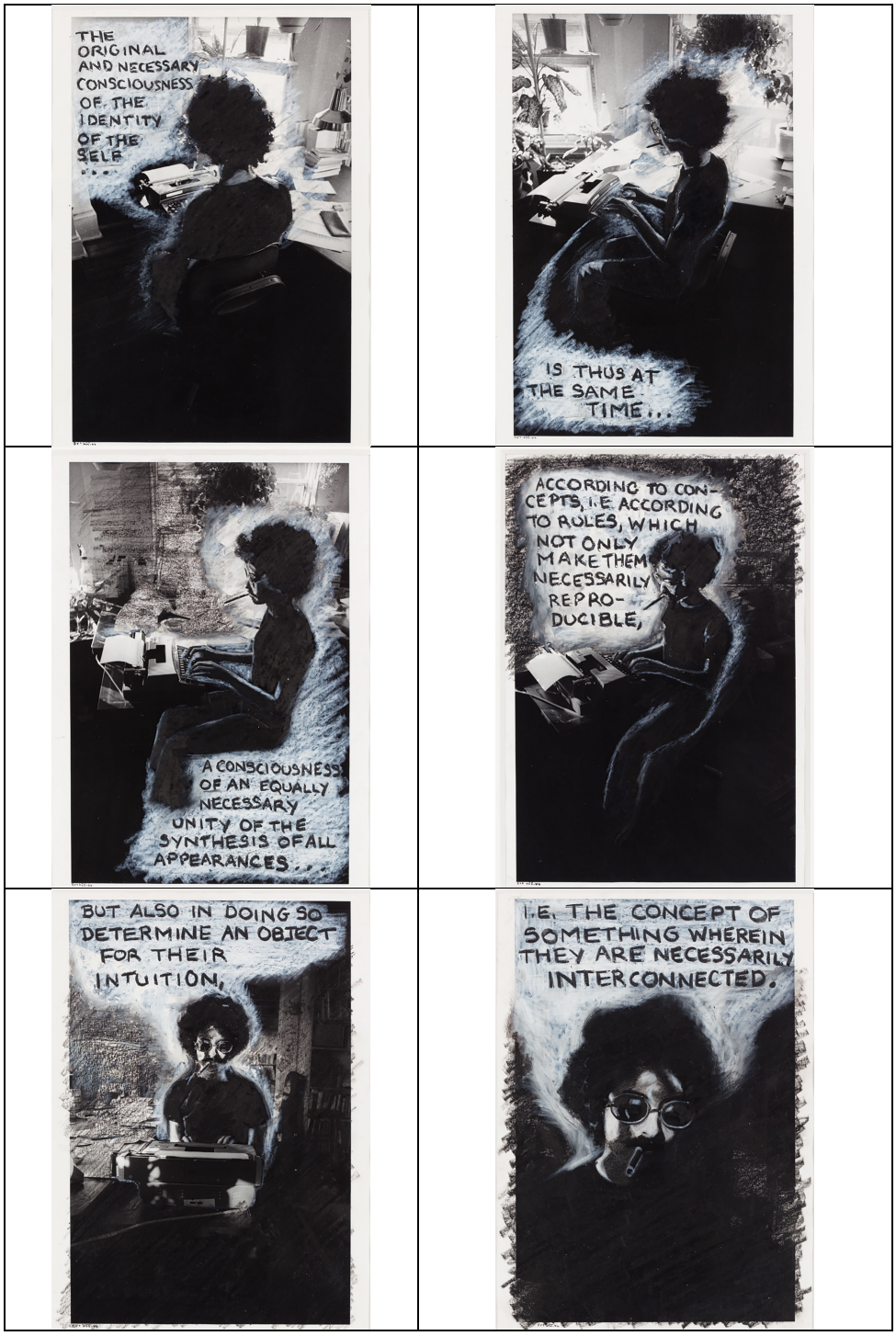

Figure 2.4-2.9: Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being: A–108 (Kant)*, 1975, oil crayon on gelatin silver print, 25 1⁄2 × 17 3⁄4".
https://www.artforum.com/print/201807/david-velasco-on-the-art-of-adrian-piper-76329

Xenophobia

Piper developed her concept of Xenophobia, defined as

> …a fear of individuals who look or behave differently than those one is accustomed to. It is a fear of what is experientially unfamiliar, of individuals who do not conform to one's empirical assumptions about what other people are like, how they behave or how they look. Ultimately, it is a fear of individuals who violate one's empirical conception of persons and so one's self-conception. So xenophobia is an alarm reaction to a threat to the rational coherence of the self, a threat in the form of an anomalous other…[194]

It is xenophobia that induces discriminatory practices like racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, class elitism and so on through "pseudo-rational mechanisms."[195] Xenophobia is the internal reaction of fear and the accompanying desire of self-preservation and protection at all times. Discrimination of any order, and for Piper there is two forms: cognitive and political, is the action extending from the experience of xenophobia. Piper felt strongly that the art world was particularly apt for "addressing the cognitive failures of political discrimination… with its latitude in the use of media, content, and subject matter, contemporary art may offer a variety of approaches for reducing this cognitive disingenuity and enhancing self-awareness."[196] Piper offers three methods of contemporary art, deployed in her work.

The first is mimesis. This is when a work of art incorporates into the subject matter, a type of knowing ironic commentary such as full and almost comical embodiment of xenophobic, pseudo-rationalized discrimination, otherwise known as

---

[194] Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism (1991)", 26.
[195] Ibid, 28.
[196] Adrian Piper, "Two Kinds of Discrimination ," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6, no. 1 (1993): 43.

stereotypes. She describes, "One scarcely knows what to question or scrutinize. But hearing or seeing them echoed back to one by an impersonal art object can make it clear to one that these phrases or habits of reasoning are not uniquely one's own, but rather crude and common slogans that short-circuit the hard work of self-scrutiny."[197]

The next is confrontation. A confrontational art object can draw the higher-order political discriminator's attention away from the abstract realm of theoretical obfuscation, and point it back to the reality of her actual circumstances at the moment. However, most confrontational element are not enough on their own to penetrate an otherwise passively irrational anomalophobic mind. This leads to the third aspect, the process of direct naming. This is what could potentially draw the viewer's attention to the pseudo-rationalization of their own "elaborate edifice of euphemisms designed to obscure from himself and others the true meaning of his attitudes, actions, and policies towards others…"[198] An art object that draws the viewer's attention to these realities, and leaves no room for ambiguity in their identification, can be an assaultive and disturbing experience but also one that points inward, back to the viewer's subject rationale rather than outward, where the viewer is likely to assess the work from their own prefigured systems of confirmation and order.

Piper is quick to note that such tactics could easily be employed in various other social and professional contexts like therapy, support groups, and training sessions but the qualities of art, specifically its object-hood, is what makes it both efficacious and

[197] Adrian Piper, "Two Kinds of Discrimination ," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6, no. 1 (1993): 43.
[198] Ibid, 44.

indispensable. She explains, "For unlike human subjects, an art object cannot have reactions to, intentions toward, or designs of any kind on a viewer… So although it may happen that a particularly insecure or provincial viewer initially may feel moved to accuse the work of art of manipulating him, ridiculing him, trying to pull the wool over his eyes, guilt-tripping him, attacking him etc., it will not require too much reflection on the viewer's part to conclude, finally, that this is not the kind of thing an art object, unlike a human subject, has the capacity to do."[199]

The objecthood of art, for Piper, makes it possible for the viewer to engage in a process of critical self-reflection. Rather than become a passive viewer, or mistake the content of the work as its meaning (or conflate it with uninformed perceptions of the artist's identity), Piper offers the opportunity for a viewer to recognize their own experience as both valuable and subjective. Recalling LeWitt, when Piper incorporates representations of herself (as a gendered and racialized object), it is not for the purpose of autobiographical sharing but rather, as a tool for possible self-reflection by the viewer.

Piper's philosophical underpinning in constructing the viewer's encounter with the art object is aligned with critical methods that formed the development of institutional critique. In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu discussed the value of works of art as needing to consider "as contributing to production not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc) but, also the producers of the meaning and the value of the work—critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and

[199] Piper, "Two Kinds of Discrimination", 45.

recognizing the work of art as such, in particular teachers (but also families, etc.)"[200] Clearly influenced by the Marxist notion of "historical materialism," Bourdieu's expansive definition is useful in the way that it is not so narrowly focused on the work of art as an individually produced object by a sole author but rather, more broadly, he is interested in the conditions of production that bring an art object into being and also what type of system keeps such production cycles going. Moreover, Bourdieu describes it simply as, "… a question of understanding works of art as a manifestation of the field as a whole."

While the benefits of a focused area in which to invest a critique of the economic power dynamics of art in institutional critique was crucial, it often lacked self-reflexivity or even a general sense of its position and for all the circulation of the term "cultural" it requires significant qualification. Feminist postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak posited that the notion of culture used by Bourdieu is one that is a "culture of the metropolis"[201] in the sense that Bourdieu's characterization of culture is one that is particularly stagnant or reductive to the inherent dynamism of cultural and cultural change. The "metropolis" for Bourdieu is one that is urban-industrialized and self-contained as is its culture. For Spivak, such a definition assumes a "package of largely unacknowledged assumptions, loosely held by a loosely outlined group of people, mapping negotiations between the

[200] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 37.
[201] Gayatri Chakravorty. Spivak, "Culture: Situating Feminism," in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 120.

sacred and the profane, and the relationship between the sexes."[202] Spivak astutely illuminates the assumptions embedded into the logic of what is even defined as "culture". In this sense, both Piper and Spivak critique the internalized and insufficient grounds in which judgments of taste and value, in art and culture respectively, are presented. In the next section, I discuss two works by Piper that further illuminate her conceptual method of self-reflexivity, informed by her philosophical conception of xenophobia.

Art for the Art-World Surface Pattern

This 1976 installation consisted of a small drywall constructed room inside a gallery space, intended to fit three or four people but "small enough to conduce to low-level claustrophobia"[203] and without any furniture. The interior walls were completely lined with newspaper clippings and photographs from the *New York Times* depicting violent events including the aftermath of an earthquake in Turkey, student-led riots, hangings in Thailand, workers' strikes, and other occurrences in the period immediately following the end of the Vietnam War. The words "NOT A PERFORMANCE" were stenciled in red at randomly selected parts of the interior, across different photographs and clippings. The room was also equipped with there concealed speakers in the walls with a looped broadcast of decontextualized conversational snippets, a mix of small talk, art references, and commonly heard examples of rationalized political apathy: "… I really hate this moralistic bullshit, Christ, I really hate it…", "… Rauschenberg would be bored

[202] Ibid, 120.
[203] Adrian Piper, "Art for the Art-World Surface Pattern," in *Out of Order, out of Sight. Selected Writings in Meta-art 1968-1992*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 162.

to tears, he'd really laugh… or leave, he'd probably leave…", "Why don't artists wake up and make art instead of trying to change the world anyway? Political art is really so impotent…" and so on.[204]

As part of the work, Piper published this short piece writing, which was included in the 1977 Paris Biennale catalog and it is worth citing in full:

> 1. We can ignore political problems, but we cannot avoid them.
> 2. We ignore political problems by: refusing to read the papers; OR reading the paper BUT refusing to understand what we read; OR understanding what we read BUT refusing to acknowledge our complicity in the problems we read about; OR acknowledging our complicity in the problems we read about BUT refusing to admit we could solve them through a personal commitment to change; OR admitting we could solve them through a personal commitment to change BUT refusing to admit that we should make that commitment; OR making that commitment BUT avoiding acting on it.
> 3. We avoid acting on a commitment to political change by: refusing to acknowledge the interdependence of the person and political; OR acknowledging the interdependence of the personal and the political BUT refusing to acknowledge the political impotence of our personal lives qua personal; OR acknowledging the political impotence of our personal lives qua personal BUT refusing to recognize its dependence on a system of political oppression of others that makes our personal lives possible; OR recognizing this but trying desperately to rationalize our lives by invoking other values like personal freedom, aesthetic pleasures, the right to privacy, etc., etc.—As if such values could have any meaning in the absence of true political freedom.
> 4. *Art for the Art-World Surface Pattern* surrounds you with the political problems you ignore and the rationalizations by which you attempt to avoid them.[205]

Piper's antagonism is enacted by her "we" identification and confrontational mode of address. Here, she identifies the refusal of others to engage with the multi-dimensional political implications of art. By doing so, she sharply indicts the art world for its failures

[204] I randomly selected these from the short script that is presented in full just to display the breadth of examples.
[205] Piper, "Art for the Art World…", 161.

of political disavowal. Although she is listing actual refusals on the part of the audience, her colleagues, the gallery system and other areas of the art economy at the time, she is also deploying her own politics of refusal. She does this on multiple levels—she refuses to simply reform the system by politely drawing attention to an issue with the intent of eliciting subdued and unaffected responses of a mythically shared art experience in which the viewer is simply reaffirming their own subjective and unclear liberal sensibilities. Piper's rich critique is extended further in another complex work.

Aspects of a Liberal Dilemma

Figure 2.10: *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma,* 1978. Mixed media installation: Empty wall, black and white photograph framed under reflective Plexiglas, 18 x 18" (45.7 x 45.7 cm); audio tape, lighting. #78004. Collection University of California Art Museum. © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin.

This powerful installation is often framed as a critical confrontation of racism, particularly anti-blackness in America – such reception is meaningful and it is clear to see why. It is similar in material, presentation, and concept to *Art for the Art-World Surface Pattern* but we should also consider this work as a clear representation of the terms of Piper's intellectual operation, and responds to a larger system of xenophobia through art, we can identify all three concepts that she identified as evident in this important work.

There is mimesis in the installation spatial design, with the hidden speakers in the walls, as well as in the soothing Muzak-tepid voice recording one hears addressing the viewer, almost like a gallery guide, that initially begins as one would expect and then seamlessly engages the viewer with a series of Socratic-style questions such as – *What's the correlation between what you're seeing and what you're hearing? Are you being preached to – again?* Unlike the confined space of *Art for the Art-World*, this installation room is bigger—about the same size of many small gallery spaces.

Figure 2.11: *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma,* 1978. Mixed media installation: Empty wall, black and white photograph framed under reflective Plexiglas, 18 x 18" (45.7 x 45.7 cm); audio tape, lighting. #78004. Collection University of California Art Museum. © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin.

There is visual confrontation in the central photographic element of a large crowd of black people, mostly men, descending a staircase, moving towards and almost through the viewer. In that moment, viewers have the choice to either peer into the photograph or take note of their own faces among the crowd because of strategically placed drop lights pointing at the Plexiglas cover on the photo.

Figure 2.12: *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma,* 1978. Mixed media installation: Empty wall, black and white photograph framed under reflective Plexiglas, 18 x 18" (45.7 x 45.7 cm); audio tape, lighting. Photo by Melinda Guillén, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2018.

And lastly, there is the element of naming, where the title is a direct and poignant implication of the pitfalls of well-intentioned yet tragically unaware American liberalism with the intent to elevate the self-awareness of the viewer. Of course, both of these powerful installations allow for the possibility of the viewer to confront their own misconceptions, discriminations, and other deeply-seated rationales when it comes to

racism, sexism, and liberal politics and paradoxically, this may be due to one missing element in both: the representation of Piper herself.

Everything Will Be Taken Away

What I have offered here is only a brief consideration of Piper's life and work: from her development as a conceptual artist and intellectual, against the grain of a prevailing and continued investment in pseudo-rational, xenophobic discrimination—both in and outside of the art world—and of which the United States uniquely branded. In this sense, a synthesis of Piper and the characterization of anti-intellectualism offered by Hofstadter makes it possible to reconsider other avenues of discrimination in a xenophobic society, which is distinct from but can also intersect with other forms including those commonly addressed in identity politics. The link is clear and one that is worth taking seriously in this political moment and within the field as conversations concerning feminism as well as "diversity and inclusion" continue to unfold and become institutionalized.

In 2005, Adrian Piper left her faculty position at Wellesley and moved to Berlin, where she established the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation, a modestly sized office space, offering a fellowship to other multi-disciplinary scholars and artists. While traveling through the United States on a lecture tour in 2006, she discovered a mark on her boarding pass. Believing she had been placed on a watch list; she has vowed to never return to the United States and has kept that vow. I close with a quote from Piper's 2018 memoir, *Escape to Berlin*:

> I owe everything I am to my birth, upbringing, and education in the United States. So I would have preferred my achievements to be a source of pride to my country of origin. Unfortunately, it is not set up to tolerate achievements like mine from someone like me, because people like me are not supposed to exist. Instead, for the rest of my life… my existence will continue to be an embarrassment and insult to everything those narcoleptic Americans hold sacred… Every future success, every forthcoming moment of contentment I attain will mortify, depress, and defeat them all the more. I regret that very much. But my task now is to put their unfortunate mental problems behind me and move on.[206]

[206] Adrian Piper, *Escape to Berlin: a Travel Memoir = Flucht Nach Berlin: Eine Reiseerinnerung*, trans. Suzanne Schmidt (Berlin, Germany: Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2018), 271-273.

Chapter Three
"Big Mouth Strikes Again: Lee Lozano's Reducible Self"

In August of 1971, conceptual artist and painter Lee Lozano wrote in one of her heavily edited notebooks:

DECIDE TO BOYCOTT ALL WOMEN" throw Lucy Lippard's 2nd letter on defunct pile, unanswered. Do not greet Rochelle Bass in store.
2nd week, August 71:
Paula Tavins calls. Aug. 11. Tell her that I am boycotting women as an experiment through abt September. And that after that, 'communication will be better than ever'.

Critic and art historian Jo Applin clarified that Lozano's *Boycott* was not a "piece" per se, like her other totalizing text-based performative works such as *General Strike Piece* and the now infamous *Dropout Piece*, which resulted in Lozano abruptly abandoning her life in the art world completely and as legend has it, disappearing from 1972 for nearly a decade until she resurfaced in Dallas, TX in 1982. *Boycott* was different and more of an experiment, noteworthy for its extreme parameters, and a deliberate move against the grain of the feminist movement's emphasis on collective action by way of a complete rejection to engage with women altogether.

As Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer describes, "[Boycott]'s outrageous premise threw gender in general, as a construct, into question. She was disturbed and embarrassed by what she saw as the subordinate, pathetic role women played, and revolted against the association.[207]" In practice, Lozano would, as remembered by her friends Sol and Carol LeWitt, cover her eyes in the presence of other women, turn away or ignore them

[207] Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, *Lee Lozano - Dropout Piece* (London: Afterall Books, 2014), 34.

completely. It was also revealed much later that even in Dallas, Lozano continued to refuse interacting with women as much as possible including her own mother.[208] To Applin, Lozano did not have an explicit political agenda and *Boycott*, "was the culmination of a deeply fraught relationship with the women's movement, making it difficult to reconcile her actions easily with a clear feminist position… However, to acknowledge Lozano's apolitical stance is not to claim that her practice was politically insignificant."[209] *Boycott* remains somewhat of an open sore in feminist art history because of Lozano's total rejection of feminism, with some going as far as calling her a misogynist, and others, such as Martha Rosler and Joan Jonas, shutting down conversations about her and her work upon first mention.[210]

There is also another odd tendency to still classify or claim aspects of Lozano's work among those in the feminist canon, as though refusing Lozano's refusal. Curator Helen Molesworth, a champion of Lozano's work and leading figure among those responsible for its renewed interest, discussed *Boycott* in conjunction with *Dropout Piece* stating that her "refusal to speak to women implies an understanding of patriarchy that is akin to her rejection of the art world—both are systems, with rules and logics that are public with personal effects. Lozano realized that, just as you can't reform the art world by focusing only on museums, you can't alter patriarchy by only bonding with

---

[208] Robert Wilonsky, "The Dropout Piece," Dallas Observer (4, December 9, 1999), https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/the-dropout-piece-6406272.
[209] Jo Applin, "Hard Work: Lee Lozano's Dropouts," *October* 156 (2016): 77, https://doi.org/10.1162/octo_a_00252.
[210] Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, *Lee Lozano - Dropout Piece* (London: Afterall Books, 2014). 57.

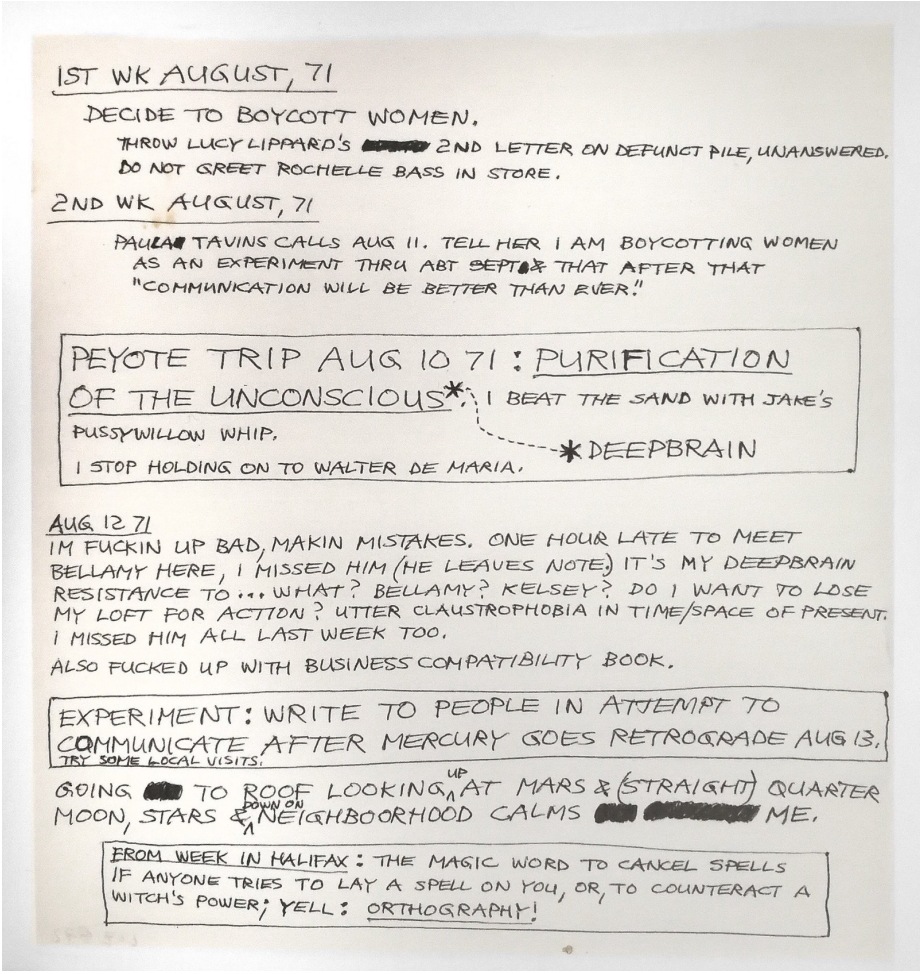

Figure 3.1: Lee Lozano, *Boycott* (1971), https://timeline.com/lee-lozano-boycott-women-20d7e892e6b

women."[211] If only it were that simple. However optimistic or well-intentioned Molesworth's sentiment is, it represents a problematic tendency of mainstream feminist thought operating in contemporary art. To not accept Lozano at her word is one thing but to also superficially attribute some sort of retroactive feminist agenda to her work, subversive or not, is to completely miss her point. The failure to recognize it as such

[211] Helen Molesworth, "Tune in, Turn on, Drop out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano," *Art Journal* 61, no. 4 (2002): pp. 64-71, https://doi.org/10.2307/778152, 70.

comes at the expense of a more direct or nuanced engagement with Lozano's often messy and contradictory political embodiment.

So how might we make sense of Lozano's political significance and overall conceptual project, in light of her complete disavowal of all political and social institutions, decrying of feminism, and exit from the art world? Is it possible or even desirable to redeem Lozano in feminist art history? I believe it is both possible and crucial but not necessarily easy for such a process requires a suspension of some deeply embedded logic (or untruths) regarding feminist politics in contemporary art. With this in mind, I proceed with caution.

I AM NOT A FEMINIST. I SPEAK TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN BECAUSE I THINK BOTH MEN AND WOMEN ARE SLAVES IN TODAY'S SOCIETY.[212]

Because I argue that liberal (or mainstream, organized) feminism is the primary logic in contemporary art historical discourse, I do not mean to suggest that the gains, losses, and issues that inform it have not changed since this time period but rather, I see that it is because of liberal feminism's reformist aims to gain entry or security within the existing and shifting structures of patriarchal capitalist institutions—instead of withdraw or refuse to participate in them—that makes it the most palatable and therefore acceptable in a larger patriarchal system in order to further solidify the status quo. I do see some productive similarities between radical separatism of the time with Lozano's work

212 Entry dated April 1969. Lee Lozano, *Private Book 1 (1968-1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2016).

against the normative goals of liberal feminism, but unlike Molesworth, I do not see the value in claiming Lozano or her work within a critically unchecked mainstream feminist framework.

One significant example of this is the inclusion of Lozano in the major survey exhibition of feminist art *WACK! Art and The Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2007. Undoubtedly a landmark exhibition given its expanse including 120 artists including Judy Chicago, Lygia Clark, Mary Beth Edelson, Eva Hesse, Joan Jonas, Yayoi Kusama, Ana Mendieta, Yoko Ono, Adrian Piper, Joan Semmel, Cecilia Vicuña, and more, arranged by major themes: abstraction, "autophotography", body as medium, family, gender performance, knowledge as power and others commonly addressed as feminist art or by women artists. Her short bio in the exhibition catalog is general given the form and space permitted and makes no mention of Lozano's position against feminism, *Boycott* is described as a "journal entry" and its interpretation defers to Molesworth's polite interpretation, "By refusing to speak to women she exposed the systematic and ruthless division of the world into the categories of men and women."[213]

I find it troubling to superficially impose or claim Lozano's work as feminist when one considers how explicit she was in not identifying as a feminist, among other labels. I'm not motivated to extend that line of thinking. Instead, I'm interested in the specific conditions that comprised Lozano's near total rejection of the social world,

[213] Molesworth qtd in Cornelia H. Butler et al., *Wack!: Art and the Feminist Revolution:* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007), 262.

political climate, and institutional relationships around her. Without understanding these dimensions, we run the risk of tacitly perpetuating the exact power dynamics much of feminism endeavors to dismantle—and the very conditions Lozano loathed.

The Climax of the 60's

Lee Lozano moved to New York City in 1961 after ending her four-year marriage to architect Adrian Lozano, whom she met while studying at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1956. In general, Lozano's practice is divided according to form and style, the earliest works in the 60's were drawings and paintings of varied objects ranging from sexual body parts, tools, machines, with layers of Surrealism, bits of Dada-esque word play, some remnants of Pop's kitsch, and loaded with force (often violent) in colorful and disarmingly witty displays of sex, primarily a penchant for penetration. They visually reflected her brimming exuberance and thematically explored sexuality, violence, language, abjection, and masturbation all mixed with pop cultural and low-brow references and often drawn in charcoal, graphite, and crayon. The works are humorous, critically playful, gross, and distorted but nonetheless captivating-- clearly intense and rejecting a larger climate of sexual repression, a shared concern with factions of the feminist movement and the era's countercultural and utopian views of The New Left.

She eventually focused more on oil paintings of tools, mostly large-scale and comparatively *cleaned up* from many of the hard and fast drawings but still deeply erotic and sexually suggestive, reflecting her sustained interest in, both abstraction and the body as well as continued wordplay. By 1961-62, Lozano was already showing in Richard

Bellamy's downtown space, Green Gallery and within a few years, her abstract paintings of tools were in regular group show rotation with the likes of Dan Flavin, Mark Di Suvero, Donald Judd, and other (mostly male) artists.

Lozano continued to work on large paintings, to critical acclaim and was included in the 1966 group exhibition, *Normal Art,* at the Lannis Museum of Norman Art, a project instigated by conceptualist Joseph Kosuth which included more conceptually minded artists such as Carl Andre, Jo Baer, Dan Graham (with whom she would soon begin a long term and tumultuous intimate relationship), Eva Hesse, Claes Oldenburg, Sol LeWitt, On Kawara, and all three of the well regarded Roberts: Morris, Smithson, and Ryman. During this time, she focused on the second major "turn" in her work, the Wave series of paintings (1967-1970) in which she developed a systematic mode of painting, still engaging the body but this time, as endurance tests in order to seek the extremes (or limitations) of her stamina. The impetus for the series derived from her interests in physics, electromagnetic waves, and energy exertion; as well as a noted affinity for the cosmological spectrum and astrology, in addition to the exuberant release of energy from orgasms. Lozano would set out to paint a series of waves across a set number of large panels, in a muted opaque palette using stiff wire brushes and steel combs and committed to completing each painting in one session, keeping the brush wet, with each session increasing the number of waves for the next panel. The intensity of her earlier works was now transmuted into the process of her minimalist compositions.

The third aspect of Lozano's practice is her extensive documenting of her daily life, personal experiences, and self-directives. In 1969, Lucy Lippard invited Lozano to

participate in an *Art/Peace* exhibition at the New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre, the first time one of Lozano's text pieces was exhibited and a few months later, Lippard curated Lozano's work again, this time at Paula Cooper Gallery in a show of conceptual works also featuring Sol LeWitt, Art & Language, Bruce Nauman, and Joseph Kosuth; she exhibited *Grass Piece* (1969) and *No Grass Piece* (1969). Lozano's text-based instructional works, or *Pieces*, developed concurrently with the Wave series and are what the more recent art historical interest in her life and work tend to focus on, and in particular, three pieces that now constitute Lozano's somewhat mythical fulfillment of her own self-devised and imposed system of blurring life and work to an unprecedented (and arguably still unparalleled) extent: *General Strike Piece* (1969), *Dropout Piece* (1970) and *Boycott* (1971).

She Bites

Lozano's early drawings are in line with many notable artists in New York at the time including Robert Smithson's earlier and lesser known pop drawings, when expanded forms of media such as television and magazines (including porno magazines) gave way to the inclusion of pop cultural images and nudes in figurative works. But Lozano's were much more intense than any of the smooth lines, more suggestive of adoration, in Smithson's drawings. Additionally, Lozano's abject drawings and paintings of fragmented cocks and tits, or cock-like tools penetrating bodily holes, follow the traditions of Surrealist abjection and recall some works by Philip Guston, while also predating the waves of late 1970's feminist abject art like the menstruation pieces by

Judy Chicago and other abject/body works by Cindy Sherman, Valie Export, and Carolee Schneeman, as well as the seedy and often masturbatory abjection in the expansive practices of Mike Kelley, Raymond Pettibon, and Paul McCarthy.[214]

Figure 3.2-3.3: This comparison shows important pop similarities between Smithson's aesthetic and Lozano's earlier works in the 1960's. (Left: Robert Smithson, *Untitled (Venus with lightning bolts),* 1964, Work on Paper, Mixed media with collage on paper, Source: James Cohan Gallery, NYC. Right: Lee Lozano, *No title (let them eat cock)*, ca. 1961, Graphite and crayon on paper, 45.8 x 30.5 cm / 18 x 12 in, Source: Hauser & Wirth, London).

Lozano's libidinal thrust is a repeated motif, depictions of cartoon like hands grasping phallic objects such as airplanes, holy crosses, wrenches, ice cream cones, and guns with penetrative directional force toward a varied rotation of bodily orifices—noses, ears,

[214] Other scholars have linked the erotic forms in Lozano's work more directly to Surrealism and Dada such as Helena Vilalta. Such connections, while not explored here, are certainly worth additional analysis and inquiry.

mouths, and of course, anuses and vaginal outlets (the latter sometimes depicted as an electrical outlet beside a hovering pronged plug). In *No title (wrench zipper),* c. 1963, we see a pair of flared blue jeans hanging off the edge of a wooden crate. The crate is nailed shut and serves as a pedestal for what would otherwise be an uninhabited pair of jeans with the exception, of course, of the composition's central element: a double-ended (or headed) enlarged crescent wrench poking out from the unzipped fastening, with a fully erect handle tucked beneath the surface. The skewed foreshortening of the quasi-still life takes boring everyday objects and attempts to turn them on. There is little concern for subtly or proportion and instead, Lozano's intensity is contained entirely in her gesture of fast and hard compositional lines, some appearing more as scratches on the surface. As for the hardly concealed hard-on, it is neither glorified nor mocked. Instead, the tight pulling of the denim around it suggests a tension that is nowhere near release with its hidden head pointing down towards the empty pant leg's hemline—it's simply there, ready to go, like a tool between uses.

Figure 3.4: Lee Lozano, *No title (cock in pocket),* 1962, ballpoint pen and crayon on paper, 7 x 6", The Estate of Lee Lozano, LOZANO 31035. https://karmakarma.org/exhibitions/olympia-karma-at-galerie-patrick-seguin/works/

This thematic is continued in another phallic drawing except that rather than point down, the phallic glans and part of the shaft are precariously half-tucked into a disembodied pocket, where the doubling of graphite shading mimics pubic hair, making the pocket

serve as more of a strange scrotum than a functional detail. Among the disembodied elements adorned to the pocket, we can see an ear and a crescent shaded black line beneath the penis, suggesting a smile, though incomplete. The small inscription on the drawing's surface reads, "cockinpocket", in one continuous cursive line with no spacing between the elements. These two drawings make it impossible to not hear The Stooges' gritty 1976 song "Cock in my Pocket", with Iggy Pop's bellowing proclamation, "I got my cock in my pocket and I'm shovin' it through your pants / I just wanna fuck and I don't want no romance". I must confess to a secret wish that they would serve as some bootleg 7" record sleeve cover version just to forge their respective fast, hard, and in your face energies together, even if only for the song's total 3 minute and 48 second running time. How satisfying would that be?

Another especially important recurring composition that best captures Lozano's explosive eroticism and seedy sense of humor in these early works is a 1962 crayon and pencil drawing depicting a distorted, discolored, misshapen, wayward teeth-baring mouth—resembling a *vagina dentata,* replete with fangs and cavities—enclosed by erratic strokes of red and flesh-pink crayon forming a set of lips, dramatically over-lined and smeared with lipstick: it is equal parts menacing, punk rock, and drag camp (after all, the mouth *is* smiling). Jammed between a small gaping hole from a missing tooth situated within the tightly clenched bite is a wee cigar, that is to say, a small phallus in the shape of a cigar (or vice versa?) with another comical layering: there is a set of cock rings wrapped around the cigar's shaft, a wedding band and engagement ring unmistakably. Above the upper lip, where a philtrum would be but is not, a small lowercase handwritten

graphite punch-line inscription reads: "she bites"—indeed she does. As Helena Vilalta observed, "Provocative and funny, these images pick up where Bataille's 'base materialism' left off, exchanging body parts to reconfigure the human body. But this is base materialism with an attitude."[215] Georges Bataille's *Story of the Eye* (1928) is certainly an appropriate erotic anchor. Like Bataille, Lozano launches a process of de-classification, as the primary stage, when it comes to her anatomical index of body parts before regrouping them among other objects—for the sake of play and pursuit of climax. It is as deliberate as it is slippery.

[215] Helena Vilalta, "Lee Lozano's Erotics of Information," essay, in *Lee Lozano*, ed. Fiona Bradley and Barry Rosen (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Fruitmarket Gallery, 2018), 58.

Figure 3.5: Lee Lozano, *No title (she bites),* 1962, crayon and graphite on paper, 8 ¾" x 11 ¾", Private Collection. http://cdn.artobserved.com/2011/01/Lee_Lozano_Moderna_Museet_Stockholm_Retrospective_2010_She_Bites.jpg

Lozano's method of de-classification is important to foreground when considering the phallic thematic in her work. It is distinct from other artists of the time like Yayoi Kusama, Eva Hesse, and Louise Bourgeois who all made phallic objects and representations contemporaneously, each possessing their own take on the erotic, sensual, absurd, and anxious—the later evidenced by Kusama. In the excellent analysis "Posing the Phallus" by Mignon Nixon, she posits, "It is not, therefore, only the fact that the phallus recurs as a graphic sexual motif that is important; or that it is reduced to a fragment; or that this fragment is of the infantile type known as a part-object; or that,

within the register of part-objects, the phallus is undermined as symbol (symbol, even of the symbolic order itself). As important as any of this is the destructive means by which the phallus-as-part-object was produced."[216]

Nixon identifies some methods of critiquing phallocentrism including parody as well as "compulsive repetition", a strategy used by Kusama in her 1965 installation *Infinity Mirror Room-Phalli's Field (or Floor Show)* as a way to subvert or lose the phallus altogether by its distribution in the limitless expanse of Kusama's stimulated plane, a type of psychedelic mirrored fun house. She continues, "…the anxiety Kusama invokes [does not] seem to me to be principally of the castration type (although clearly the phalli-fields do parody fetishism as a kind of phallus-fixation). I mean something more literal: that the phallus as a singular discrete entity is lost in its proliferation and dispersal across these fields."[217] Like Kusama and as indicated by Nixon, Lozano's representation of the phallus does not promote castration, although the association is simply too close to ignore. Painter Judith Bernstein also made work depicting phallus-tools in NYC around the same time as Lozano, however, they did not know one another, Berstein appreciated the thematic overlap but considers her work more "humanist" and Lozano's "much more lethal."[218] I find the system at the core of Lozano's playful and vivid rearrangements as one of power – power in its broadest sense, power embodied in

---

[216] Mignon Nixon, "Posing the Phallus," *October* 92 (2000): pp. 98-127, https://doi.org/10.2307/779235, 127.
[217] Nixon, 113.
[218] Interview with painter Judith Bernstein, "Judith Bernstein by Sofia Leiby ," BOMB Magazine, July 28, 2015, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/judith-bernstein/.

parts, words, and tools—a process of endless power play and a seedy (and toothy) fragmented, erotic one at that and hell-bent on release.

Private Notebooks for the Public

The tenuous link between Lozano and the position she held against feminism is further complicated by her own reflections of the state of sexual politics contained in her private notebooks. The Estate of Lee Lozano now holds all 11 small, spiral bound notebooks kept by the artist which provide limited but vivid access to Lozano's life and process during her short active career in the art world. Spanning only from 1968-1971, the notebooks contain practical information, addresses, ideas, dreams, complaints, jokes, the value or painting, detailed accounts of social interactions with art world friends and professionals, thoughts on sex, food, life, drugs, science, philosophy, and the universe, as well as plans for artworks, random quotes from conversations, relationship struggles, and private commentary on her life in Soho—all reflecting Lozano's playful, occasionally listless and somber, often biting, with an explosive sense of multi-dimensional vitality and deep commitment to solitude. Unlike Piper's emphasis on the value of an impenetrable slow and thorough meditative clarity, Lozano wanted more of everything, faster and harder. Her entries do not follow a linear order, no pagination but many entries are numbered, and apart from some few and far between minimal sketches and multi-page recitations of social encounters, drug experiences or dreams, and some random thematic lists, the entries are mostly short passages written in blue or black ballpoint pen in the artist's block lettered penmanship.

The notebooks are both the starting place and end for Lozano's text-based works though she did conceive of a conceptual schema permitting for exhibition and purchase, which is detailed in *Clarification Piece,* where she self-instructs, "make a clear distinction between a piece as an act or series (set) of acts in time, & the write-up of a piece which occurs only when there is occasion to show the write-up (either publicly or privately in the form usually of letters to individuals)."[219] At the bottom of the page, Lozano provides a legend using some symbols, including an asterisk and infinity icon, to further explain (to everyone? Or herself? Both?):

> *all write-ups of pieces are drawings. ← please note!
> Sometimes called investigations or experiments.
> Subject to remain undisclosed until completion.
> This distinction between a one-of-a-kind (hand) printed (piece of) matter & printed mater, which is reproduced matter.
> I gotta allow a few carbon copies. Or zerox copies.

What I find striking about this particular piece is that for Lozano's key, there are multiple ink colors used, suggesting a sort of laboring or obsessive corrective anxiety about the task of providing and establishing clarity, particularly as it pertains to classifying, exhibiting, and selling her work. What is important to note here is that in the moment of "the personal is political" feminist mantra, and the shift to conceptual art into

[219] Lee Lozano, *Language Pieces* (New York, NY: Hauser and Wirth , 2018).

performance, Lozano enacted a complete transmutation of her personal/private interior space with her public presentation by cataloging her personal life as indistinguishable from her work. In 2001, Lucy Lippard reflected, "Lee had a nice sense of language. She wasn't precisely an intellectual, but she was very thoughtful, and her work was more personal than that of the guys, who were still mostly Minimal… but Lee was extraordinarily intense, one of the first, if not the first person… who did the life-as-art thing. The kind of things other people did as art, she really did as life—and it took us a while to figure that out."[220] As Lozano started to carry out *Dropout Piece* and *Boycott*, just before leaving the art scene entirely, she sat down and rigorously edited all of her private notebooks in January of 1972.

The topics, works, historical moments, and other material covered in her notebooks are vast and worthy of their own extensive analyses. My interest in them is to further illuminate and complicate Lozano's tenuous relationship to feminism (then and now) by foregrounding her own words, thoughts, and actions contained in some of her notebook entries. I focus on entries leading up to *Boycott* primarily from 1969, a significantly busy year for Lozano, and ones that deal with three themes: gender and sexuality, rejection of institutions and institutional relationships, and solitude and isolation in the hopes that I can piece together a more complex (but far from complete) map from which to assess Lozano's rebellious politics of rejection. Additionally, I note

---

[220] This Lippard quote is from a text box that appears in the layout, along with another quote by Sol LeWitt on Lozano's behavior and boycott of women. The text boxes are not contextualized in the actual feature itself. Katy Siegel, "Making Waves: Katy Siegel Talks with David Reed About the Legacy of Lee Lozano," *Artforum*, October 2001, 126.

entries and pieces with their accompanying 1971-72 edits because, as we'll see, they show a distinct shift, perhaps more appropriately, they reveal more reflection in Lozano's perspective, almost like (a post-break up sense of) resolve but not quite.

Total Revolution

In her short remarks at the April 10, 1969 Open Hearing by the Art Workers Coalition at the School of Visual Arts, Lozano read the following:

> Statement for Open Public Hearing, Art Workers Coalition.
> For me there can be no art revolution that is separate from a science revolution, a political revolution, an education revolution, a drug revolution, a sex revolution, or a personal revolution. I cannot consider a program of museum reforms without equal attention to gallery reforms and art magazine reforms which would aim to eliminate stables of artists and writers. I will not call myself an art worker but rather an art dreamer and I will participate only in a total revolution simultaneously personal and public.[221]

Lozano's romantic statement demonstrates her critical idealism beyond the framework of the AWC and as recalled by others such as Lippard, Lozano was "appalled" by the format and structure imposed at AWC meetings and its splinter group the Ad Hoc Collective. She was bored with their predictable and replicative political program, was unimpressed with the label "art worker" as a placeholder maintaining art world status or elitism, while double-dipping into the social and political climate of labor-oriented struggles. She was also confused by the expectation for her to fall in line with the reformist aims of the feminist movement as it attempted to intersect with contemporary art. She felt alienated

[221] Art Workers Coalition, *Documents Open Hearing: Facsimile* (Sevilla: Doble J - ISPART, 2010).

and began to withdraw more and more as she continued to receive notable success (especially as a "woman artist") with critical reviews in the *Village Voice*, *Artforum*, and *Art in America*[222] and while exhibiting in group and solo shows throughout New York City and Europe.

However, the AWC and other associated art-group meetings were hardly enough to satiate Lozano, a known paranoiac, and instead, only served to deepen her brimming sense of dissatisfaction with the social conventions of art and life. Jo Applin considers Lozano's brief moment of participation (or infiltration attempt) into the AWC as "something stridently, if not errantly feminist about Lozano's gesture, in which she stood up and insisted she be seen and her voice heard within the public 'space of appearances' that the Open Public Hearing produced."[223] It does seem that Lozano's effort was the result of a hopeful attempt to use the platform as a way to declare or test out personal social critiques among a captive audience, rather than advance the general agenda of the AWC. But that is likely secondary to the fact that during this time, she was fully engaged in *General Strike Piece,* and her participation in the Open Hearing was aligned with the instructional parameters she set:

GENERAL STRIKE PIECE (Started Feb 8, 69)

GRADUALLY BUT DETERMINEDLY AVOID BEING PRESENT AT OFFICIAL OR PUBLIC "UPTOWN" FUNCTIONS OF GATHERINGS RELATED TO THE "ART WORLD" IN ORDER TO PURSUE INVESTIGATION OF TOTAL PERSONAL & PUBLIC REVOLUTION. EXHIBIT IN PUBLIC ONLY PIECES WHICH FURTHER

---

[222] Joanna Burton, "The New Honesty: The Life-Work and Work-Life of Lee Lozano," in *Solitaire: Lee Lozano, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Joan Semmel*, ed. Joseph Newland, Ann Bremner, and Helen Anne. Molesworth (Columbus, OH: Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, 2008), 21.
[223] Applin, 135.

SHARING OF IDEAS & INFORMATION RELATED TO TOTAL PERSONAL & PUBLIC REVOLUTION.
IN PROCESS AT LEAST THROUGH SUMMER, 69.*

In May, just after the Open Hearing and during *General Strike Piece*, Lozano wrote, "In 1965 (?) Kasper König said to me: "You are a good painter and a nice girl." I replied: "Wrong on both counts. I'm a VERY good painter and NOT a nice girl!" and another entry, "Paul Bianchini lays a check for $500 on me for drawings he hasn't picked yet. After he leaves me (with Simonne Stern) I have utterly empty feeling" she continues on the opposite page, "Empty feeling is not because of visit, which was a lot of fun, but somehow (the emptiness) is related to getting money."[224] Although she was committed to avoiding social functions at this time, her notebooks reveal that even without her physical presence in the social dynamics of art, she was still engaging by thinking about them during this time. Such a seemingly inescapable reality would only intensify her attempts to control it before it, as she feared, controlled her.

AUG 3, 69.

ANOTHER ATTACK OF SADNESS, NOT SO SEVERE THIS TIME. (SEE MAY 10, 69.). NO-GRASS PIECE.

AUG 6, 69.

I FEEL TOTALLY OUT OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION WITH EVERYBODY.[225]

Lozano extended *General Strike Piece* through October of 1969. A later drawing (or "write up" reproduction for the purpose of sale or exhibition) of the piece includes an

[224] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 2 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2017), 36-36A.
[225] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 4 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2018).

additional note from January 21, 1971, "ENDED FALL '69, WHEN SCHIZ SYMPTOMS BEGAN TO APPEAR (ME IN HERE VS. THEM OUT THERE). I STILL REGRET MISSING SOME ART EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE DURING SPRING '69, & APPEAR TO HAVE ALIENATED A FEW HUMANS BECAUSE OF MY WITHDRAWAL AT THIS TIME."[226] This melancholic reflection is made heavier by her continued commitment to documenting her life as work, so much so that even her deeply private and raw vulnerabilities are equivalent to and used as material.

By the end of 1969, Lozano was included in the *8 Painters* show at the Watson Gallery in Norton, Massachusetts and prepared for a handful of exhibitions in Germany, mostly exhibiting her systematic Wave paintings. Her relationship with Dan Graham started to deteriorate:

NOV 29 69

MY CALL TO DAN: AT LEAST I AM STILL CAPABLE OF LOSING MY TEMPER!

CAUSE OF SEPARATION: REDUNDANT INFO.

88.

NOV 30, 69

SEX WITH DAN: HOT & FAST. LIKE FIRE. ARIES, SAG, LEO.

And a longer entry excitedly contemplating the value of having three partners because it "WOULD SUIT ALL OUR LIVES BETTER. WE NEED TO LIVE ALONE, WE NEED CHANGE, VARIETY, FREEDOM, A GOOD MENTAL EXCHANGE & THE

[226] A various points throughout her notebooks and in some of the entries that became artworks, Lozano mentioned her struggles with schizophrenia. Lee Lozano, *Language Pieces* (New York, NY: Hauser & Wirth , 2018).

MILEAU CONDUCIVE TO IT. WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO WORK HARD WITHOUT PRESSURE TO SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS"[227]

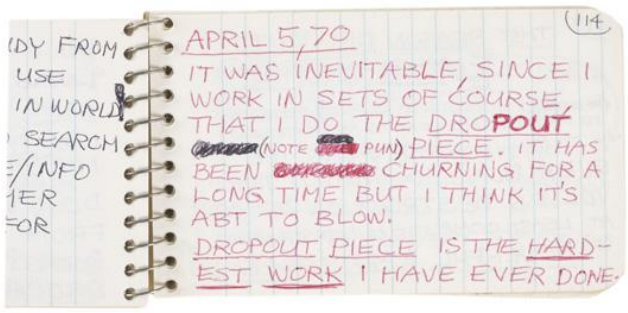

Figure 3.6: Lee Lozano, *Dropout*, Notebook 1, (1969), The Estate of Lee Lozano. http://thisistomorrow.info/articles/lee-lozano

A year after her brief contribution to the AWC, on April 5, 1970, Lozano wrote in anticipation of *Dropout Piece*, which is one of her most well known pieces and manifestations of her blurring between life and work. The most circulated page directly related to the piece states, "It had been churning for a long time but I think it's abt [sic] to blow. *Dropout Piece* is the hardest work I have ever done…" It is interesting to me that it typically ends there when cited where Lozano is only mid-thought. She continues on the following page and it is what I find the most revealing into Lozano's irreconcilable desire

[227] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 4 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2018).

to be loved and to be alone, she concludes, "[in] that it involves destruction of (or at least complete understanding of) powerful emotional habits. I want to get over my habit of emotional dependence on love. I want to start trusting myself and others more. I want to believe that I have power & complete my own fate."[228]

Rip-Off Red / Girl Detective

Kathy Acker is another figure that was wandering around New York City during this time and one that has received posthumous celebration in recent years in the literary and art worlds. Acker was an experimental writer and sex positive feminist, known for her punk literary style of weaving autobiographical elements with highly charged and explicit details of sex, power, violence, fantasy, desire, and taboo. Like Lozano, Acker had an early failed marriage and then relocated to New York City and like Solanas and many other struggling creative women, Acker turned to sex work, mostly stripping, to make money and free up her time for writing.

Kathy Acker, was born Karen Lehman in 1947 in New York City, the result of an unplanned pregnancy, she never knew her biological father and shortly after his departure, her mother, Claire, married her stepfather Albert Alexander. Her mother's second marriage was loveless and produced Acker's half-sister, Wendy—though the two sisters were never particularly close and eventually estranged. Acker maintained a fraught relationship with her emotionally withholding and overbearing mother, frequently citing

[228] Robert Wilonsky, "The Dropout Piece," *Dallas Observer* (4, December 9, 1999), https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/the-dropout-piece-6406272.

it as a source of her own feelings of rejection, anger, and anxiety. This was made all the more complicated when her mother committed suicide in 1978.

During the 1970's, Acker moved between New York, San Diego, and San Francisco, along the literary, experimental, and counter-cultural circuit. Openly bisexual, Acker had many intimate and sexual relationships (though primarily with men) having married her first husband, Robert Acker, in 1966 and later marrying composer and musician Peter Gordon, maintaining flings with a long list of others. She previously attended UC San Diego, earned her BA in literature and became close friends with poet, critic, and educator David and artist Eleanor Antin after the two moved to San Diego from New York in 1968 (the day Valerie Solanas shot Andy Warhol).[229]

In the early 1970's, Acker wrote the story, *Rip-Off Red, Girl Detective* that was published after her death in 1997. At the time, Acker was living in San Diego with Peter Gordon, working at a strip club as a dancer (later remarking that San Diego was a nice place to work in the industry but it was boring). As told by Chris Kraus in her biography on Acker, *Rip-Off Red, Girl Detective* was Acker's first venture into writing about sex, "She was a writer supporting herself in the sex industry: why not *write* about sex and stop stripping?"[230] It was also discovered that Acker tendency towards fictionalizing her own life included perpetuating the myth that Gordon's father was supporting her financially and as a pseudo-father (making her partner Gordon, something along the blurry lines of her brother). Nevertheless, this fixating thought was enough to inspire Acker to finish her

[229] Chris Kraus, *After Kathy Acker: a Literary Biography* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2018), 45.
[230] Ibid, 78.

book, as she wrote later to artist Jackson Mac Low: "… I'm their daughter and they've accepted my fantasy of a real brother-sister relation & his father's supported me for the last 4 months… so I could write *Rip Off Red*, which is the most wonderful help I could get from anyone & for the first time in my life I feel free & open enough to try to risk myself in order to deal with myself & find out about stuff... I'd love to fuck the whole family."[231]

Her desire to mythologize an intimate and erotic relationship to the Gordons is also reflected in the work itself. Though she was in San Diego at the time, the first person narrative is set in New York and follows the title character "Rip-Off Red" and her boyfriend as they investigate the murder of a woman named Spitz. The spitfire narration opens with, "This is the story about how I have kept myself from being bored" and immediately leads into a graphic sexual encounter between the narrator and her boyfriend Peter, from foreplay to his climax with a brief downturn (He asks, "Did you come?") and back into building up her excitement, blood flowing, thoughts racing and release in an opening scene familiar in style and energy to Bataille's *Story of the Eye*—a deliberate parallel by Acker.

To escape boredom and do something else other than fuck, Rip-Off Red decides to form a detective duo with her boyfriend "Peter Peter" and the two fly to New York. While on the flight, Rip-Off Red fantasizes and masturbates under the coat on her lap while sitting next to "Spitz" and then, suddenly, Spitz kisses her (breaking the fantasy and into pseudo-reality) and the two rush to a restroom to have sex: "I'll follow her

---

[231] Acker qtd. in Kraus, 79.

implicitly; she can do anything to me except leave me. She takes my hand; with my fingers she strokes her eyelids, the skin directly below her hair, then her cheeks. I follow her, tell her I love her, I want to be her, we're beginning, now we're beginning. Are you still scared? She lifts my hang, it grows lighter, places it under her sweater; she strokes her break with me, I'm her animal, I learn to stroke her breast. We're twins; breast against breast somehow."[232] It's soon discovered that Spitz is abruptly murdered and from that point forward, Rip-Off vows to solve it but is constantly distracted and led by her own fantasies, dreams, and other preoccupations.

The loose and hazy narrative jumps from time and place: with the first, third, and fourth parts following dated chapter sections and the second part divided up according to the age of the narrator, from ages 1-16. The deviation from the uneasy narrative in the second part is deepened by its focus on Rip-Off Red's early family life listing banal details of childhood and sexual curiosity and exploration with her sister. The majority of this section is focused on Rip-Off Red's shameful experiences with her mother which give way to preteen and teenage angst, "Age 13: I fuck and find out my mother's been lying. I know my mother lies about everything. We outwardly hate each other."[233]

Rip-Off Red, Girl Detective was the first book manuscript that Acker ever completed. It also serves as a turning point for her as a writer, effectively establishing her erotic, degenerate, exuberant style, which blended aspects of postmodernism and gonzo journalism and towards the development of transgressive fiction and new feminist prose.

---

[232] Kathy Acker, *Rip-Off Red, Girl Detective: And the Burning Bombin of America: The Destruction of the U.S.* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), 16.
[233] Ibid, 65.

It is the precursor to Acker's breakthrough novel *Blood and Guts in High School*, published in 1984 (though written in 1978), a more developed fictional work taking on social taboos such as sex, incest, violence, and abortion.

I found aspects of Acker's life and work to be a wonderful, even if unlikely, parallel to Lozano from her fraught relationship to her mother, her desire to invent and reinvent herself, and the high level of intensity by which they both, respectively and adamantly, led their lives. For example, Rip-Off Red, in the familial focused second part, shares:

> I have to disintegrate my mind to the point my mind is inseparable from the common mind or my "unconscious." By thinking: dreaming, following sexual and other desires, and by inflaming you with sensuous images, we can get rid of the universities, the crowded towns, the bureaucracies. I call up images of myself… or just images… I usually find out that people have the same images, and I know we are all connected… People who have died are still thinking and choosing, for all thoughts and desires are connected and pulsing, in the utter blackness, back and forth. I'm not sure of this.[234]

I could easily imagine coming across this passage in one of Lozano's notebooks or envisioning Lozano, in her studio, similarly wondering about the limitless expanse of the universe, the absurdity of life, and sexual desire all contained in the body, as a system, with an overflow of rapid fire, seemingly disparate, and highly charged thoughts reflecting a perpetual sense of loneliness with the tremulous hope of connectivity.

---

[234] Ibid., 67.

I Was Bored Before I Even Began

Though many connections between Lozano and radical feminism seem insufficient, radical lesbian feminist Valerie Solanas is worth exploring comparatively and in detail. Solanas was an aspiring writer and playwright and is largely remembered only as the wild radical lesbian feminist who shot Andy Warhol (and critic Mario Amayo) in the summer of 1968. Like Lozano, Solanas was a loner among a crowd but her crowd in NYC was comprised of other misfits: druggies, sex workers, drag queens, degenerates, bourgeois self-proclaimed revolutionaries, and other esoteric fringe dwellers located in and around the infamous Chelsea Hotel and it would be years before Lozano migrated to that area of the city. In 1967, Solanas wrote the S.C.U.M. (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto and published it the following year. It was also Solanas' hope that the text would serve as a recruitment tool to build a base of SCUM members but that did not take hold.

Just over 10,000 words, the short text is an angry, reactive, passionate, and often humorous polemic against the status of men, calling for their complete and total elimination, opening with:

> Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the male sex.[235]

Solanas was born in New Jersey in the 1936 and had a turbulent and violent childhood, endured physical and sexual abuse, while frequently hopping around to different family

[235] Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto (1971)* (London: Verso Books, 2016), 37.

homes. She came out as a lesbian in the ultra conservative climate of the 1950s and settled into New York City after putting herself through college (often by holding multiple jobs including prostitution) to earn a degree in psychology. Her family stated that Solanas had a voracious intellectual capacity and was especially charismatic and intense. Her background in psychology is apparent in the tone and syntax of the SCUM Manifesto with her inverted Freudian declaration of all men possessing "pussy envy".[236] The manifesto demonstrates her desire to dissolve all systems of control which she identified as all created by men and to laugh at their complete demise or as Avital Ronnell offered, Solanas viewed men as "their own worse and first enemies: from the start they have placed themselves beyond the pleasure principle, propelled by the death drive" and she appointed herself to see that through.[237]

The sections addressed in the manifesto are vast in scope; many are intensely serious, absurd, odd, and equal parts damning and hilarious including framing men as distrustful, pussy-hogging, inferior beings, perpetual screw ups, who are responsible for all of society's pitfalls: violence, rape, disease, the family, governmental control, money, and even the ugliness of modern cities. Solanas, quite comically writes, "Being totally sexual, incapable of cerebral or aesthetic responses, totally materialistic, and greedy, the male… has decorated his unlandscaped cities with ugly buildings (both inside and out), ugly decors, billboards, highways, cars, garbage trucks, and most notably, his own putrid

---

[236] Solanas, 40.
[237] Avital Ronell, "Deviant Payback: The Aims of Valerie Solanas (2004)" introduction, in *SCUM Manifesto (1971)*, by Valerie Solanas (London: Verso Books, 2016), 13.

self."[238] Although Solanas, in a more *practical* consideration, did allocate a space for some men, the Men's Auxiliary, where certain types of men could make themselves useful to SCUM's program to "squash the male sex" by conducting "Turd Sessions" where every male present would recite, "'I am a turd, a lowly abject turd' and then proceed to list all the ways in which he is."[239] The manifesto reveals Solanas' rage against the structure of society and its default awarding of power to men. For all its absurdity, it remains an indispensible historical document capturing the desires, dreams, pain, and anger of a powerful lesbian radical feminist reject with an agenda and nothing to lose.

Sometime in 1968, Solanas met Andy Warhol and became hopeful that he would produce an original play she wrote titled, *Up Your Ass*. Although Warhol accepted her script, he never agreed to produce it nor did he return it or give any indication that he had actually read it and instead, when she demanded compensation for the lost script, he cast her in a small role his film, *I, a Man* and gave her $25. Obsessive and dejected, Solanas still pushed Warhol to compensate her for the lost script and after a number of harassing phone calls, she returned to the factory on June 3, 1968 and fired three shots at Warhol, two missing and one going through his torso, striking his lungs, liver, and stomach. She also shot art critic Mario Amaya and before leaving, attempted to shoot Warhol's manager in the head but her gun jammed and she left. She turned herself in on the same day and told the police that she shot Warhol because "he had too much control in my

[238] Solanas, 65.
[239] Some of the men permitted to join include men who kill other men, journalists, biological scientists who are not advancing biological warfare, faggots, and men who give things away (money, services etc.). Solanas, 73.

life".[240] And it is certainly strange that a loner butch lesbian radical (and now attempted murderer) would find herself championed by the organized feminist movement after shooting a famous artist but that is precisely what happened to Solanas. Although she viewed the liberal reforms of organized feminism to be nothing more than a "civil disobedience luncheon club", the NY chapter president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Ti-Grace Atkinson declared Solanas a "'heroine' of the feminist movement".

Solanas' anger at Warhol and paranoia of his stealing her script mirrors a sentiment expressed the following year by Lozano in *Party Piece* (or *Paranoia Piece*): "Describe your current work to a famous but failing artist from the early 60's. Wait to see whether he boosts* any of your ideas. March 15, 69."[241] At another point, after completing a logged *Dialogue Piece* session with Robert Morris (whom she nicknamed "Moose"), she wondered if he too would try to steal the ideas that she shared during their conversation.

I do not conflate Lozano and Solanas and my point here is that like Solanas, Lozano also wanted to dissolve all existing social institutions (and relationships) of control and they shared a particular allergy for the organized feminist movement. In 1970, when Solanas was serving her three-year sentence at New York State Prison, Lozano made another write-up drawing, *Women's Lib brought bad luck*, 1970-1971.[242]

---

[240] Ronell, 24-27.
[241] Lee Lozano, *Language Pieces* (New York, NY: Hauser & Wirth , 2018).
[242] The relatively short three-year prison sentence, considering the charges of attempted murder, assault, and illegal possession of a firearm was made in light of Solanas' diagnosis with paranoid schizophrenia, making her unfit to stand trial and after she plead

At the top of the nearly squared piece of vellum she wrote, "PAST: "MEN FIGHT EACH OTHER, WOMEN BORE EACH OTHER" And then proceeded to describe in detail the social dynamics she experienced at some (unnamed) feminist artist organization meeting that was held in early November of 1970, as noted by Lozano's February 1971 addition (which is when she reflectively named the piece). The meeting went as follows:

> TWO WOMEN CALLED TO TELL ME ABOUT THE MEETING AT WHICH WHITE & BLACK FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD DISCUSS DEMANDING 50% FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN THE WHITNEY SCULPTURE ANNUAL. I THOUGHT I'D BETTER NOT COPOUT. WHEN I GOT THERE IT WAS THE SAME JIBBERJABBER ALLCUNT DISORDER AS IN JUNIORHIGHSCHOOL GIRLSCLUB DAYS. A SELF-APPOINTED CHAIRWOMAN COULD NOT CONTROL THE BLABNOISE. I SMOKED GRASS THROUGHOUT LIKE I DO WHEN I'M HOME. A NICE BLACK SISTER TRAPPED ME IN THE TYPICAL POWERGAME, IT WAS PLAYED OVER AN ASHTRAY. LATER TWO WOMEN PATTED ME ON THE HEAD. I OFFERED A TASTE OF GRASS TO TWO OTHER NICE BLACK SISTERS BUT THEY SAID NO. SOME HEAVIES SPOKE WITH AFFECTED INFLECTIONS. I STRONGLY FELT THE PRESENCE OF LOTSA MEN AT THE MEETING.[243]

Perpetually bored and not one for social niceties, Lozano's controlling demeanor was instantly set off by the "allcunt disorder" of the meeting. As one of her many oppositional traits and for someone so hell bent on disrupting the social order of things, she certainly only wanted her engagement with others to be on her preferred terms, which were either schematized permutations of social conduct (like in the *Dialogue Piece* sessions)—like a controlled environment—or its variable counterpart: total hedonism and nothing in between. When she sensed that neither would happen, she defaulted to her first stage of

---

guilty to charges of reckless assault with intent to harm. She served most of her sentence in a psychiatric care facility.

[243] Qtd in Applin, 140.

withdrawal, smoking grass, and detachment. Solanas was also against boredom, addressing it in the SCUM Manifesto, "Life in a society made by and for creatures who, when they are not grim and depressing are utter bores, can only be, when not grim and depressing, an utter bore."[244] Lozano's concerns were similarly immediate and extreme: she only engaged with what was in front of her and her escapism kept her on a pursuit of something beyond, something transcendent, something stimulating.

However, among their many diverging qualities, Lozano did not attribute the frustrating and often-boring dysfunction of institutional relationships to men, nor did she experience the homophobic misogyny Solanas endured. In fact, Lozano identified with men, got along with them, and preferred their company to women. As the feminist movement became more organized (or mainstream to use today's vernacular) and the art world more professionalized, it is not surprising that Lozano would become somewhat of an anomaly because she was invested in maintaining autonomy, defying social expectations, valuing solitude, and her independence. Both Lozano and Solanas distanced themselves from any and all external pressures that they felt would lead only to more oppressive conformity and confinement. It is unfortunate that the feminist majority of the time often reinforced a sense of confinement and did not value the significance of such staunch individualism, as both a reality and potential benefit to the movement but also, did not recognize individualism as a compulsory courtesy patriarchy affords automatically to men.

---

[244] Solanas, 63.

Refusal, Rage, and Reduction

JUNE, 68

SOME INSTITUTIONS I DO NOT BELIEVE IN:
ONANISM
DOMINATION
SLAVERY
COMPETITION
WINNING
MARRIAGE
THE FAMILY
PARENTHOOD
PATRIARCHY
MATRIARCHY
POSSESSION
SECURITY
FOOD
GOD
HEIRARCHY[245]

We can see that Lozano refused to sacrifice herself to any fanatic association including, of the time and in her experience, to the art world and larger second wave feminist movement. Instead, she favored solitude and isolation as a means of self-preservation. This isn't to suggest that she didn't try to maintain conventional relationships—she did—and was often disappointed and hurt by them (or was the one causing the pain) but rather than accept such occurrences as reason to continue in pursuit of something working out, she defensively used them as evidence to give up on them entirely, at least, as much as possible. In the end, Lozano would not sacrifice herself to anything and in exchange, she sacrificed all else and she did so in a systematic process of withdrawal and eventually, near complete reduction of her self and identity.

[245] "Onanism" is an antiquated reference to masturbation. Lee Lozano, Private Notebook: 1968-9, edited January 25, 1972.

By this point, *Boycott* starts to seem like a viable choice given Lozano's anti-social antagonism especially in consideration of her list of institutions she did not believe in. However, there is another possible dimension to *Boycott* worth considering and it is from an entry from December 1969 (at the end of her overwhelming, exhaustive year) with its 1972 edit:

26-28

DEC 20 69

CONFINEMENT IS NEAR THE ROOT OF MY RAGE. I AM NOT ANGRY AT ANYONE OR ANYTHING, BUT I FEEL RAGE. ~~(IS IT THE ROAR OF MY RISING SIGN, SUPPOSEDLY ARIES?)~~ I HAVE ALWAYS FELT RAGE. I WANT TO PUSH THESE WALLS OUT WITH MY ELBOWS. THIS LOFT FEELS NARROW. I WANT TO PUSH AWAY MY CONFINEMENT, FEEL BIG SPACE AROUND ME, BREATHE IN AIR FROM FAR AWAY. WANT TO SEE CITY LIGHTS AROUND ME.

28A.

TRACE RAGE BACK TO BRUTAL ABRUPT WEANING AT 3 MOS. OLD BUT IT PROBABLY ORIGINATED IN THE WOMB, LONG BEFORE THE BRUTAL WEANING, WHEN I GOT STUCK IN BRIDGE POSITION & DELAYED BEING BORN OR WAS DELAYED BY MY MOTHER.[246]

[246] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 5 (1969-1970)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2018).

It is significant that in another deeply personal admission, she wonders, if the higher frequency of her rage that she experienced throughout her entire life was either an uncontrollable result of the circumstances of her own birth or an outcome from a possible choice made by her mother, Rosemond Knaster. Although I have no desire to launch a psychological assessment of Lozano, I do see another overlooked source of tension between her, the mainstream feminist movement, and the essentialist notions of motherhood and the nuclear family.

Jo Applin identified one connection between Lozano and radical feminist Shulamith Firestone, who wrote the widely acclaimed *The Dialectic of Sex* in 1970 and was also against mainstream feminism. Both Lozano and Firestone studied painting at the Art Institute in Chicago, the former completing her MFA in 1960, the latter a BFA in 1967. Both rejected the nuclear family and essentialist notions of motherhood as well as expectations of childrearing. However, Firestone still maintained that the revolution—even loosely defined—required a degree of participation and commitment that Lozano did not find interesting whatsoever.[247]

In her chapter titled "Down with Childhood", Firestone attacks the nuclear family as a modern unit of control, where the burden of reproduction and childrearing is not only disproportionately assigned to women but also, represents the equivocation of women and children as inferior. The "myth of childhood" is an ideological construct akin to the persisting myth of femininity, which distributes and defines power through a patriarchal

[247] Applin, 143.

logic, imbuing both womanhood and childhood with subjugated status by an ahistorical conflation of biological processes with "natural" determinism. Firestone argues that one need only look to their own family to recognize the psychological expectations placed on the family unit but it was not always this way.[248] She examines the family structure in the Middle Ages where children were not separated from adults to the extent that they are in the modern era by the onslaught of the nuclear family's centering of children, which extended beyond the domestic life of children and served as the basis for the institution of education to advance the State. She writes, "Schools multiplied, replacing scholarship and a practical apprenticeship with a theoretical education, the function of which was to 'discipline' children rather than to impart learning for its own sake. Thus it is no surprise that modern schooling retards development rather than escalating it."[249]

School became the ideological site of enforcement, severing the child from multi-dimensional learning from adults and older and more experienced children and instead, they started to think in linear and hierarchical terms, encouraging competition and subject to rankings and other instruments of structured assimilation. The myth of childhood promoted a sense that children were fundamentally different than adults (like women to men) and should, therefore, be treated as such: powerless, irrational, emotional, and in need of guidance, She concludes, "Children, then, are not freer than adults. They are burdened by a wish fantasy in direct proportion to the restraints of their narrow lives;

---

[248] "We don't need to elaborate on the subtle psychological pressures of family life. Think of your own family. And if that isn't enough…" Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution (1970)* (London: Verso Books, 2015), 88.
[249] Firestone, 76.

with an unpleasant sense of their own physical inadequacy and ridiculousness; with the constant shame about their dependence, economic and otherwise ('Mother, may I?'); and humiliation concerning their natural ignorance of practical affairs. Children are repressed at every waking minute. Childhood is hell."[250] Firestone felt that one of the only ways to free women from the role of childrearing was for the feminist movement to resist the processes of raising children by raising children, not as infantilized and helpless dependents, but rather, as soon-to-be adults, as they had been pre-capitalist societies.

Solanas, like Firestone, also embraced technological advancements of the era especially when it came to reproductive processes. Solanas was excited by the prospect of technology making it possible for women to reproduce without men, and to reproduce only other women, with the added bonus of eventually eliminating men all together. Of course, her premise was outrageously and absurdly nihilist. Firestone, who was a skeptical advocate for cybernetics, wanted feminists to recognize the faulty state of some contraceptives and to also embrace expanded reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization, which was in its early stages of development at the time, with the first successful procedure occurring in 1978. Disgusted by the "cult of natural childbirth" and essentialized formulations of motherhood, Firestone considered reproductive technologies a viable alternative and possible path to force a critical re-examination of motherhood and its pressures on women, "At the present time, for a woman to come out openly against motherhood on principle is physically dangerous. She can get away with it only if she adds that she is neurotic, abnormal, child-hating, and

[250] Firestone, 93.

therefore 'unfit'… until the decision not to have children or to have them by artificial means is as legitimate as traditional child-bearing, women are as good as forced into their female roles."[251]

The normative equivocation of womanhood to motherhood with the expected role of childrearing is a major point of contention within the feminist movement and in particular, radical feminists against their reformist counterparts. Lozano had no explicit interest in having children or starting a family of any sort. After her death, her ex-husband Adrian Lozano shared that she became pregnant shortly after they were wed but she decided to have an abortion and he, "knew that children were impractical for them at the time, but he was 'partially disappointed' with her decision."[252] Years later, sometime in the summer of 1968, likely between May and June, it seems that she may have had another had an abortion after writing:

I AM A NOBODY IN TIME. I AM NO-TIME IN A BODY. THE BODY WANTED TO HAVE MUSCLES, NOT BABIES, AND THE MIND OBEYED. – MAY 1968[253]

There are many examples of essentialized motherhood and notions of the "maternal" as an inherent quality assumed or imposed on women, which was further complicated by feminist movement's celebration of motherhood (from a middle class, white, heterosexual perspective). Though Firestone accurately noted the need to end

---

[251] Firestone, 182.
[252] Robert Wilonsky, "The Dropout Piece," Dallas Observer (4, December 9, 1999), https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/the-dropout-piece-6406272.
[253] This is deduced from a note with the contact information of an "abortionist" recommended by Lozano's doctor. Lee Lozano, *Private Book 1 (1968-1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2016).

shaming of childless women, it still remains. One exception to the polarities of essentialized motherhood and the anti-maternal is artist Mary Kelly's acclaimed feminist artwork *Post-Partum Document* (1976), which was a six-part series exploring the mother-son relationship between the artist and her young son, employing a cataloged and document-based conceptual approach. The series marked a noted departure from the Marxist position against motherhood levied by radical feminists and the uncritically celebrated essentialism of liberal feminism's take on the maternal. Instead, Kelly explored psychoanalysis and Lacanian principles throughout stages of her son's development and refrained from framing the work as biographical and considered it more of a conceptual investigation, shifting from the perspective of mother, child, and analytic observer.[254]

Unlike Kelly, Lozano's work was much more focused on her own interior preoccupations, observations, and reflections and despite including much of her social and intimate relationships throughout her notebooks, she very rarely included any mention of her family. In addition to the aforementioned entries about her mother and birth experience, there is one notable early drawing, circa 1963, that is unique for a handful of reasons. It's a rare collage piece that incorporates a letter she received from her father, Sidney Knaster.

[254] For more on the theoretical and conceptual approach, I suggest *A Conversation about Conceptual Art, Subjectivity, and the Post-Partum Document* – Mary Kelly and Terry Smith.

The composition is almost like a twisted-Braque collage on speed. It includes a muted version of the wide-grinning mouth with a missing tooth overlapping the letter. Next to the gaped hole is a photograph (likely of her father) doubling as one of the teeth. Along the right side of the drawing is a loose but hard-pressed sketch of a rotary telephone, the receiver pushed down into its place by a hazard orange protruding arrow. Her father used a sheet of personalized letterhead and wrote in a casual cursive script. The full content of the letter is difficult to read both for penmanship legibility and due to the lines comprising the mouth's bottom lip outline but from what I can make it, it reads as follows:

Lenore,
Sure hope you are surviving the heat wave. Although mother and I know you like warm weather. Hope you are getting adjusted and beginning (rest of the sentence illegible). Please be careful about walking alone at night – In fact, I hope to hell you don't do that. Buy yourself the coffee maker and the kettle for hot water etc. – Sure wish you would send us (sic) sketches of heads as previously discussed and maybe a colorful oil for the faces mentioned.
Write dear.
Love, Dad[255]

There are some words circled directly on the letter, "High" (from Highland) and "Live" (from Live Oak) from the letterhead return address, and the following words from the letter: "heat", "warm", "hell", "hot", and "Love" – all grouped together by an obvious thermal association, including the red circles, but also linked to love, live, and high: concepts and states that Lozano enjoyed and frequently pursued. Incorporating a personal, brief, and lovely letter by her father into the composition, one where he

[255] Lee Lozano, No title, ca. 1963. LOZAN31085. Lee Lozano, 11.

expresses both care in her well being, as well as support for her as an artist, stands in complete contrast to Lozano's mentions of her mother in her private notebooks.

Lippard wondered about Lozano's rejection of women and what it could have revealed about her childhood or family, noting that although her text-based pieces were intensely personal, they also functioned as experiments in compartmentalized privacy. She writes, "… delving into the roots of women's lives was absolutely necessary to the feminist project. Lozano never allowed herself such sisterhood, or such an outlet."[256] This "missed opportunity" was also considered by painter David Reed as a "self-destructive way of dealing with a very real situation", which was the reality that women did not have power in the art world. However, Reed saw Lozano's withdrawal from the feminist movement as "masochistic" because shortly after her exit from the art world, "women… did gain power by engaging and supporting one another."[257] His perspective is both paternalistic and pathologizing and rather than view Lozano as an individual, Reed fails to recognize that the kind of power Lozano was most interested in, did not originate anywhere else but from within her mind and body.

On April 27th, 1969, Lee Lozano wrote across two pages in her notebook: ONE'S BODY IS ONE'S MOTHER. (MY FATHER IS THE BOOK-OF-CHANGE). HOW ONE TAKES CARE OF ONE'S BODY INDICATES HOW ONE FEELS ABOUT ONE'S MOTHER. THE BOOK-OF-CHANGE IS "THEY", NOT "ME". "THEY" ARE MY ANCESTORS, WHO ARE MINE AND EACH PERSON'S "HIS

[256] Lucy Lippard, "Cerebellion and Cosmic Storms," essay, in *Lee Lozano:* ed. Müller-Westermann Iris (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 194.
[257] David Reed in Katy Siegel, "Making Waves: Katy Siegel Talks with David Reed About the Legacy of Lee Lozano," *Artforum*, October 2001, 125.

OWN" UNIQUIELY UNTIL A VERY LONG WAY "BACK" FROM "NOW" WHEN THEY BEGIN TO MERGE INTO THE FEW, THEN POSSIBLY ONE?[258]

I find it productive to consider her fraught relationship to her mother as a wedge between them and also, between Lozano and the mainstream liberal feminist movement. It doesn't take a specialist to understand or accept the possible resulting ramifications one experiences throughout life in circumstances of familial dysfunction even if, as Firestone suggested, they are much more commonplace than one is meant to believe. Although no one will ever know for sure what occurred between Lozano and her mother—though her association of her mother with her body and her body as a place of confinement, restriction, and often infuriatingly *in the way*— during her formative years (which is besides the point) it's vital to consider *Boycott* beyond its current classifications as a total rejection of feminism and gender roles, refusal to celebrate or embrace her womanhood and as an instance of self-loathing or misogyny. Because Lozano merged her life with her work, it seems as though *Boycott* complexly extended from a matrix containing much that is unknown and subconscious as well as her lifelong, strained relationship with her own mother, preference for her father and the company of men, and her rejection of the expected roles of women as mothers. Or as Solanas put it, "Traditionalists say the basic unit of 'society' is the family; 'hippies' say the tribe; no one says the individual."[259]

---

[258] I address the Book of Change in the conclusion. Humorously, Lozano updated this entry a few pages later, after a detailed log of a mescaline trip with a note: "ANCECSTORS COMMUNICATED WITH ME FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY'RE NOT CHINESE!" Lee Lozano, *Private Book 2 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2017).
[259] Solanas, 51.

Cerebellion

We do know that Lozano edited her private notebooks sometime in 1972, indicating that she knew or was paranoid or hopeful enough to rightly assume that they would be read and not kept entirely private. Her edits consisted mostly of her crossing out certain words or bits of information like certain personal contacts (though many remain) and much of the alterations were noted as such with dates. One particular entry from September 1969 stated, "People (in some ways) are more important than art"; three years later, Lozano edited that entry by crossing out the parenthetical.[260]

There is something almost neo-Romantic (and clearly existential) about Lozano's desire to merge and maintain an intensely concentrated sense of self against the grain of collective struggle and social movements. She was extremely focused on her own emotional and intellectual processes and like the Romantics, she looked elsewhere for inspiration and in search of a way of life that she felt was out there, somewhere, but certainly not within her immediate confines. Lozano's near neo-Romantic sensibilities are compounded by her often disruptive and erratic behavior, which did not easily fit into the social and cultural milieu of the 1960's at the intersection of art's push towards political reform. No one knew that better than Lozano, of course, and she would deal with her fear of confinement by obsessively searching and pursuing different avenues of escape: withdrawal, drugs, and solitude and later, a wide-eyed desire to love or be loved or something like it.

---

[260] Katy Siegel, "Market Index: Lee Lozano," *Artforum*, April 2008, https://www.artforum.com/print/200804.

Of the available surveys and studies on Lozano, many of them cite the period from her 1972 exit from New York City and subsequent 1982 resurfacing in Dallas, TX as adding the alluring mystery of her exit or testaments to her conviction and rigid adherence to her practice—the latter seems to be the most valuable partial truth. According to Jaap van Liere, Lozano's former dealer who began representing her work in the 1980s, after she resurfaced or rather, could be contacted at her parents' home, "She was extraordinarily private and impossible to pin down. There are 10 years of her life I don't know anything about. It's hopeless. I spent 10 years working with her and there is still so much I don't know. And I don't know who does."[261]

It is generally left alone that Lozano exited the art world in 1972, a move thought to be a full realization of *Dropout Piece*. It certainly adds to the mystery of her already enigmatic persona and effective blurring of her life and her work. However, like many hero stories, or in this instance, the anti-hero, it seems as though the sensationalized version is a bit far removed from the truth. The real version, or something closer to reality is, in my view, crucial to understanding Lozano's rebellion from social expectations.

Luckily, Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer provided some detail of Lozano's supposed lost decade pieced together from interviews with a small handful of people that knew her during those cloudy years. Most interesting is Lozano's friendship with painter Gerry Morehead, who had met Lozano in 1971 and kept in loose contact, reconnecting in 1975 when Morehead moved to NYC and the two became roommates. They lived in the Lower East Side and Lozano, in her mid-40s, immersed herself in the Bowery punk scene, even

---

[261] Wilonsky.

befriending icon Joey Ramone, attending multiple nights of Patti Smith and Television's residency at famed venue CBGB's (where Morehead worked), and smoking grass while hiding from the art world in plain sight. Morehead maintains, "She knew everyone and everyone knew her—she did not disappear."[262]

Her detachment from the art world and refusal to participate in its economies by simply walking away from it in the name of anti-professionalization is particularly salient and is only further underscored by her decision to still hang around NYC but ultimately choosing the young, gritty, fast, energetic, self-destructive, and anti-authoritarian universe of punk over the restrictive social codes of the professionalized art world and mainstream anything including feminism. It's also not surprising that her rebellious departure and self-elected estrangement confused many of the people she left behind because she didn't vanish or fall into obscurity, she just said, "fuck it" and left. In short, Lozano was just too punk for the art world and the art world was just too uptight for her. And in some ways, people should have seen Lozano's drop out coming. Just a few years earlier, in May of 1968, with the Vietnam War continuing to unfold and a historical period of civil unrest in France reaching its boiling point with student-led protests and rioting culminated in the country's largest strike widespread general strike of workers, Lozano wrote:

[262] Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, *Lee Lozano - Dropout Piece* (London: Afterall Books, 2014), 55.

ARTIST, CRITIC, DEALER, AND MUSEUM FRIENDS, IN FACT, ALMOST EVERYBODY: I STILL SMELL ON YOUR BAD BREATH THE OTHER PEOPLE'S RULES YOU SWALLOWED WHOLE SO LONG AGO[263]

Dorothy Litchenstein, the gallerist and wife of famed Pop-artist Roy Litchenstein, once said, "Lee was punk before punk".[264] It's possible now to look back at Lozano's practice, particularly the earlier works, as well as *Dropout* and *Boycott*, as clear examples of her proto-punk embodiment, long before her 1972 departure from the contemporary art scene. It also doesn't require much intense reflection to understand how the status quo, with its limitations, boring sense of propriety, rules and regulations (of any sort and for anyone) produces a sense of confinement that one can either live within or burst out of—and we know which path Lozano chose. She didn't want to be defined by anyone or anything else except herself. Her fatalistic fascination with life and transcendence was deepened by her affinity for drugs, music, and interest in non-Western knowledge systems and fringe areas of thought, including psychedelia, the I Ching, and astrology.[265]

By the time Lozano resurfaced in Dallas, Texas, she was broke, 52-years old, and at the mercy of her elderly parents' limited ability to care for her in their small apartment. Mark Kramer, Lozano's cousin, was living in the same apartment complex as her parents and when she arrived from New York, he recalled that the first thing she told him was, "I have relinquished my artistic identity" and she explained that she no longer wanted to be

---

[263] Entry from May 1968. Lee Lozano, *Private Book 1 (1968-1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2016).
[264] Nina Renata Aron, "This Radical Artist Ignored Women for a Project, but Then Kept up the Boycott Her Whole Life," Medium (Timeline, September 29, 2017), https://timeline.com/lee-lozano-boycott-women-20d7e892e6b.
[265] Lozano frequently documented her experiences with drugs such as mescalin and LSD.

called Lee and instead, wanted to be referred to as "E".[266] She was continuing her process of reduction.

As Katy Siegel noted, "Her desire to separate herself belongs on a continuum not only with artists who have deliberately retreated but also with the anonymous thousands who do not get shown or sold, who either stop making art or continue their work in involuntary privacy."[267] Lozano's life and work are destabilizing enactments of political rejection: rejection of the status quo, form, normative structures, and systems of control with an existential absurdity that is difficult to capture. Lozano was deliberately impolite; poetically and sincerely belligerent; and impossible to contain. More critically, the unfortunate confinements that Lozano attempted to evade are the same ones embodied in the rebellious and anti-authoritarian ethos of punk rock: rejecting social norms, dismantling the status quo, and breaking down the system. Damn the man, damn the woman, and damn you too. And yet, people still wonder what was wrong with Lee Lozano, as they also wondered what was wrong with Valerie Solanas and what is wrong with childless women; rather than wonder what was wrong with the political system and social economies around her, them, and us—be it the art world, feminism, or any other normative extension of the status quo. This problem continues today.

Dropout and *Boycott* were just precursors to Lozano's final exit. The time between 1982 and her death in 1999 is especially dark, troublesome, and violent which includes her father filing a restraining order against his daughter and after his death in

---

[266] Wilonsky.
[267] Katy Siegel, "Market Index: Lee Lozano," *Artforum*, April 2008, https://www.artforum.com/print/200804.

1988, Lozano (or E) directed her violent outbursts towards her mother until she passed away in a nursing facility in 1990. The 1990's, according to her cousin and art dealers van Liere and Rosen, were especially unstable for Lozano: evictions, brief stays with a rotation of temporary boyfriends, periods of homelessness; meanwhile her dealers re-established interest in her art after she granted them freedom to exhibit whatever they wanted so long as her presence was not required. At the start of 1999, Lee Lozano was diagnosed with cervical cancer, somewhat of a cosmic joke given her intense disassociation and rejection of womanhood. The cancer was quick and aggressive; she died on October 2, 1999. She is buried in a desolate area of Dallas County in the Southland Memorial Park. Upon her request, there is no headstone.[268] With no identifying marker tethering her to the ground, Lozano transcended her last threshold of confinement: her body and thus fulfilling her desire to control her own fate. Ashes to ashes, cosmic dust to dust.

[268] Wilonsky.

Conclusion
"Conceptual Joy and Personal Power"

In "Learning from the 60s", the late black feminist, lesbian, poet Audre Lorde, reconsidered the inherited legacies, primarily those of both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., and the problematic historical tendencies of reflecting upon the 1960s', so heavily laden with romantic reductions, which often contrasted her own lived experience of the era. She felt it necessary for black people to understand that, "… if there is one thing we can learn from the 60s, it is how infinitely complex any move for liberation must be. For we must move against not only those forces which dehumanize us from the outside, but also against those oppressive values which we have been forced to take into ourselves. Through examining the combination of our triumphs and errors, we can examine the dangers of an incomplete vision."[269]

Lorde also emphasized the importance of individual choice and responsibility in emancipatory politics, poignantly asking, "How are you practicing what you preach – whatever you preach – and who exactly is listening?"[270] I find this question so valuable when it comes to all three of my subjects. Who is listening? So I set out to listen to them, their archives, their reception histories, and identify—in a forensic approach—missing or overlooked moments in order to offer some more pieces to their respectively complex trajectories.

---

[269] Audre Lorde, "Learning from the 60's," essay, in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2015), 135.
[270] Ibid, 144.

Lucy Lippard

It is simply not possible to tell a story about feminism and conceptual art in the United States without Lucy Lippard. Her presence is an exceptional through-line in many significant moments of the era and because of this, she was an obvious point of entry into the complicated interpolation of feminism and art. But rather than only honor or celebrate Lippard for all that she has done for the social groups and art movements of which she was part, I became more interested in her individual politics and creative impulses. But first, I needed to address the concept of "dematerialization", as one of Lippard's major contributions to conceptual art, and look at it in a more complex way rather than just compare the US and Argentine formulation and instead, trace the concept to reveal the political stakes of both areas, in and outside of art: The Art Workers, The New Left, Perón and populism, Masotta—quite a lot of territory—and I know it is a fragmented history. What I hope is that it conveys the difficulty in going outside of the usual narrative arcs that history repeats.

I am a longtime appreciator of the various modes of output by Lippard, especially the independent and experimental publications and her curatorial work. The second part of the chapter offers a closer look at her personal politics, highlighting her critique of liberal feminism and identification as a socialist feminist and the continuation of her conceptual method established in *Six Years* through her novel *I See/You Mean*, and in the noted shift of themes in her writing since leaving New York City. The title of the chapter "elusive success and possible happiness" is lifted from her description of the conceptual narrative in *I See/You Mean*. It struck me as quite fitting given the ebb and flow of

Lippard's life and work. I view her, in consideration of the last two chapters, as more of a foil and point of access to feminism and conceptual art. As indicated here, and worth exploring more, Lippard may have advocated for conceptualism and feminism into the mainstream contemporary art world of her time but she didn't exactly follow through with either and not nearly to the extent of people like Piper and Lozano. It would be interesting to synthesize her work alongside the likes of Carla Lonzi and Arlene Raven.

Adrian Piper

There are many possible avenues to approach Adrian Piper's extensive and daunting archive. After an arduous and humbling reading of the second volume of her dissertation, *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*, the first is on Hume and the second is on Kant, I no longer possessed the naïve desire to delve into her philosophical scholarship from the position of an art historian with a background in sociology and gender studies. I decided to return to her reception history and look at some of the major survey exhibitions and anthologies on conceptual art and feminism. Like Lippard, Piper was often mentioned as active in the late 1960's at the height of conceptualism but usually after the grand narrative of its founding fathers was reiterated. To some extent, this made sense, Piper was a bit younger than most of her contemporaries at the time. Her contributions to conceptual art are often overshadowed by her prominence as a figure in the history of black performance art and to a less extent, feminist performance.

But those are incomplete narratives and because of that, I was motivated to construct a more nuanced approach to the history of identity politics and conceptual art as

a way to explore how Piper's philosophical and conceptual explorations of the self, analyses of power, and her use of the systems of racism and sexism as situated content. Her philosophy, art, and yoga practice are also incomplete perceptions and from researching Piper and her work, I became more attuned to certain methods of criticism that conflate artist with their work, often, in an attempt to dismiss or undermine them. Tearing into the particularities of Piper's exchange with Kuspit, while knowing it was just one example among countless personal attacks veiled as critical analyses has made me not only more of a careful critical writer but also a research, as well. Thankfully, there are others in the field who are also taking on a more complicated view of identity politics and conceptual art, including Nizan Shaked's *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art* (2017). There is also excellent work on the methodologies of criticism, such as Jennifer Doyle's *Hold it Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (2013).

My decision to foreground Piper as an intellectual emerged as an important and relatively unexplored aspect of not only her work, but also the history of conceptual art, and with much broader political and social resonance today. I'm indebted to the ideas set forth by Richard Hofstadter in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* and hope to extend them further in the future. I'd also like to do additional research on Piper and further develop an analysis of her installation pieces as well as her cultural criticism.

Lee Lozano

In many ways, Lee Lozano's *Boycott* and her apparent rejection of feminism and the art world are what inspired me to go beyond the usual roster of feminist artists in my research. Unlike Lippard and Piper, the available scholarship, exhibition history, and critical reception on Lozano are quite limited with the exception of Jo Applin's recent monographic study *Lee Lozano: Not Working,* which became an indispensible guide. Lozano's time in the professional art world was short and productive. I still find it curious that the span of time in her life after her drop out from art is still discussed mostly as a mystery but I suppose that adds to her legend. So I was both pleased and not surprised, however, to discover that it is much more likely that she did not actually leave New York and instead, just severed ties and immersed herself in the punk scene for a while.

As mentioned earlier, I brought in feminist figures into each chapter, mostly intuitively. Because of Lozano's finite archive of work and writing, I populated her story with more people than the previous two chapters. I'm pleased to have brought in Kathy Acker, Valerie Solanas, and Shulamith Firestone. I don't feel the need to redeem Lozano for purposes of her inclusion into a feminist art canon. Instead, I find it odd that some of the more recent interest in her work uncritically places her within that framework, however loosely defined.

Intersectionality, Institutional Inclusion, and Identity

I began this study with a general framing of the individual and freedom as defined in existentialism. As Simone de Beauvoir assessed, the body "is not a thing, it is a

situation".[271] Thus, our subjectivities are embodied and our bodies are the sites of our expression of and into contexts that are also necessarily situated. As I've explored in each of my chapters, the varied pressures of collective identity can produce not only faulty associations and incomplete narratives but also, reinforce both alienation and marginalization when predicated on existing hierarchical forms of power. As Mary Kelly wrote, "… Marginalization is not simply a matter of chronological displacement or exclusion. It can also be effected by incorporation."[272]

By reaching beyond the confines of conventional art historical methodologies, as well as eschewing neatly packaged histories of the 1960's and 1970's, conceptual art, and the political landscape in and around the women's movement, I endeavored to reveal not only certain overlooked critical aspects of the lives and work of my subjects but also, to reveal the ways in which such omissions are, in effect, frequent and ongoing. Rather than offer a seemingly comprehensive history of feminism in the beginning, I decided to explore examples of alignment and tension from both major and peripheral feminist figures—in and outside of art—in each chapter, wherever appropriate. Resonance became must more important to me than attempting to confine Lippard, Piper, and Lozano within one totalizing framework.

Recalling Jennifer Nash's excellent re-examination of intersectional feminism, "Answering questions about the fit between intersectionality and lived experience of identity requires intersectionality to craft a theory of agency and to grapple with the

---

[271] Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 38.
[272] Mary Kelly, "Reviewing Modernist Criticism," *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Boston: David R. Godine, (1984.) 88.

amount of leeway variously situated subjects have to deploy particular components of their identities in certain contexts."[273] While I am certainly informed by intersectional feminism and still maintain its value, from the outset, I aimed to foreground the agency of Lippard, Piper, and Lozano. Without restriction, this enabled me to bring in a myriad of feminist figures who populate my study: from Barbara Ehrenreich, Joanna Russ, Donna Haraway, Heresies collective; to Cherríe Moraga, bell hooks, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde; to Mary Daly, Shulamith Firestine, Kathy Acker, and Valerie Solanas as well as Simone de Beauvoir.[274] Their differences are crucial.

Some loose but common threads

Thus far, I've focused on tracing historical lines—some diverging, some intersecting—through Lippard, Piper, and Lozano's lives and practices, respecting their personhood and suspending (as much as possible) the usual rotation of claims made about them. But it's important to also place them among their contemporaries, as contemporaries, as well. Beauvoir also emphasized the significance of connected existence in the pursuit of individual freedom, stating "to will oneself free is also to will others free."[275] Through my research I discovered some shared interests and tendencies among all three of my subjects. Some of them, such as the body as a system, are quite reflective of the historical moment and feminist movement, especially. Lippard often

[273] Jennifer Nash, 11.
[274] For more work on the individual, agency, and collectivity synthesizing feminism and existentialism, I recommend: Sonia Kruks' *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity* (2012) and Elizabeth Bartlett's *Rebellious Feminism: Camus' Ethic of Rebellion and Feminist Thought* (2004).
[275] Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*, 73.

wrote about women's bodies as the politicized; Piper conceived of her body as an object; and Lozano considered her body as another form of confinement. Among the pleasantly surprising and compelling shared interests are eastern philosophy, self-pleasure, and seeking friendships in the competitive art scene.

I Ching and Vendata

All three of them were also interested in eastern forms of philosophy. Lozano and Lippard were deeply interested in astrology as well as the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes, Yi Jing*), the ancient Chinese divination book of the Zhou dynasty (1050-770 BC). At the core of the *I Ching* is a text called *Changes of Zhou* (Zhou yi), which contains a set of 64 hexagrams: a series of lines and numbers associated with particular worldly parables. Each hexagram consists of six stacked horizontal lines, each line is either yin (broken, appearing as an open line with a gap in the center) or yang (unbroken, appearing as a solid line). Each hexagram conveys a particular quality and each line within the hexagram, read from the bottom line to the top, also has associated meanings. *I Ching* has been translated and interpreted for centuries with significantly varied uses, influences, and debates regarding its origins.

The hexagrams became popular in the 1960's in the United States and its resonance with Lippard and Lozano is not surprising both in its use as a self-identification system and for its visual qualities. In *I See/You Mean*, the character A starts to set up a hexagram reading for herself and the character D. A instructs D to, "Frame the question formally" and he ignorantly responds, "In a Chink accent?", to which she

insists, “Don’t make fun. You’ll invalidate it.” And he dismissively shoots back, “How can I if I don’t believe it in the first place. Or doesn’t it know that?”[276] A continues the reading despite D’s arrogant lack of engagement. Towards the end, she looks up the interpretation of one line and is surprised to see that “Chien is heaven, male, active and it’s underneath K’un which earth, female, passive”, noting the placement reversal. D doesn’t care and deflects with a snide sexual remark (“As good a way of screwing as any”) and A continues, “I for one tend to a more feminist interpretation. Then it says ‘High and low mingle and are of one will. The active, bright principle (Yang) lies within; the passive dark principle (Yin) lies without—strength lies within, glad acceptance without. Superior Man is at the center of the things; those of low moral worth hover above the fringes. The way of the former waxes, that of the latter wanes.”[277] The I Ching resurfaces again in the epilogue, where the remaining characters gather for another reading and in another conceptual deployment of the self-referential, meta-narrative, the characters ask: “Does This Book Have a Happy Ending?”[278]

Lee Lozano’s interest in *I Ching* appears throughout her notebooks and is represented, in part, by the piece *I Ching*, alternatively named *Book of Change Piece*. She frequently consulted the hexagrams to interpret thoughts, ideas, occurrences, and social exchanges in her life. The piece was another type in which Lozano would adhere to a system of instructions, or she intended to but did not always end up seeing them through. On April 18, 1969, she wrote: “STRIKING” SIMILARITY IN STRUCTURE OF I

[276] Lippard, *I See/You Mean*, 19.
[277] Ibid, 20.
[278] Ibid, 149.

CHING WITH THE STRUCTURE OF SUBATOMIC THEORY OF QUARKS.[279] And on May 22, 1969, after initiating *Book of Change Piece*, she concluded:

JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY REPRESENTS A REGRESSSION IN MANKIND'S MENTAL/EMOTIONAL EVOLUTION. THAT IS, IT IS A STUPID PHILOSOPHY WHICH HOWEVER PROBABLY FULFILLED NEEDS OF SECURITY, THE FATHER'S WATCHFUL PRESENCE. IT MADE THE SPOKEN/WRITTEN WORD LAW. NON-VERBAL INFO WAS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT (THE EASTERN RELIGIONS ARE MUCH MORE INTELLIGENT, MUCH MORE INCLUSIVE OF ALL INFO.)[280]

As noted previously, Piper began her serious engagement in yoga during the 1960's. She explained that she, like many others, started doing yoga but she committed fully to the practice and started taking class, doing postures at home, and studying Vendata philosophy. At the same time, she started reading Wittgenstein (like Jasper Johns and everyone else in the art world), and so her mutual interest in both Eastern and Western philosophy is what led her to start taking courses at CCNY. She recalled one instance of shaming, "My first philosophy instructor, an analytic philosopher in the Anglo-American tradition, made disparaging remarks in class about 'fuzzy-headed Eastern mysticism'. I responded by tucking the fuzzy part of my head safely out of sight, under my hard-nosed analytic philosopher's hat."[281]

[279] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 2 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2017).
[280] Ibid., Entry 50A.
[281] Adrian Piper, "On Wearing Three Hats (1996)," Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2007, http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteNGBK3Hats.pdf, 118.

Self-Pleasure

Among the backdrop of the "Sexual Revolution", many feminist artists began to incorporate erotic and sexual themes and depictions in their work and of course, many were censored. Painter Joan Semmel's work addressed female sexuality in a variety of erotic compositions, often representing individual nude women or couples in sexual positions and often in the privacy of their beds. And there's also Betty Tompkins, whose series of *Fuck Paintings* (1969) inspired by porn magazines, depicted closely framed representations of double penetration and anal sex.

Around this time, artist Vito Acconci's infamous performance piece *Seedbed* (1972) at Sonnabed Gallery in NYC consisted of Acconci laying beneath an angled floorboard ramp in the gallery, masturbating while talking into a microphone connected to speakers throughout the gallery for the piece's three week duration. Acconci became the giver and the receiver of both public and private pleasure. Adrian Piper and Lee Lozano also had elements of masturbation and self-pleasure in their work. In one of Piper's advertisements in *The Village Voice* of *The Mythic Being*, her alter-ego male persona is shown thinking to himself: "Don't feel particularly horny but feel I should masturbate anyway just because I feel so good about doing it."[282] Once again, reflecting the freedom to inhabit and express desire and self-pleasure as a man while also confronting the stigma of the hyper-sexualized black man.

Conversely, and on a much more subdued, vulnerable, and normative register, there are several moments of sex in *I See/You Mean*. In a more pensive recollection, the

[282] Adrian Piper, "Notes on the Mythic Being I-III (1974)," essay, in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , vol. I (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 130.

narrator (recalling Acker) meticulously recites a recent sexual experience with her distant boyfriend, threading through instances of fond erotic memory with layers of insecurity, "When it's expressed as pure passion it makes for almost unbearably good fucking, but in another mood it's desperation. Those are the times I love him most… But I think that's when he loves me the least…"[283]

In addition to *Masturbation Piece*, Lozano hilariously wrote in her notebook in May of 1969: "FINALLY SOLVED METHOD OF PRESENTATION OF SEX PIECE!! I SURE AM LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS ONE."[284]

Friendship

As suggested throughout their respective chapters, Lippard, Piper, and Lozano were all disheartened, frustrated, and upset by the competitive aspects of the art world, where the blurred lines of professional, social, and personal relationships made it enjoyable at times but also inconsistent, unfair, and alienating. All three of them responded to the climate of competition differently.

Lippard chose inclusion. She curated Piper into her first group exhibition and was an early supporter of Lozano, as well. *Six Years*' chronological presentation of artists, exhibitions, and other art world related happenings is as much a reflection of her immediate social surrounding as it is an attempt to offer a non-hierarchical mapping (rather than linear timeline) without separating people and artwork into identifying labels or movements. Both Piper and Lozano have multiple entries throughout the book. Piper's

[283] Lucy Lippard*, I See/You Mean*, 64.
[284] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 2 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2017).

submissions include a section of an ongoing essay (focused on her Catalysis series); three untitled pieces in booklet form; Untitled (a square of text, presented as lines referencing directions); and a reprint of withdrawal statement from May 1970, a short text explaining Piper's withdrawal from an exhibition in protest of the art world's "inability to have meaningful existence" in reference to the disconnect and disregard of violent world politics and shares a page with Luis Camnitzer's "Contemporary Colonial Art" excerpt.[285]

Lozano's entries in *Six Years* include texts (not reproductions) of *General Strike Piece* (listed just below an entry and photograph of Michael Heizer's *Double Negative* monumental land art piece), *Grass Piece,* and *I Ching Piece,* which were curated by Lippard in the exhibition *Infofiction* in January of 1971. *Dialogue Piece* includes a short review by Lippard that Lozano's work "combine art and life to an extreme extent" and that unlike other instructional or score type pieces, Lozano's are "directed at herself, and she has carried them out scrupulously, no matter how difficult to sustain they may be."[286]

It's not difficult to recognize the ways in which competition and the loneliness and frustration it often produces, contributed to Lozano's self-alienation. In July of 1969, Lee Lozano wrote, "PISS ON THE VICIOUS PEOPLE. I'M THRU WITH THEM FOREVER."[287] Whereas, Adrian Piper considered the ways competition and other social ills impacted the body, reinforcing her lifelong commitment to self-preservation, "Power

---

[285] Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries* .. (New York: Praeger, 1973).
[286] Ibid., 98.
[287] Lee Lozano, *Private Book 2 (1969)* (New York, NY: Karma, 2017).

is bad for the lining of the stomach. Financial success causes overweight and heart trouble. Art-world parties are bad for the liver. Galleries cause headaches and blood-sugar attacks. Dealers cause dislocation of the jaw. Critical reviews cause digestive upsets and emphysema. Competition between fellow artists for any of the above is a known carcinogen."[288] In a tribute to her dear friend, Sol LeWitt, Piper wrote,

> I always wanted to be just like Sol – a real gentleman: strong, calm, kind, modest, soft-spoken; unassuming but unflappable, generous, honest, forthright, good through and through. He was not just lucky, but blessed, for his kindness to others was repaid with love, and that enabled him to be who he was, fully, for all of us who were privileged to circle in his orbit. One of the reasons he was so averse to all the encomia his friends tried to arrange or publish during his lifetime was his personal modesty: He did not want it suggested that he had an orbit, or that we were drawing light and inspiration from his presence. But we were; and in that we, too, were blessed.[289]

Among LeWitt's orbit, Piper fondly recalls dinners she attended at LeWitt's loft with his partner Mary Peacock (and later Mimi Wheeler): Bob Ryman, Lucy Lippard, Carl Andre and Rosemary Castoro, Bob and Sylvia Mangold, Bob Smithson and Nancy Holt, Mel Bochner and Dorothea Rockburne, Hans Haacke, Don Judd, Hanne Darboven, Joseph Kosuth and Christine Koslov, Dan Graham and Lee Lozano, Jan Dibbets, Larry and Susan Wiener, Doug Huebler, John Weber, Virginia Dwan, Konrad Fischer, Kaspar König, Nicholas Logsdail, and others.[290]

---

[288] Adrian Piper, A Political Statement, 1973.
[289] Adrian Piper, "Sol, 1928-2007," APRAF Berlin: Sol LeWitt, 1928 – 2007, 2007, http://www.adrianpiper.com/art/sol.shtml.
[290] Ibid.

Figure 4.1: Lucy Lippard, Adrian Piper, Sol LeWitt, Jerry Kearns (December 1982; photograph by Jeffrey Evans) Adrian Piper, "Sol, 1928-2007," APRAF Berlin: Sol LeWitt, 1928 – 2007, 2007, http://www.adrianpiper.com/art/sol.shtml.

LeWitt was known for his gentle, humble, reflective, and supportive disposition, a combination of traits that are anathema to the masculine codes of greatness—though he is still one of the most celebrated and successful artists of the time. He was also a close friend to Lucy Lippard, Lee Lozano, and the late sculptor Eva Hesse.[291] Yet, such friendships rarely elicit interest and remain, for various reasons, suspect in some areas of feminist history.[292] It is easy to isolate moments of rejection, alienation, fallouts, and

[291] A recent exhibition "Converging Lines: Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt" explored their friendship and mutual influence.

[292] I write this in full cognizance of the centering of men's history and its embedded logic into historical methodologies, more focused on competitive individualism than friendships. But I also acknowledge the logic extends into some essentialist areas of feminist history wanting to reveal exclusionary politics and sexism and that also eschew

infighting among artists, especially women. Neatly packaged historical narratives of great rivalries pervade and are a central tenet of the competitive logic in white patriarchal capitalism. Friendships, especially among women and also between men and women, curiously do not factor into histories of movements much despite our better judgments and lived experiences indicating otherwise.

Conceptual Joy and Personal Power

In the "Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power", Audre Lorde passionately calls for a detachment from male models of power that perpetuate the myth of strength as a condition devoid of emotion and feeling, and one that is in false opposition to the valued pillars of rationality and intellect. Lorde positions the "erotic" as our intuitive knowledge base and an innate source of power. The erotic can be accessed through both individual expressions of intuition, and through exchange via physical, emotional, psychic, and intellectual forms. The erotic is what makes the under-valued experience of joy possible.

Lucy Lippard, Adrian Piper, and Lee Lozano each deployed the erotic and cultivated their own individual pursuits of joy through conceptual art, in and around feminism, and as an intuitive process of self-possession (and redefinition)—although Lippard's was never fully realized while Piper and Lozano fully committed with varying degrees of intensity. As articulated by Lorde, "That self-connection shared is a measure of joy, which I know myself to be capable of feeling… And that deep irreplaceable knowledge of my capacity for joy comes to demand from all of my life that it be lived

---

the (very real) consequence of over-valuing the contribution of men as a way to devalue the contributions of women, as default.

within the knowledge that such satisfaction is possible, and does not have to be called *marriage*, nor *god*, nor an *afterlife*… Our erotic knowledge… is a grave responsibility, projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe."[293] The erotic makes freedom from confinement—externally imposed and often internalized— not only an individual necessity but also, a joyous possibility.

[293] Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," essay, in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2015), 57.

Bibliography

Acker, Kathy. *Rip-Off Red, Girl Detective: And the Burning Bombin of America: The Destruction of the U.S.* New York: Grove Press, 2002.

Alberro, Alexander. "The Contradictions of Conceptual Art." Introduction to *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 1-5. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

Alberro, Alexander, and Sabeth Buchmann. *Art after Conceptual Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

Alberro, Alexander. “Dematerialization .” In *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 102–22. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

Alberro, Alexander. “Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977.” Introduction. In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, xvi-xxxvii. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Anastas, Rhea, and Michael Brenson, eds. *Witness to Her Art: Art and Writings by Adrian Piper, Mona Hatoum, Cady Noland, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, Daniela Rossell and Eau De Cologne*. Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Bard College, 2006.

Applin, Jo. *Lee Lozano: Not Working*, 129–51. New Haven: CT, 2018.

Applin, Jo. “Hard Work: Lee Lozano's Dropouts.” *October* 156 (2016): 75–99. https://doi.org/10.1162/octo_a_00252.

Aron, Nina Renata. “This Radical Artist Ignored Women for a Project, but Then Kept up the Boycott Her Whole Life.” Medium. Timeline, September 29, 2017. https://timeline.com/lee-lozano-boycott-women-20d7e892e6b.

Art Workers Coalition. *Documents Open Hearing: Facsimile*. Sevilla: Doble J - ISPART, 2010.

Atkinson, Terry. "Concerning the Article "The Dematerialization of Art"" In *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 52-58. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.
The letter was previously unpublished and dated March 23, 1968. Portions of it were published in Lippard's Six Years (1973), 43-44. The entire text is located in the Lucy R. Lippard papers, Archives of American Art, uncatalogued acquisition.

Bartlett, Elizabeth Ann. *Rebellious Feminism: Camus's Ethic of Rebellion and Feminist Thought*. New York City, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 2015.

Beauvoir, Simone de. "The Independent Woman." Essay. In *The Second Sex*, translated by HM Parshley, 679–715. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1989.

Bowles, John P. "'Acting like a Man': Adrian Piper's Mythic Being and Black Feminism in the 1970s." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 3 (2007): 621–47. https://doi.org/10.1086/510921.

Bryan-Wilson, Julia. *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions." *October* 55 (1990): 105–43. https://doi.org/10.2307/778941.

Buchmann, Sabeth. "Introduction: From Conceptualism to Feminism." Essay. In *From Conceptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows, 1969-74*, 8–15. Londres: Afterall Books, 2012.

Burton, Joanna. "The New Honesty: The Life-Work and Work-Life of Lee Lozano." Essay. In *Solitaire: Lee Lozano, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Joan Semmel ;* edited by Helen Anne Molesworth, 17–38. New Haven, CT, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2008.

Butler, Cornelia H. "Women-Concept-Art: Lucy R. Lippard's Numbers Shows." In *From Conceptualism to Feminism Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows, 1969-74*, 16–69. London: Afterall Books, 2012.

Butler, Cornelia H., Judith Russi. Kirshner, Catherine Lord, Marsha Meskimmon, Richard Meyer, Helen Anne. Molesworth, Peggy Phelan, et al. *Wack!: Art and the Feminist Revolution:* Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.

Camnitzer, Luis. *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Camus, Albert. *The Rebel: an Essay on Man in Revolt*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1991.

Colpitt, Frances. "The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art." In *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice*, edited by Michael Corris, 33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Costello, Diarmuid. "Xenophobia, Stereotypes, and Empirical Acculturation: Neo-Kantianism in Adrian Piper's Performance-Based Conceptual Art." In Adrian Piper: A Reader, 166-215. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018.

Crow, Thomas E. “Artists and Workers .” In *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent*, 135–59. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.

Darboven, Hanne. “Statement to Lucy Lippard.” Essay. In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 62–64. Cambridge, MA, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1983.

Doyle, Jennifer. “Feeling Overdetermined: Identity, Emotion, and History.” In *Hold It against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art*, 94–125. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.

Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution (1970)*. London: Verso Books, 2015.

Graham, Dan, Bennett Simpson, Chrissie Iles, Rhea Anastas, Kim Gordon, Rodney Graham, and Nicolás Guagnini. *Dan Graham: Beyond*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009.

Gramuglio, María Teresa, and Nicolás Rosa. “Tucumán Is Burning: Statement of the Exhibition in Rosario (1968).” Essay. In *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, edited by Katzenstein Inés, 319–23. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004.

Halley, Janet E., Prabha Kotiswaran, Rachel Rebouché, Janet E. Halley, and Hila Shamir. “Which Forms of Feminism Have Gained Inclusion?” Introduction. In *Governance Feminism: an Introduction*, 23–53. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

Harris, Angela P. “Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory .” In *Critical Race Feminism: a Reader*, edited by Adrien Katherine. Wing, 34–41. New York University Press, 1997.

Heresies, Collective, ed. “Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics.” *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*. New York, NY: Fine Arts Building, 1977.

Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. London: Cape, 1964.

Hooks, Bell. *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000.

Israel, Matthew. "The Beginnings of the Vietnam War and the Antiwar Movement." In *Kill for Peace: American Artists Against the Vietnam War*, 12–22. University of Texas Press, 2013.

Kelly, Mary, "Reviewing Modernist Criticism," in Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation. (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Boston, 1984), 87-103.

Kosuth, Joseph, and Seth Siegelaub. "Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art." *October* 57 (1991): 152–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/778876.

Kosuth, Joseph. "Art After Philosophy (1969)." Essay. In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 158–77. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Kraus, Chris. *After Kathy Acker: a Literary Biography*. South Pasadena, CA, CA: Semiotext(e), 2018.

Kruks, Sonia. *Simone De Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Kuspit, Donald. "Adrian Piper: Self-Healing Through Meta-Art (1987) by Donald Kuspit." Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art, 2019. https://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/meta-art-by-donald-kuspit/3996.

Laclau, Ernesto. *On Populist Reason (2006)*. London: Verso, 2018.

Lehrer-Graiwer, Sarah. *Lee Lozano - Dropout Piece*. London: Afterall Books, 2014.

Leiby, Sofia. "Judith Bernstein by Sofia Leiby ." BOMB Magazine, July 28, 2015. https://bombmagazine.org/articles/judith-bernstein/.

LeWitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 12–16. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Lippard, Lucy R. *A Different War: Vietnam in Art*. Bellingham, WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1990.

Lippard, Lucy R. “Curating by Numbers: Landmark Exhibitions Issue – Tate Papers.” Tate, January 26, 2012. https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/curating-by-numbers.

Lippard, Lucy R. “Prefaces to Catalogs of Three Women's Exhibitions (1971) .” In *The Pink Glass Swan Selected Essays on Feminist Art*, 50–61. New York, NY: New Press, 1995.

Lippard, Lucy R. *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; a Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries* .. New York: Praeger, 1973.

Lippard, Lucy R., and John Chandler. “The Dematerialization of Art .” In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 46–50. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Lippard, Lucy, and Antony Hudek. “Number Shows.” Number Shows | | Flash Art, 2011. http://www.flashartonline.com/article/number-shows.

Lippard, Lucy, and Rupert White. “Lucy Lippard on Place, Places and Conceptual Art.” Art Cornwall. Falmouth University College, May 22, 2010.

Lippard, Lucy. “Cerebellion and Cosmic Storms.” In *Lee Lozano:* edited by Müller-Westermann Iris, 188–201. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010.

Lippard, Lucy. *I See/YouMean*. Los Angeles, CA: Chrysalis, 1979.

Longoni, Ana, and Mariano Mestman. "After Pop, We Dematerialize: Oscar Masotta Happenings, and Media Art at the Beginnings of Conceptualism." In *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-garde*, edited by Inés Katzenstein, 156-72. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004.

Lorde, Audre. “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism.” In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 124–33. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2015.

———. “Learning from the 60's.” In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 134–44. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2015.

Lozano, Lee. *Language Pieces*. New York, NY: Hauser & Wirth/ Printed Matter, 2018.

Lozano, Lee. *Private Book 1 (1968-1969)*. New York, NY: Karma, 2016.

Lozano, Lee. *Private Book 2 (1969)*. New York, NY: Karma, 2017.

Lozano, Lee. *Private Book 3 (1969-1970)*. New York, NY: Karma, 2017.

Lozano, Lee. *Private Book 4 (1969)*. New York, NY: Karma, 2018.

Lozano, Lee. *Private Book 5 (1969-1970)*. New York, NY: Karma, 2018.

Mahon, Joseph. *Existentialism, Feminism and Simone De Beauvoir*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999.

Masotta, Oscar. "After Pop We Dematerialize (1966)." In *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, edited by Katzenstein Inés, 208–15. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004.

Matt, Gerald, Sabine Folie, and Hans-Jürgen Hafner. *"Seek the Extremes - Lee Lozano"*. Vol. 1. Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2006.

McMillan, Uri. "Plastic Possibilities: Adrian Piper's Adamant Self-Alienation." Essay. In *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*, 95–151. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2015.

Molesworth, Helen. "Tune in, Turn on, Drop out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano." *Art Journal* 61, no. 4 (2002): 64–71. https://doi.org/10.2307/778152.

Moraga, Cherrie. "La Güera." Essay. In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, 27–34. New York, NY: Kitchen Table Press, 1983.

Morris, Catherine, and Vincent Bonin, eds. *Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art*. Cambridge/Brooklyn, MA/NY: MIT Press/ Brooklyn Museum, 2012.

Morris, Catherine. "Struggling for Diversity in the Heresies." In *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85: a Sourcebook*, edited by Catherine Morris and Rujeko Hockley, 184–88. Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum, 2017.

Moten, Fred. "Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper's Theatricality ." In *In the Break: the Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, 233–54. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Myron, Nancy. "Class Beginnings." Introduction. In *Class and Feminism: a Collection of Essays from the Furies*, edited by Charlotte Bunch and Nancy Myron, 1–10. Baltimore, MD: Diana Press, 1974.

Nash, Jennifer C. “Re-Thinking Intersectionality.” *Feminist Review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.4.

Newman, Amy. *CHALLENGING ART: ARTFORUM*. New York, NY: Soho, 2000.

Nixon, Mignon. “Posing the Phallus.” *October* 92 (2000): 98–127. https://doi.org/10.2307/779235.

Piper, Adrian, Christophe Cherix, Cornelia H. Butler, David Platzker, Glenn D. Lowry, Ann Philbin, and Okwui Enwezor. *Adrian Piper: a Synthesis of Intuitions, 1965-2016*. NYC, NY: Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2018.

Piper, Adrian. *Escape to Berlin: a Travel Memoir = Flucht Nach Berlin: Eine Reiseerinnerung*. Translated by Suzanne Schmidt. Berlin, Germany: Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2018.

Piper, Adrian. “An Open Letter to Donald Kuspit (1987)," in *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism , vol. II* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), pp. 107-126.

Piper, Adrian. "From the Logic of Modernism." In *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art 1968-1992*. Vol. II. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996.

Piper, Adrian. “Notes on the Mythic Being I-III (1974).” In *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , I:116–39. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999.

Piper, Adrian. “On Wearing Three Hats (1996).” Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2007. http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteNGBK3Hats.pdf.

Piper, Adrian. “Passing for White, Passing for Black (1991).” Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin, 2009. http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/Passing.pdf.

Piper, Adrian. “Preparatory Notes for The Mythic Being (1973-1974).” In *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writing in Art Criticism* , I:91–115. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999.

Piper, Adrian. “Sol, 1928-2007.” APRAF Berlin: Sol LeWitt, 1928 – 2007, 2007. http://www.adrianpiper.com/art/sol.shtml.

Piper, Adrian. “Two Kinds of Discrimination .” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6, no. 1 (1993): 25–75.

Piper, Adrian M.S. "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism (1991)." Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. 1991. Accessed 2018. http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteXen&KantRat(1991).pdf.

Pollock, Griselda. *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*. London, England: Routledge, 2006.

Piven, Frances Fox., and Richard A. Cloward. "Introduction to the Paperback Edition." Introduction to *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, Ix-Xvii. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

Ronell, Avital. "Deviant Payback: The Aims of Valerie Solanas." Introduction. In *SCUM Manifesto (1971)*, edited by Valerie Solanas, 1–34. London: Verso Books, 2016.

Russ, Joanna. *How to Suppress Women's Writing*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983.

Shaked, Nizan. *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2017.

Shatz, Adam. "Black Like Me: Conceptual Artist Adrian Piper Gets Under Your Skin," in Lingua Franca, vol. 8.8, (New York City: November 1998), 48.

Siegel, Katy. "Making Waves: Katy Siegel Talks with David Reed About the Legacy of Lee Lozano." *Artforum*, October 2001.

Siegel, Katy. "Market Index: Lee Lozano." *Artforum*, April 2008. https://www.artforum.com/print/200804.

Smithson, Robert, and Alison Sky. "Entropy Made Visible: Interview with Alison Sky." Essay. In *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, edited by Jack Flam, 301–9. Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 1996.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Culture: Situating Feminism." In *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, 119-36. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Stimson, Blake. "The Promise of Conceptual Art." Introduction to *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, Xxxviiii-Lii. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Vilalta, Helena. “Lee Lozano's Erotics of Information.” In *Lee Lozano*, edited by Fiona Bradley and Barry Rosen, 56–69. Edinburgh, Scotland: The Fruitmarket Gallery, 2018.

Wark, Jayne. “Conceptual Art and Feminism: Martha Rosler, Adrian Piper, Eleanor Antin, and Martha Wilson.” *Woman's Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (2001): 44–50. https://doi.org/10.2307/1358731.

Wilonsky, Robert. “The Dropout Piece.” Dallas Observer. 4, December 9, 1999. https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/the-dropout-piece-6406272.