

**On Experience in the Art of Janet Cardiff and
George Bures Miller.**

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A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

On Experience in the Art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

David Capell

The celebrated art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller is, above all, productive of an intense experience. It makes an immediate and intoxicating impression.

This thesis asks a simple question: *What is the experience of this intense experience?* Or again: *How does experience function in this art?* To ask these questions is to implicitly recognize the cultural construction of experience. And yet, at the same time, this thesis also explores the possibility, suggested by these two artists among others, that experience is an encounter with that which exceeds the processes of construction. This is, in other words, to look at experience as it is constituted in and by a culturally determined structure, and to look for the possible limit of such construction.

This thesis is concerned with a body of co-produced and mostly co-authored work, focussing on the experience of the “walks” and the “theatres” in so far as they best demonstrate a certain preoccupation with these concepts.

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Whatever else there is in life, so called 'experiences' – which of us has sufficient earnestness for them? Or sufficient time? Present experience has, I am afraid, always found us 'absent-minded': we cannot give our hearts to it – not even our ears.

Friedrich Nietzsche¹

We are all searching ... for the authentic experience.

Janet Cardiff²

Introduction: On experience.

The experience of the art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller is, above all, intense. It makes an immediate and intoxicating impression that is corporeal and mysterious. The artists' immersive audio recordings – their “walks” and their “theatres” especially – are particularly affective. This thesis is, principally, an attempt to describe and analyse the play of experience that emerges in our encounter with this art.

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, two long-time collaborators, husband and wife, are a significant and influential presence in the contemporary Canadian art scene.

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans Walter Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 15.

² Brigitte Kalle, “I Wanted to Get Inside the Painting” in *The Paradise Institute* (Winnipeg: Plug In Gallery, 2001), 15.

In 2001 Cardiff and Miller represented Canada at the prestigious Venice Biennale. Their large theatre *The Paradise Institute* (2001) was popular, plagued by long lines, widely acclaimed, and was awarded both La Biennale di Venezia Special Award and the Benesse Prize. That same year Cardiff was awarded the National Gallery of Canada's *Millennium Prize* and the MoMA PS1, New York, exhibited a mid-career survey (awkwardly titled "Janet Cardiff: a survey of work including collaborations with George Bures Miller") that toured to Montreal, Oslo and Turin. They have been busy since, with both public and private commissions. A partial list of new works exhibited this past year, in 2005, would include *Her Long Black Hair* in Central Park for the Public Art Fund, *Words Drawn in Water* for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, in Washington, DC, *Ghost Machine* in Berlin, *The Secret Hotel* in Bregenz, Germany, an interactive website - *Laura* - for the Vancouver Art Gallery, and an audio installation called *Pandemonium* at the Eastern State Penitentiary historic site in Philadelphia.

The pair is perhaps best known for their guided audio walks (for which Cardiff is usually named the sole author³). These walks, like *Drogan's Nightmare* (1998) and *The Missing Voice: case study b* (1999), are a kind of narrative, guided audio tour through a museum, library, park or neighbourhood. For these the participant borrows a portable CD player and headphones, or a small video camera, which provides both the audio

³ The collaborative production of these artists has been variously authored by "Janet Cardiff," "Janet Cardiff in collaboration with George Bures Miller," and most recently as "Cardiff and Miller." I have chosen to group all this art together under "Cardiff and Miller" for a few reasons. Regardless of the declared authorship, this art is all, to some degree, co-produced between the two artists. During a talk at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, on March 18th, 2004, Cardiff and Miller spoke of the complications around the authorship of their work, and the art world's difficulty accepting co-authorship, and suggested that this is, however, what they preferred. Finally, this art is generally grouped together in exhibitions, catalogues, and articles, and functions together, as one body of work, regardless of the varied authorship, which seems largely irrelevant, in the end.

recording and a visual recording played back on the LCD monitor. The walks direct the participant along a route, for ten to thirty minutes, and usually end a short distance from where they begin. Cardiff and Miller also exhibit various immersive installations. The best known of these are surely the miniature theatres: *Playhouse* (1997), *The Muriel Lake Incident* (1999) and *The Paradise Institute* (2001). Each recreates the illusion of an ornate, early twentieth-century theatre, as though seen from a balcony, and each employs a pair of headphones to play back an accompanying recording that simulates both the film/theatre performance on the screen/stage, and the space of the theatre.

In the walks and the theatres, and in many of the other installations these artists have exhibited, the participant is addressed directly by a mysterious woman - a voice that, as one critic remarks, “provide[s] one of the strongest arguments for a notion of continuity through the artist’s oeuvre.”⁴ She involves the listener in a strange, fictional story that variously evokes the popular narratives of detective fiction and science fiction. In these works, and in most all Cardiff and Miller’s art, the narratives are suspenseful, inconclusive and fragmentary, as if “some crime has been or will be committed,” to quote an artist statement for *Walk Munster* (1997).⁵

Cardiff and Miller’s *Playhouse* might best provide a brief and representative example of the *feel* of this art.⁶ It begins, when the participant dons a pair of headphones, with the voice of a woman. “Hello, sorry I’m late,” she says. She ushers us into the

⁴ Kitty Scott, *The Missing Voice: case study B* (London: Artangel Afterlives, 1999), 113.

⁵ *Janet Cardiff: a survey of work including collaborations with George Bures Miller*, ed Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (Long Island City, NY: P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 2001), 80.

⁶ Because this thesis is specifically concerned with the experiential quality of this art I have not included any images, but have, instead, relied on descriptions.

“theatre,” a small confessional booth-like structure: “Let’s go in. Go in through the middle curtains ... through the next set ... and then sit down.” We pass through the soft red velvet curtains and enter a close, intimate room. We hear people murmuring. Surprisingly the sound reverberates in the space of a large theatre. We sit on a hard wooden chair and it creaks under our weight. The woman whispers in our right ear, “She’s going to start.” As we peer down into a miniature replica of a theatre, the image of an opera singer appears – a projection on opaque glass. We hear a “ssshhh” in the audience, then applause all around us. A piano starts playing. The opera singer begins a dramatic German aria. “I like this song a lot,” the woman whispers. Then some in the audience begin to laugh. The opera singer abruptly stops, and there is loud laughter. The audience begins to count in unison, “One, two, three ...,” methodically all the way up to ten. The piano starts again, and the woman on stage begins to sing Puccini’s “O Mio Bambino Caro.” “This isn’t the right song,” whispers our companion, “what’s she doing?” The audience begins to murmur restlessly, as if they too sense that something is wrong. And then, suddenly and urgently, the woman whispers to us,

There’s a suitcase under your chair. It has everything you’ll need. You have to meet her backstage as soon as it’s over. A car will be waiting in the back alley. It’s up to you now. She knows there isn’t much time. I’m leaving before the police come. Remember to leave the headset on the stand. I won’t see you again. Good luck.

We hear her getting up out of her chair and walking away. The opera singer finishes her song and walks offstage. The audience claps and yells “Bravo.” The singer returns to the stage for a bow, then leaves. The audience applauds louder. Abruptly the sound of applause is interrupted, and the recording cuts to a man’s voice: “When this theatre is old and decrepit, roof leaking, rats scrounging in the rubble, you’ll come back and sit in this

box and remember her performance, and everything that went wrong that night.” The sound of applause returns and then slowly fades.⁷

†

Together with Cardiff and Miller’s other recent collaborative work, pieces such as *Playhouse* have garnered enormous success. The accolades have, indeed, bordered on the hyperbolic. “Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller,” suggests one New York Gallery, “have forged a multimedia practice that international critics have identified as one of the most significant breakthroughs in conceptual art in the past decade.” To bolster this argument the gallery’s press release reminds the reader that “their work has been exhibited at some of the most important venues for contemporary art.”⁸ It is “among the most innovative artworks to emerge in recent years,” claims the director of the PS1. It is “unique ... innovative ... [and] distinctive,” writes the director of the MoMA, New York. “It is among the most perceptually engrossing, emotionally intense and seductive artworks of recent years,” claims the curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.⁹ Another critic speaks of Cardiff’s “international prominence.”¹⁰ And one final example, the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal suggests that Cardiff is “one of the most compelling figures on today’s art scene.”¹¹

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all the quotations from the art come from the published scripts in Christov-Bakargiev.

⁸ Quoted from the Luhring Augustine press release, 2002.

⁹ Christov-Bakargiev, 14.

¹⁰ Scott, 108.

¹¹ Real Lussier, *Le Journal: Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art* 13.1 May - September (2002): 3.

Critics often, and justly, describe the intensity of experience in this art. While one critic describes a “heightened awareness,”¹² another writes of “a heightened experience,”¹³ “a direct experience,”¹⁴ and even “an art experience.”¹⁵ Another critic suggests that this art “provides a sense of connection that focuses attention on the immediate experience.”¹⁶ Another critic claims that the artists’ “intention is to provide the viewer with an experience as real as possible.”¹⁷

Yet despite the attention to experience, little of the critical response seriously and substantially considers its character. For example, one critic cryptically alludes to a “fundamental ambiguity that makes Cardiff’s work particularly compelling,” without really naming the ambiguity, or describing how it might function in the viewer’s experience.¹⁸ Another speaks generally of the art’s “ability to affect us,” and of the “pleasure in being drawn in,” notes that there is “no responsibility, no sense of control,” and “at the same time, there is also a bit of anxiety,” and then unsatisfactorily concludes by merely asking, “Where does this end?”¹⁹ Such descriptions lack a focussed, thorough, and productive discussion of the experience of this art and the logic of that experience. Perhaps this thesis contributes here most, in this absence.

¹² Scott Watson, “Ghosts: Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller” in *The Paradise Institute* (Winnipeg: Plug In Gallery, 2001), 24.

¹³ Marnie Fleming, *A Large Slow River* (Oakville: Oakville Galleries, 2000), 14.

¹⁴ Fleming, 15.

¹⁵ Fleming, 15.

¹⁶ Monica Biagioli, “Janet Cardiff the Missing Voice (Case Study B): An Audio Walk” *Artfocus* Winter/Spring (2000): 12.

¹⁷ Sabine Himmelsbach, *Fast Forward: media art Sammlung Goetz* (Hamburg: Sammlung Goetz, 2003), 463.

¹⁸ Aruna D’Souza, “A World of Sound” *Art in America* 90.4 (2002): 161.

¹⁹ Biagioli, 12.

Again and again this thesis navigates around the issue of critique and the potentially critical project of Cardiff and Miller. Much of the discourse that surrounds this art, the response of critics and curators as well as many of the artists' own statements, argues implicitly or explicitly that the art is critical - in the most general sense, critical of the dominant and oppressive relations of power in society. In part this thesis aims to describe the tone of the reception of Cardiff and Miller's art. There are many general and specific claims made for critique in this art - of disruption generally, for example, and of institutional critique specifically, for another - and this thesis looks closely, and suspiciously, at a few of them. The potential for critique as it functions *within* the art itself is also considered, and this thesis attempts to clarify and assess some of the terms of this apparent project. There is, this thesis argues, a certain post-modern lack of commitment in the art that continually undermines any critical intention, and this despite the implicit description of a paradoxically modern sense of a project by the artists and their curators. Ultimately this thesis suggests that the terms around critique (intention, subversion and disruption, for example) are perhaps unproductive in describing this art, and proposes, instead, that experience, and its relevant terms, suggests a more productive exploration.

In this thesis no attempt is made to speak exhaustively of Cardiff and Miller's complete oeuvre. It is concerned with a body of co-produced and mostly co-authored work, focussing on the walks and the theatres in so far as they best demonstrate certain proclivities – what one critic calls “one continuous but unresolved meditation.”²⁰ Together, the walks and the theatres demonstrate certain formal similarities, but more

²⁰ Scott, 113.

importantly they share an identifiable logic. One of the objectives of this thesis is to describe and analyse that logic. That experience is central to this logic is demonstrated not only in the response of critics, but also in the claims of the artists themselves. Cardiff suggests an “authentic experience,”²¹ and, elsewhere, a “direct experience,”²² in her and Miller’s art.

For sure, “experience” is an important word in these artists’ statements. During an interview Cardiff, centrally positioning a notion of experience, claims, “If you read theory then you understand certain issues in a particular way but if you experience those same issues in an art piece it can sometimes help you understand those questions in a deeper way.”²³ Most striking, perhaps, is the prominence of “experience” in the following description of her discovery of the form for the audiowalk. Recording her thoughts while walking through a graveyard in Banff, she says,

I inadvertently pushed the rewind button and then pressed play to see where I was and in the headset I heard my footsteps walking and my voice started describing what was just in front of me. I started to walk with my own footsteps while listening to my voice and I was totally freaked out. It was one of those ‘aha’ experiences.²⁴

This seemingly unidentifiable and ineffable “experience” will become Cardiff and Miller’s primary concern. Their art asks a particularly intense experience from the participant. This thesis asks a simple question: *what is the experience of this intense experience?* Or again: *how does experience function in this art?*

²¹ Brigitte Kolle, “I Wanted to Get Inside the Painting” in *The Paradise Institute* (Winnipeg: Plug In Gallery, 2001), 15.

²² Fleming, 15.

²³ Kolle, 19.

²⁴ Cardiff quoted in conversation with Kitty Scott, *The Missing Voice: case study B*, 116.

To pursue this questioning, it is necessary, however tentatively and hastily, to hazard an entry into the murky waters of “experience” as a philosophical concept. In this, I have chiefly been guided by the American cultural historian Martin Jay, whose book *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* keenly delineates what Jay himself describes as an historical “crisis of the word ‘experience’.”²⁵ Summing up this crisis, Jay cites Michael Oakeshott, an English philosopher of history, for whom “‘experience,’ of all the words in the philosophical vocabulary is the most difficult to manage.”²⁶ Yet it is not easily avoided. “Although ... it is tempting to abandon it altogether,” as the philosopher and historian Joan Wallach Scott argues, she none the less concludes that, “*experience* is not a word we can do without.”²⁷

Jay argues persuasively that the temptation to abandon experience can be followed back to its “trial” in the modern age. Descartes, for example, radically calls on us to “stop living ‘in’ or ‘through’ experience, to treat it itself as an object.”²⁸ At the same time, the subject of this experience is increasingly depersonalized and democratized, through its “implicit reduction to a universal model, which is the

²⁵ Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

²⁶ Michael Oakeshott, *Experience and Its Modes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 9; quoted in Jay, 9.

²⁷ Joan Wallach Scott, “The Evidence of Experience” *Critical Inquiry* 17.4 Summer (1991): 797; quoted in Jay, 4.

²⁸ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 162; quoted in Jay, 35.

disembodied, spectatorial Cartesian *cogito*.”²⁹ From early modern to high modern, the trial of experience slowly gives way to a mournful lament for it. In the early twentieth century Walter Benjamin decries the “poverty of human experience,”³⁰ for example, while Theodor Adorno fears that “the very possibility of experience is in jeopardy”³¹ – and later Giorgio Agamben would bemoan that experience “is no longer accessible to us.”³² The revaluation of experience reaches a dramatic pitch with post-modernity and its powerfully effective post-structuralist critique, as naive notions of “lived,” “direct,” “pure,” “personal,” “immediate” and “authentic” experience are named “a simplistic ground of immediacy that fails to register the always already mediated nature of cultural relations and the instability of the subject.”³³ On the specifically linguistic construction of experience, for example, Paul de Man writes that, “instead of containing or reflecting experience, language constitutes it.”³⁴ Joan Wallach Scott, on experience and epistemology, argues that any critique of experience should suggest, “*not* the reproduction and transmission of knowledge said to be arrived at through experience, but the analysis of the production of knowledge itself.”³⁵

²⁹ Jay, 35.

³⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Experience and Poverty” in *Selected Writings: Volume 2 1927-1934*, ed Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith, trans Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 732; quoted in Jay, 2.

³¹ Theodor Adorno, “In Memory of Eichendorff” in *Notes to Literature, Volume 1*, trans Shierry Weber Nichol森 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 55; quoted in Jay, 2.

³² Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, trans Liz Heron (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 13; quoted in Jay, 2.

³³ Jay, 3.

³⁴ Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 232; quoted in Jay, 363.

³⁵ Joan Wallach Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 777; quoted in Jay, 251.

Yet however murky the waters, and however “withered and diminished” it may be, experience has not been abandoned.³⁶ The identity politics of the 1980s and 90s, for example, are the debate between its post-structural critique and a stubbornly persistent cult of experience. Indeed, the valuation of experience in Western thought persists alongside its critique. Martin Jay identifies what he calls a “reconstitution” of an increasingly subject-less conceptualization of experience in post-structural writers, like George Bataille, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault and their writings on “inner experience” and “limit experience.”³⁷ Experience may in part have been relegated to the status of “a collective linguistic concept,” but as Jay argues, “such concepts always leave a remainder that escapes their homogenizing grasp.”³⁸ This notion of a remainder goes a long way toward explaining the persistence of experience in Western thought. Indeed, throughout its history, “the word ‘experience,’ is used to gesture toward precisely that which exceeds concepts and even language itself ... employed as a marker for what is so ineffable and individual ... that it cannot be rendered in conventionally communicative terms.”³⁹

The ineffable and the individual are central to the experience of this art, whether despite or indeed because of its acknowledged debt to a post-modern or post-structural sensibility that questions the assumptions of immediacy and authenticity that often follow. Such a sensibility is apparent, for example, in Cardiff and Miller’s avowed interest in the fiction of Philip K. Dick, whose novels play with the truth claims of

³⁶ Jay, 42.

³⁷ See Jay’s chapter on “The Poststructuralist Reconstitution of Experience: Bataille, Barthes and Foucault,” 361-400.

³⁸ Jay, 6.

³⁹ Jay, 5.

subjective experience, or the *nouveau romans* of Alain Robbe-Grillet, whose early novels play with the logic of continuity and cause and effect. And it is in fiction, and in the post-modern, post-structural sensibility, that we might find an initial point of departure for this exploration of experience. Michel Foucault provides a nice connection between the two. “Experience is neither true nor false,” he writes, “it is always a fiction, something constructed, which exists only after it has been made, not before.”⁴⁰ If this is so, then how might Cardiff and Miller’s art (and the discourse that surrounds it, including artists’ statements, interviews, and its critical reception) construct a fiction of experience, and what is the experience of this fiction? Or perhaps it is better to ask, because this art is very much aware of the fiction of experience, what is the fiction of this fiction?

†

In forming a response to these questions, I have attempted to stay close to the experience of the art as it is explicitly or implicitly addressed in artists’ statements and critics’ responses, adding my own personal experience of the art, which has in turn been shaped by extended contemplation. Together these sources bring into play a varied and fertile ground that in turn suggests a number of inter-relating approaches to experience, and though the subject of this thesis seems fairly well contained – within the recent work of these artists – the conceptual territory it covers is not; a brief catalogue of the experiential axes addressed might include: illusion and simulation; technology; site specificity; disruption; political and institutional engagement; narrative; time and history;

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, “How an ‘Experience-Book’ is Born” in *Remarks on Marx: conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 36; quoted in Jay, 398.

corporeality. Each axis (and each chapter) builds on the ideas of the last and, no doubt, raises more questions than it answers. Hopefully this will seem to the reader a productive opening rather than an unfinished task.

Chapter One starts by looking at the experience of illusion and simulation, and also begins to explore and establish some of the terms with which we might approach this art. It follows the artists' own perspective on the experience of their work. In one interview, for example, Cardiff declares, "What really interests me - the relationship to the basic philosophical ideas about how do we know we are really here and not just dreaming, or how do we know that the physical world exists when we are surrounded by simulacra. Also what do new technologies tell us about how we function in the world."⁴¹ The "relationship" to the philosophical ideas, the epistemological inquest into knowledge, reality and simulation, technology and "the world" and the relationship between them, are all initially explored here. The chapter describes a certain fetish for "reality" that will return throughout the thesis, and looks at technology's relation to illusionism. It suggests a technological critique that is allowed, possibly encouraged, by this art, but ultimately never mounted, and finally, it describes a potentially creative relationship with technology that might function in the experience of this art. It is hoped that this chapter opens a number of theoretical discussions, while briefly touching on some of the specific debates around illusion and technology.

⁴¹ Carnegie International, "Ask The Artists: Janet Cardiff," <http://www.cmoa.org/international/html/forum/cardiffresponse.htm> (August, 2006).

The second chapter adopts a different set of terms, and starts by listening closely to the sounds of gunfire and explosions that recur in many of the works, sounds which Cardiff ambiguously suggests “could be from a war.”⁴² This chapter, in part, takes up the relationship with “the world” that is briefly established in the first chapter, here in terms of site specificity and relations of power, and intends to develop the politics of the experience of this art a little more. It looks at the experience of the political event and suggests that a potentially radical politics resides in the intensely subjective experience of disruption. Before closing it directly takes up the relationship between Cardiff and Miller’s art and the institution, and some of the claims made for it.

The third chapter is more firmly rooted within a post-modern/post-structural sensibility. It looks at the experience of the (de)construction of history, narrative, and meaning. It first looks at the detective narrative, as a thematic approach to these issues, and then suggests that Cardiff and Miller’s art is more concerned with the potential for a direct experience of history in the recording as a direct record of the past. Here this chapter begins to formulate a kind of “direct experience” which is central to the experience of this art, especially as it is described by the artists.

The fourth chapter continues to explore such a “direct experience,” now in relation to the corporeality of Cardiff and Miller’s art, taking up the ever relevant discourse around the body. It looks at the experience of corporeality and, after considering the processes of (dis)embodiment, argues that the experience of corporeality itself is the predominant concern of this art. In closing it begins to suggest the possibility

⁴² Christov-Bakargiev, 30.

of a productive experience of heterogeneity and difference that will be further explored in the next chapter.

The fifth chapter takes up the more abstract terms around subjectivity as it discusses the experience of this art. It continues to follow the idea of a direct experience or connection established in the last two chapters. It looks at various potential experiences of dissolution or instability, looks at the experience of the direct address that this art performs, and finally suggests the tenuous potential for an experience of subjectless-ness.

The conclusion approaches the aesthetic experience fairly abstractly, adopting the most general terms of the debate, and attempts to speak of the subject/object axis in broad and encompassing terms. It briefly considers the aesthetic experience of this art, and also articulates some of the problems around authority that have been present throughout this thesis. It finally suggests, and looks at, the dangerous experience of otherness. It is less a conclusion than a suggestion of yet another perspective on the experience of this art, one that this thesis implicitly suggests might be the most productive.

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Before moving ahead to these chapters, however, it is useful to pause on (or perhaps to begin with) this question of perspective, and the multifarious perspectives of these chapters. It is worth noting here that Cardiff and Miller explicitly state their

intentions, suggesting a project, in contrast to many of the artists and much of the art exhibited alongside theirs in the last few decades. There has recently been an influential discourse proclaiming an open, pragmatic and heterogeneous experimentation, formulated specifically in opposition to the determination of the project, among artists and critics and theorists. The “inter-relational” practice and theories described in Nicolas Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics*, “which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space,” provide one example.⁴³ Bourriaud writes of an art that allows the audience to enter into a “dialogue,” in contrast to one that is “peremptory and closed in on [itself].”⁴⁴ A similar relational logic underlies *New Genre Public Art*, an art that Suzanne Lacy suggests is “contextualized within the public.”⁴⁵ Even the various collaborative “institutes” and organizations in international biennials and exhibitions suggest yet more examples; the curators for the 2003 Utopia Station at the Venice Biennale write, for example, “It has been important to all concerned that the plan not present itself as a finished picture.”⁴⁶ These ideas, and the suggestion of non-determination, collaboration and a non-authoritative relationship with the audience, inform this thesis in what might best be described as an underlying suspicion of the authority and determination that functions in the experience of this art, and in the fundamental rupture with the world that this illusionary art is premised in. These issues pertain directly to the varied descriptions of experience that this thesis proposes, for

⁴³ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland (France: Les presses du reel, 2002), 119.

⁴⁴ Bourriaud, 120.

⁴⁵ Suzanne Lacy, “Introduction” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 3.

⁴⁶ Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Rirkrit Tiravanija, “What is a Station?,” <http://www.e-flux.com/projects/utopia/about.html> (August, 2006).

example - a variability that suggests a kind of anti-authoritarian gesture of heterogeneity - and also to this thesis' anxious desire to seek out the productive possibilities of active participation in what is often a very passive and oppressive spectatorship. These issues and terms will be taken up again in the closing chapters of this thesis, but it is valuable to acknowledge them here, however briefly, before beginning. They are worth considering, as a point of departure, in so far as they determine the strange path and the final destination of this text.

Chapter one: Illusion, simulation, technology and the experience of some basic philosophical ideas.

This chapter looks at the experience of illusion, simulation and technology. It suggests some of the epistemological terms of these experiences. It looks at the relationship between the real and the simulated, and describes a certain fetish for “reality.” It describes a critique of technology and also describes the somewhat paradoxical potential for invention and creativity in the experience of technology.

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The illusion of sound is surprisingly convincing in Cardiff and Miller’s art, as in, for example, the walk *The Missing Voice: case study b*. Commissioned by Artangel, in London, England, in 2001, this walk begins in the crime section of the Whitechapel Library. The first sound heard in the recording is a telephone. It rings slightly behind, and to the left, with a hollowness and a reverberation that suggest some distance and a large room. A librarian answers the phone, “Hello, Whitechapel Library,” and again her voice is behind and to the left with a similar reverberation and volume. Then a woman’s voice whispers close, with no echo and no reverb, on the right side: “I’m standing in the library with you. You can hear the turning of newspaper pages, people talking softly.” It

sounds as if she is immediately at the listener's ear. Soon the listener is torn from the space of the library and immersed in a radio play-like reading of a crime novel - the sound is flat, without reverberation - only to be quickly returned to the ambient, echoing sounds of the library. The listener is then led through the building, and its changing acoustic spaces, through the echoes of the stairwell, into another room. Here a fly buzzes around the listener's head. It is one of many convincing effects. Eventually the listener is led out of the building into the suddenly complex and dynamic acoustic space of the street. Here the sounds are especially alive, coming and going everywhere: cars whirr by, cyclists pass quickly, and pedestrians approach from behind and pass.

The "three-dimensional" playback is a sophisticated illusion, produced through a binaural recording which employs two microphones recording simultaneously, placed in the approximate position of two ears. These recordings reproduce what are called "head related transfer functions" - the subtle changes in tone and timbre that help us intuitively position sounds relative to our location.⁴⁷ Recorded and replayed through state-of-the-art digital microphones and headphones, the recordings are as clean and noise free and convincing as possible. The illusion of auditory space, here and throughout this art, is intense, convincing and affective. As one critic among many notes, these recordings "have an uncanny effect."⁴⁸ But what is this uncanny effect? What is the experience of illusion?

⁴⁷ Cardiff and Miller's recording process, including HRTFs, are described in detail in Fleming, 20-25.

⁴⁸ John Weber, *Present Tense: Nine Artists in the Nineties* (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 16.

It seems to revolve around a number of concerns: knowledge, meaning, reality and perception, doubt, scepticism and even the search for truth and certainty. These are epistemological concerns that in turn evoke a modern philosophical narrative about experience and its role in the production of knowledge.

“How do we know we are really here and not just dreaming? How do we know that the physical world exists when we are surrounded by simulacra?”⁴⁹ These are the “basic philosophical questions” with which Cardiff is explicitly concerned. These questions, in so far as the artists and the art itself ask them, are at least in part rhetorical. Though the deception of the senses is intensely felt, there is no deep or lasting or substantial doubt. The deception is always contained and immediately explained by the illusion of the art. This art is always *an illusion*, after all. In other words, despite being temporarily fooled, *we know what we know*, and when the recording stops the doubt stops too. There is no pressing epistemological inquest, here. Nor is there any revolutionary intervention into the everyday.

Nonetheless, the recordings momentarily “creat[e] a dislocating uncertainty concerning what is recorded ‘fiction’ and what is ‘reality,’” as one critic suggests.⁵⁰ In other words, the experience of this art is, in part, an experience of the confusion between two divided worlds: the simulated and the “real.” Another critic asks, “If the Cardiff audio track is a fiction in your head, maybe the real world is too.”⁵¹ Again the question is

⁴⁹ Carnegie International, “Ask The Artists: Janet Cardiff,” <http://www.cmoa.org/international/html/forum/cardiffresponse.htm> (August 2006).

⁵⁰ Weber, 16.

⁵¹ Watson, 26.

rhetorical. It enacts a certain confusion and a preoccupation with “reality.” (Curiously much of the response to this art - perhaps even this thesis - similarly *enacts* one theory or another.)

Some of the artists’ statements, and some of the critical response, suggest a more sincere confusion, as if they largely ignore the isolation and containment of illusion. These statements demonstrate, for example, what Jean Baudrillard might have named a fetishization of the lost object of reality.⁵² “I like the idea,” says Miller, “that we are building a simulated experience in the attempt to make people feel more connected to real life.”⁵³ Another critic, demonstrating this same fetishization, suggests that the artists’ “intention is to provide the viewer with an experience as real as possible.”⁵⁴ The logic here suggests a privileged experience, while simultaneously suggesting some underlying impoverishment as the norm. It also refuses the experience, the broader context, of the artificiality of the illusion.

If we momentarily set aside this fetish for reality and authenticity (it will return again), it is possible to see how the experience of these two worlds of “reality” and the simulated or “virtual” world might suggest a particularly creative, inventive and productive relationship, where “each makes a certain imperceptible contribution to the other, not adding any particular feature or quality but a depth of potential, a richer

⁵² Jean Baudrillard, “The Hyper-Realism of Simulation” in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed Charles Harrison and Paul Woods (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell), 1049.

⁵³ Kolle, 15.

⁵⁴ Himmelsbach, 463

resonance.”⁵⁵ The “virtual,” Elizabeth Grosz argues, “is the domain of latency or potentiality,”⁵⁶ and it is “the space of the emergence of the new, the unthought, the unrealized, which at every moment loads the presence of the present with supplementarity, redoubling a world through parallel universes.”⁵⁷ And maybe, while “creating alternative realities for a physical site,” as Cardiff claims,⁵⁸ the formal experience of this art implicitly suggests the possibility of the productive and creative potential of the virtual.

We might, however, approach illusion and simulation more straightforwardly, and more critically. For sure, the implicit and explicit privileging of simulation lies open to critique, especially in so far as it is absent in the artists’ statements. For example, where Cardiff (sounding like Marshal McLuhan) suggests, “They say media kills your senses, but it’s not true because it can actually enliven them,” there is no critique of the relations of power at work.⁵⁹ In speaking of this art, Miller notes, “I talk a lot about Disneyland or Theme Parks,”⁶⁰ and later in the same interview Cardiff says of their art, “It is like a ride.”⁶¹ This art, no doubt, necessitates the same critique that these industries of entertainment have been subjected to. Jonathan Beller, for example, describes a commercial, capitalist cinematic machine - surely Cardiff and Miller’s favourite - whose

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 80.

⁵⁶ Grosz, *Architecture*, 86.

⁵⁷ Grosz, *Architecture*, 78.

⁵⁸ Carnegie International, “Ask The Artists: Janet Cardiff,”

<http://www.cmoa.org/international/html/forum/cardiffresponse.htm> (August, 2006).

⁵⁹ Kolle, 15.

⁶⁰ Kolle, 13.

⁶¹ Kolle, 18.

sole purpose is the modulation of affect and the capturing of attention.⁶² The spectator, he concludes, is the new labourer in a deterritorialized factory, and there is a sense in which the participant in this art might be a labourer as well, working for Cardiff and Miller. We are certainly following directions, committing our attention, affected, submitting to the authority of the work.

Cardiff, commenting on the experience of her installations, says of her and Miller's intentions:

We're trying to connect right away to the remembered experiences that your body knows; you go into a cinema and you let yourself be lost for an hour. Your subconscious recognizes the acoustics, the colours and texture of the space and is ready for the experience. It is like when you go into a shopping mall, you recognize the space of a shopping mall for what it is and react accordingly.⁶³

Perhaps the participant is less a labourer, and more a shopper.

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Cardiff and Miller's art might be said to allow such critique, even implicitly to mount it. But the critique is never explicit, and is never developed with any specificity. One ostensible critique of the technology of illusion and simulation is encountered within a rather compelling and dystopic image in *Drogan's Nightmare*, produced for the 26th *Bienal de Sao Paolo* in 1998. Beginning in the exposition hall, it leads the participant outside, through a nearby park. It involves the listener in the sci-fi nightmare of a man

⁶² Jonathan Beller, "Capital/Cinema" in *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture*, eds Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 82-3.

⁶³ Kolle, 13.

wired to a machine.⁶⁴ At one point Drogan says, “I’m walking in the forest,” but the synthesized voice of the machine responds, “You’re not there. You’re still here with us. You’re lying on the bed, the straps are on your wrist. Your eyes are closed.” It is, of course, much like our predicament, wired to Cardiff and Miller’s machine, the machine’s voice replaced by Cardiff’s. It is a particularly unsettling realization. Indeed, in a sense, like Drogan, we are not really there in the park or the exposition hall, so much as we are wired to the machine of this art. The former is entirely overwhelmed and consumed by the latter. The experience suggests a powerful, but always latent self-critique. There is no *specific* critique mounted here, no manifest commentary on the flows of capital that function in this particular machine, for example. This is clearly not the artists’ intention.

In the recent *Words Drawn in Water* (2005), a walk commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., the participant is loaned an Apple ipod to play back the recording (the ipods were, not surprisingly, provided by Apple at no charge).⁶⁵ Despite, or perhaps because of, this dubious sponsorship and product placement, there is nothing in the walk that specifically addresses the increasingly influential socio-economics of the ipod. Just as the machine that controls Drogan is unidentified, so too there is little or no identification of the means of production that reside in Cardiff and Miller’s technology. There is a complex historical, political and cultural specificity to the economics of the experience of this art, deeply imbricated in relations of power, but the art itself never really encourages its articulation.

⁶⁴ Drogan returns, in a similar though less explicitly technologically inclined predicament, in *The Paradise Institute*; here too Drogan seems disconnected from reality, seemingly drugged or hypnotized as if the technology has merely become invisible.

⁶⁵ The Hirshhorn website reads: “Ipod Shuffle courtesy of Apple.” Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, <http://www.hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/descriptions.asp?ID=20> (August, 2006).

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In this art technology is a privileged means towards an intense, subjective experience. Everywhere the experience of technology is a personal experience. In fact, it is the experience of technology itself, the experience of the audio-playback in the headphones, which isolates the participant. The installation *Forty-Part Motet* (2001) - a performance of Thomas Tallis' sixteenth-century choral motet *Spem In Alium*, simulated by an installation of forty speakers that simultaneously play back a recording of each individual singer - provides an interesting example. Though ostensibly heard or performed in common by the audience, each participant creates his or her own personal and subjective experience of the motet while navigating the complex acoustic installation.

As one critic claims, describing a certain ineffable quality, the intense experience of this technological masterpiece of simulation demonstrates "a purity of execution that verges on the spiritual."⁶⁶ Indeed, the audience displays a pronounced reverence for the work (is it any coincidence that this installation was first exhibited in the rebuilt Rideau Chapel in the National Gallery of Canada in 2001?). Though it begs for a critique of this mystico-religious celebration of technology, the installation provides a moving experience.

In response to Cardiff and Miller's art one critic quotes Donna Haraway: "A slightly perverse shift of perspective might better enable us to contest for meanings, as

⁶⁶ Deidre Hanna, "Sounds of Silence" *Modern Painters* 15.4. Winter (2002): 102.

well as for the forms of power and pleasure in technologically mediated societies.”⁶⁷ Perhaps the especially intense subjective experience of technology suggests the potential for just such a perverse perspective that might enable us to contest the unidentified relations of power that function everywhere in this art. Perhaps the intensity of experience, despite its technological dependence, fulfills one contemporary theorist’s injunction that “art’s function consists in appropriating perceptual and behavioural habits brought on by the technical-industrial complex to turn them into *life possibilities* ... reversing the authority of technology in order to make ways of thinking, living and seeing creative.”⁶⁸

Perhaps the intense and intensely personal experience of the motet, like the resonant experience of the virtual, might load the present with a potential that in turn might allow the participant a new degree of creativity and invention. We must also ask, however: is this a truly productive, ineffable potential, or is it merely the ambiguity of the indeterminate?

This question will remain throughout this thesis – indeed, this thesis will not suggest any final answer. For sure the experience of technology is, paradoxically, both authoritarian and potentially productive. The chapter that follows will continue this train of thought and look again, in a slightly different context, at the relationship to “the world” in specifically political terms.

⁶⁷ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 151; quoted in Laurel Woodstock, “Speaking of Touch” in *Janet Cardiff* (Lethbridge: Southern Alberta Art Gallery, 1994), 5.

⁶⁸ Bourriaud, 69.

Chapter two: Site, disruption, and the experience of the political.

This chapter looks at the experience of the political event within the art. It first looks at the ostensible site specificity of the experience of this art, and suggests, to the contrary, a non-specific relationship. It suggests that a potentially radical politics might reside in the subjective experience of disruption, despite an escapist and perhaps indiscriminate aestheticization. Finally this chapter considers the relationship to the institution, and some of the claims made for it.

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A bomb suddenly explodes in the street during *The Missing Voice*. The explosion is followed by sounds of helicopters and machine-gun fire. Later the guide describes a church, surrounded by scaffolding and barbed wire, and “men with guns in black uniforms and face masks.” *Louisiana Walk #14* (1996), *Villa Medici Walk* (1998), *Drogan’s Nightmare* and *A Large Slow River* (2000) also feature the sounds of explosions, gunfire and helicopters. These are unexplained, ambiguously political events with which this art, and these artists, are clearly concerned.

Cardiff explains: “In *The Missing Voice* the sound of a bomb exploding could be from a war, it could be the Brick Lane bombing or an IRA reference.”⁶⁹ Despite the allusion to specific historical events, Cardiff describes the non-specificity of the event. The neo-Nazi Brick Lane bombing was a very different event from an Irish Republican Army bombing, and the only way to reconcile these differences, as Cardiff does, is to understand them abstractly, as some ambiguously “political event.”

In other words, the site-specificity of the walks is non-specific. In a recent interview, speaking of *Words Drawn in Water*, Cardiff says, “I had to turn off my negative feelings about the Bush administration in order to produce the piece.” She continues, “it made me realize how difficult it is not to become political in Washington.”⁷⁰ It is an explicit statement of the artist’s intention to disengage the work from the contingencies of the political specificity of the location of the walk – despite one critic’s unintentionally ironic claim that “Cardiff takes the viewer to the real locations and lets the places speak for themselves”⁷¹ (an example of a critic *enacting* the discourse of site-specificity).

The specificity of the walk is formal and also abstract. It is formally specific to the streets and museums through which the participant passes, while it remains abstractly related to the content and specificity of these spaces. In a recent essay in *Artforum* entitled “Terror and Form” David Joselit argues that entertainment, in so far as it

⁶⁹ Christov-Bakargiev, 30.

⁷⁰ Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, <http://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/descriptions.asp?ID=20> (August, 2006).

⁷¹ Himmelsbach, 463.

expresses a desire for a kind of abstract formal law, is an immanent socio-economic terror (he relates this terror to terrorism and Al Qaeda; such is the tenor of the debate).⁷² We might want to ask to what extent this art desires such an abstract formal law, both here and elsewhere, and to what extent it might function as an immanent socio-economic terror (despite the somewhat fanatical terminology).

After speaking of the bomb in *The Missing Voice* Cardiff immediately mentions the experience of “escapism.”⁷³ Miller, in speaking of their immersive art, equally suggests, “in a way it’s total escapism.”⁷⁴ Speaking of the cinema Cardiff again describes it as “a perfect ‘window’ to escape into,”⁷⁵ and says elsewhere, “we’ve always enjoyed the idea that when you are in a theatre, you get a sense of being removed from reality. It takes you to a fantasyland where you don’t have to worry about things.”⁷⁶ Even of the installation *The Dark Pool* (1995) Cardiff says, “we hoped to create an environment that removed the viewer from the art gallery and transported them into another space and time so that they forgot where and why they had come.”⁷⁷ For sure these escapist desires evoke some troubling politics – the evacuation of the participant’s specificity and difference, for example. The displacement of political specificity in experience, and the great mystification that it allows, evoke Terry Eagleton’s warning that experience is “ideology’s homeland,”⁷⁸ and Jane Gallop’s argument that “a politics of experience is a

⁷² David Joselit, “Terror and Form” *Artforum* January (2005): 45.

⁷³ Christov-Bakargiev, 30.

⁷⁴ Kolle, 19.

⁷⁵ Cardiff in Atom Egoyan, “Janet Cardiff” *BOMB* 79 Spring (2002): 62.

⁷⁶ Christov-Bakargiev, 14.

⁷⁷ Christov-Bakargiev, 56.

⁷⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1976), 15; quoted in Jay, 170.

conservative politics.”⁷⁹ No doubt this art allows mystification in the non-specific, disengaged, escapist experience of the political.

Worse, perhaps, is the risk of the aestheticization of politics. *Walk Munster*, a walk in Munster, Germany, alludes to the burning of books, both Nazi and Anabaptist, and includes a sample from Francois Truffaut’s 1966 film of Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Christov-Bakargiev writes of this walk, “it reminds you of a removed layer of German history This history provided Cardiff with a perfect setting for layering the audience’s real experience with cinematic memories – spy and mystery movies, as well as scary war movies about Nazis.”⁸⁰ In other words, the German history evoked in this walk suggests a setting or a stage or a backdrop for a cinematic experience. The emphasis on the latter, here, is important. Another critic, writing of *Louisiana Walk #14*, similarly suggests that “Cardiff has turned the immediate area into an ever-changing backdrop for her *mise-en-scène*.”⁸¹ Neither critic intends critique, though it seems impossible to ignore it here. In so far as this walk is engaged with German history, and in so far as this art is engaged with any specific politic, there is a worrisome cinematization of the political. Indeed, the explosions and the gunfire in *The Missing Voice* and the other walks are particularly cinematic - they are too brief and uncomplicated to sound real. As Jay concludes in his study of experience, “although the capacity to experience ... events and processes in aesthetic terms can be valuable ... the indiscriminate aestheticization of morally or politically fraught phenomenon can also

⁷⁹ Jane Gallop, “Quand nos levres s’ecrivent: Irigaray’s Body Politic” *Romantic Review* 74 (1983): 83; quoted in Jay, 170.

⁸⁰ Christov-Bakargiev, 79.

⁸¹ Scott, 116.

have disastrous consequences.”⁸² The most obvious example here is, of course, the fascist history that Cardiff and Miller imagine. In so far as this history is used or exploited as a setting or a *mise-en-scène* for Cardiff and Miller’s musings on experience it is clearly disconcerting. The artists, in fact, reproduce here, not merely its image, but an historical aspect of fascism itself, a certain aestheticization of the political for which the Nazis and their propaganda machine were famous. Perhaps this reproduction of the process suggests an implicit critique. But it is difficult to see that it functions, here, all that differently from the original process, especially in so far as the potential critique is never articulated. There is little specific critical context which might suggest or encourage a subversive slant on the appropriation of this form. Perhaps it is far too easy to simply be entertained.

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However, despite this dubious politic, the intensity of the experience is potentially radical. As Jay notes elsewhere, “not only has the link ... between experience and experiment been a boon to those who want to tinker with the established order, so too have the egalitarian implications of relying on experience rather than the authority of texts or the power of those allegedly higher in a foreordained great chain of being.”⁸³ Experience, in other words, is a force of disruption.

⁸² Jay, 405-406.

⁸³ Jay, 170-1.

Both Cardiff and Miller speak often and directly of disruption in their art. Cardiff says, for example, “we take a system that is known or trusted, and we play with it.”⁸⁴ In another interview she similarly suggests that the participants are “lulled into a complacency, but then Bam! There is a disjunction,”⁸⁵ and again, of generally “want[ing] the pieces to be disconcerting in several ways.”⁸⁶ Elsewhere Miller expresses a similar desire, suggesting that “you should feel this kind of disjunction” in the experience of the art,⁸⁷ and later he speaks again of a “strange disjunction.”⁸⁸

Not surprisingly, the disruption Cardiff and Miller describe is never particularly specific. It is enough that a system is played with, regardless of what that system is, or the manner in which it is disrupted. It is enough that the participant *feels* disjunction or disconcertion. The experience or sense of disruption is the artists’ intended effect. In this way the art is generally disorienting. One critic, for example, simply describes the art as “a disorienting journey.”⁸⁹ Another suggests that “you are disoriented by a curiosity and inclination to intrude.”⁹⁰ And another suggests that the works “make the familiar seem strange,” noting that “this altered state is what interests Cardiff most.”⁹¹

The disruption is sited within the participant’s subjective experience, in other words. It is the disruption of the participant’s interiorized complacency, or trust, or

⁸⁴ Kolle, 19.

⁸⁵ Egoyan, 65.

⁸⁶ Egoyan, 62.

⁸⁷ Kolle, 11.

⁸⁸ Kolle, 17.

⁸⁹ Biagioli, 12.

⁹⁰ Woodstock, 14.

⁹¹ Scott Watson, “Ghosts: Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller” in *The Paradise Institute* (Winnipeg: Plug In Gallery, 2001), 27.

comfort. Where Ivo Mesquita describes a walk as “a means of subverting the authority of the voices that govern social and cultural institutions,” and suggests that the work “provides an opportunity to interrogate the numerous methods and motives that constitute the forms of representation and perception, whether artistic or institutional,”⁹² we might see that the voices are internal voices, and the methods and motives that constitute forms of representation and perception are predominantly, if not exclusively, those that are internalized. For despite the claims made, and an initial sense of their applicability, there is little direct engagement with the external authority of institutions.

For example, in the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, the video walk *Conspiracy Theory* (2002) begins above a gallery, in a hall between the rarely visited public library and the offices of the administration, on a sofa which is surely rarely used. The walk travels down through the ground floor entrance foyer, passing by a rarely visited installation (in the author’s experience), and then passes a security desk, for which the participant must wear a pass, through several heavy industrial doors, through a service hallway, and enters an underground mall through an unmarked door. Here, as in all of Cardiff and Miller’s walks, the participant is led through back doors, down service hallways, down alleys, under bridges, passing through all sorts of “unusual” locations – what one critic suggestively calls “the hidden spaces of the institution.”⁹³

The walk *feels* transgressive. Passing the security desk, entering into the hallways that burrow through the depths of the institution, feels illicit. But clearly the gallery has

⁹² Ivo Mesquita “Untitled” *Trans>arts.culture.media* 8 (2001): CD cover.

⁹³ D’Souza, 113.

allowed it. One critic describes the experience as “permissible transgression.”⁹⁴ There is, in fact, paradoxically, a deeper control here, in so far as each participant is first authorized to participate, must sign a waiver, provide identification and credit card, and wear a pass. And, importantly, the participant, on some level, is aware that there is little in the act of following these walks that is not externally authorized, by both the institution and the literal authors of the experience, Cardiff and Miller, and especially Cardiff as she guides us through a walk. After all, the experience of a walk is the experience of following directions, step by step.

Get up and walk towards the door, down the stairs. Turn to the left Try to follow the sound of my footsteps so that we can stay together Turn to the right.⁹⁵

The participant always knows that there is no transgression here, no challenge to the authority of the institution.

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There are many claims made for the disruption posed by this art. Several critics suggest, for example, that a kind of Situationist *dérive* or *détournement* functions in this art in the unusual wanderings it produces.⁹⁶ Mesquita similarly notes “a sense of

⁹⁴ Woodstock, 6.

⁹⁵ Quoted from *The Missing Voice: case study b*, though every walk features similar instructions.

⁹⁶ Marnie Fleming, *A Large Slow River* (Oakville: Oakville Galleries, 2000), 28-29; Iwona Blazwick, “Janet Cardiff” in *Fresh Cream: contemporary art in culture* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 184; Christov-Barkargiev, 26.

travelling on a non-linear path with no predetermined objective.”⁹⁷ “The liberation of behaviour,” writes one Situationist,

requires a social space that is labyrinthine, but at the same time continually subject to modification. There will no longer be any center to be reached, but instead an infinite number of moving centers. There will no longer be any chance of getting off track in the sense of getting lost, but rather in the more positive sense of finding previously unknown paths.⁹⁸

In comparison, Cardiff and Miller’s walks might be described as a guided *dérive*. There is, in this art, a distinct possibility of getting off track and lost because there is a determined route. The participant is, in fact, discouraged from wandering. The walk, with a definite end, is not subject to modification. It is an illusion or a simulation of a *dérive*, or better, it suggests the sense of *dérive*, perhaps - which is an altogether different experience than that called for by the Situationists. (Again it is as if these critics are *enacting* the discourse, regardless of the actual experience of the art.)

This is not to ignore the manner in which the *sense* of disruption that Mesquita describes, and the sense of *dérive*, still function in the experience of this art as a potentially disruptive, non-specific, formal, interior and subjective engagement with the politics of institutions and representation. It is only to argue that there is little or no engagement with the external institutions, or “the everyday,” as many imply.

There are other claims made for the disruption of external or objective systems in the experience of this art. Scott Watson suggests an “institutional critique,”⁹⁹ evoking not

⁹⁷ Mesquita; reprinted in Christov-Bakargiev, 102.

⁹⁸ Constant, “The Principle of Disorientation” in *Situationists: art, politics, urbanism* (Museu d’art Contemporani Barcelona, 1996), 87.

⁹⁹ Watson, 29.

only the conceptual practice of artists like Hans Haake, Daniel Buren and Marcel Broodthaers, but also those that followed, like Robert Smithson, Bruce Nauman and Louise Lawler, artists whose critical investigations into the economic and political structures of art institutions seek to expose the hidden relations of power at work. In his survey on art after modernism, art critic David Hopkins, writing on Haake, Buren, Broodthaers and the others, suggests that their practice “amounted to open warfare” on the institution.¹⁰⁰ It would be difficult to argue for such open contradiction and conflict in Cardiff and Miller’s art.

Specifically Watson argues that “Cardiff’s subversion of the institution is to manoeuvre her participant out of the building,” and he goes on to suggest “penetrating ... the security net.”¹⁰¹ Merely leading the participant out the door, however, surely does not negate or deny or escape the web of power relations in which he or she is involved. The latter, and not the former security net, is undoubtedly where the institution manifests much of its power. And the participant, immersed in this art, in its narrative and audio-scapes, is never particularly engaged with the specific political structure of the institution, and never particularly engaged with the physical space of the museum, as Watson implies.¹⁰² The institution and its functions and structures remain largely un-articulated within the experience of the art.

¹⁰⁰ David Hopkins, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 167.

¹⁰¹ Watson, 25.

¹⁰² Security is a thematic concern in *The Conspiracy Theory* that could productively be explored in relation to these claims for institutional critique.

It is similarly argued that the walks appropriate the museum audio-guide in critique,¹⁰³ but again Cardiff and Miller's narrative walks function somewhat independently of the institution and its tour. These walks are surely not engaged with the institutional tour in the way that the critical practice of Andrea Fraser is, for example, despite the comparisons.¹⁰⁴ Fraser's talks and guided tours speak almost exclusively of the institution, historically, politically and economically. Fraser, in her own words, exposes and critiques the relations of power that function in an institution, "not only substantively, as a symbolic system, but on the level of the social relations and social structures of which this system is the site."¹⁰⁵ In her talks and guided tours she speaks, as herself, of museological issues, speaks of Douglas Crimp's, Tony Bennett's and Michel Foucault's critiques of the institution. For example, in her recent work "Isn't This a Wonderful Place?," subtitled, "a tour of a tour of the Guggenheim, Bilbao," she asks whether the anonymous author of the guide might have read Crimp's "On the Museum's Ruins."¹⁰⁶ Cardiff and Miller's walks make little or no mention of the hidden processes of institutionalization. They do not explicitly expose the system, and they do not engage in any larger critical debate.

In *Conspiracy Theory*, as in every walk, the participant is immersed in a narrative. One of the effects of this immersion is to reduce the museum to a kind of set. This is especially so for the particularly cinematic quality of the walks. At one point *Conspiracy*

¹⁰³ See Jim Drobnick, "Mock Excursions and Twisted Itineraries: Tour Guide Performances" *Parachute* 80 Oct.-Dec.(1995): 30-37; Jennifer Fisher, "Speeches of Display: the museum audio-guides of Sophie Calle, Andrea Fraser and Janet Cardiff" *Parachute* 94. Apr.-June (1999): 25-31; Watson, 25.

¹⁰⁴ The comparison is made by both Drobnick and Fisher.

¹⁰⁵ Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: the writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed Alexander Alberro (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), xv.

¹⁰⁶ Fraser, 237.

Theory leads the participant to Christian Boltanski's permanent installation, *The Archive of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal* (1992).¹⁰⁷ During a brief look into the installation our guide says simply, "I like this piece of art, but it's a bit spooky."¹⁰⁸ (In *The Missing Voice* the woman similarly describes having recently seen René Magritte's *Menaced Assassin*, and says that it was "creepy.") Boltanski's politically charged *Archive* - evoking in part a characteristically fascist predilection for archiving and the potential similarities in the museum's own desire for the archive - is rendered nothing more than a prop, largely emptied of any potential content. And it is difficult not to be complicit with this act. Importantly, it is the suggestive politic of Boltanski's installation that ultimately gives the museum relevance. Without this relevance, there is nothing particularly valuable about the museum's exposition of such an art work. Indeed, stripped of the potential politic of the art the museum feels more like a funhouse.

Perhaps a far more profound threat to the institution of the museum lies not in any explicit or intentional institutional critique, not in any transgression or appropriation, but in the almost total evacuation of the specificity of the institutional space. "Cardiff and Miller," cautiously suggests their gallery, "reference traditional museum displays by using the formal structure of the diorama."¹⁰⁹ Though it feels as if a critique is implied here, I think, the word "reference" suggests a particularly ambiguous engagement with the institution that keenly avoids actually specifying one. Despite the claims made by

¹⁰⁷ Situated to the side of the foyer of the entrance to the museum this installation is viewed through a locked, metal, wire-mesh door. Inside the walls of a small closet-like room are lined with shelves stacked with uniform boxes, each identified with a name and a photograph of an employee. A single bare light bulb hangs from the ceiling.

¹⁰⁸ The transcriptions of *The Conspiracy Theory* are mine.

¹⁰⁹ Lühring Augustine Press Release, "Cardiff and Miller" 2002.

many critics, there is little or no direct critique of any external or objective institution in this art. And perhaps it is worth noting here that institutions, some of them rather conservative (the MoMA in New York, the Carnegie Institution and the Smithsonian have all commissioned walks) have been surprisingly quick to embrace this art.

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In conclusion, and in transition to the following chapter on history, we might briefly consider a quote on historiography that relates back to the issues raised in these last two chapters. Foucault, somewhat surprisingly, argued that in his books, which “function as an experience, much more than as the demonstration of a truth ... what is essential is not found in a series of historical verifiable proofs; it lies rather in the experience which the book permits us to have.”¹¹⁰ Perhaps we might carefully follow Foucault, in a turn away from history and truth, in the chapters that follow, and begin to look past the specificity and the historical references in the art to the experience that it permits us to have, in a manner that is perhaps a little more productive than critical.

¹¹⁰ Foucault, “How an ‘Experience-Book’ is Born,” 36; quoted in Jay, 396.

Chapter three: The experience of history and meaning.

This chapter considers the experience of history and meaning in this art. It looks first at the narrative of the detective as a thematic representation of history and as a deconstruction of meaning. It describes the increasing meaninglessness of the narrative, and then suggests that meaninglessness might function positively. It then argues that this art is more concerned with a direct experience of history and looks closely at the experience of the recording while exploring various terms to describe the potential of such an experience.

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In all of Cardiff and Miller's work, from the earliest installations to the most recent video walks, the participant must constantly navigate through various tenses, memories, and recordings from a past, a present, and sometimes even a future. For example, in *Villa Medici Walk* - a walk produced for the *Académie de France* in Rome in 1998 - as Christov-Bakargiev describes it, "memories of events in different places, as well as shifts into past moments of the villa's life ... are layered into the piece."¹¹¹ Christov-Bakargiev then concludes that the walk "becomes about time slippages."¹¹²

¹¹¹ Christov-Bakargiev, 92.

¹¹² Christov-Bakargiev, 92.

Another critic simply claims that “Cardiff’s script is ... a commentary on time,”¹¹³ while yet another identifies the “philosophical musings on the nature of time.”¹¹⁴

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This art most explicitly and thematically imagines history and meaning in the story of the detective. The detective is an historian, investigating the history of a crime. In the traditional story of detection this history constitutes and is constituted by an identifiable meaning, following a logic of successive cause and effect. The clues add up and the crime is solved. The meaningful experience of the clue is constituted within this order.

But the narratives in this art are not the traditional detective narratives, and nor do they suggest their traditional logic. They belong to a more contemporary reinterpretation of the genre that has emerged in the last half-century, a “post-modern” genre of detection, or “metaphysical detection,” as one literary scholar describes it.¹¹⁵ Suggesting that the art belongs to this latter genre, Cardiff herself mentions the influence of “po-mo” writers like Alain Robbe-Grillet and Philip K. Dick.¹¹⁶ Here, the clue is no longer meaningful in any straightforwardly detectable manner. The increasingly meaningless narrative of this later genre “calls into question ... the hermeneutic strategies of rendering meaningful those

¹¹³ Fleming, 31.

¹¹⁴ Alex Ohlin, “Something to Be Desired” *Art Papers* Jan.-Feb. (2004): 35.

¹¹⁵ Jeanne Ewert, “A Thousand Other Mysteries: Metaphysical Detection, Ontological Texts” in *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism*, ed Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 179.

¹¹⁶ Janet Cardiff, “The Artist’s Life” *The Globe and Mail* March 31 (2001): R2.

signs which are unintelligible to others.” Indeed, it calls into question heuristic detection itself and “the epistemological method of discovering truth by questioning sources of knowledge.”¹¹⁷

Such meaninglessness is, of course, consistent with much modern literature: with the meaninglessness of Samuel Beckett or the absurdity of the existentialists. But meaninglessness, in Cardiff and Miller’s art, does not function as any critique of a grand order of things. It is much more an appropriated style. And, if it suggests anything, it suggests something more positive and productive (which is not to claim better). The increasingly meaningless narrative exposes the participant to what he or she does not know. One critic, for example, describes “a stream-of-consciousness narrative that creates intensely specific, yet open-ended, impressions.”¹¹⁸

The recent *Cabin Fever* (2004) provides an exceptional example. We peer into a small diorama where we make out a cabin in the woods, at night. There is a light on, and we hear voices in the distance, coming from the cabin. A car drives up, stops near to us, and someone gets out and walks toward the cabin. We start to put together, from the snippets of the argument that we can make out, some kind of fight. The argument becomes heated and a shot is suddenly heard. But the argument continues, seemingly oblivious. A car pulls up again, someone gets out and walks toward the cabin, the argument gets loud, and a shot is heard, in the seamless loop of the audio track. This gunshot, a clear narrative signpost in many of Cardiff and Miller’s fictions, and of course

¹¹⁷ Ewert, 179.

¹¹⁸ Weber, 16.

a classic trope of suspense, seems to function in excess of the narrative. There is no scream, in response; no one seems to notice it. The gunshot is no longer the stable moment of ordering that it usually is as the central event around which a suspenseful thriller unfolds. It resists any single meaning or interpretation. It does not allow any too-easy interpretation, while insisting on interpretation nonetheless. It is an altogether far more productive undetermined experience of a gunshot, I think. It is not an experience of what we know of the gunshot, but of what we do not know.

There is, perhaps, a certain absence of structure, order and determination here. In the “intensely specific yet open-ended impressions,” in the disorderly, or rather, in the hyper-orderly moments, maybe the participant is allowed a different kind of logic, without the order or rule of narrative. And maybe this allows a momentary leap of invention and creativity.¹¹⁹ Such productive invention is especially seductive in so far as it suggests the possibility of a new way of thinking – what we might call a “rhizomatic” thinking, to use Deleuze and Guattari’s famous metaphor. A new thinking is not an old thinking, is not a thinking determined by the knowledge we have acquired from the past. It is not determined by what we know. It is not determined – and this is where the argument is seductive, and increasingly tenuous – by the discourses and knowledges of the dominant powers.

This example from Cardiff and Miller’s *Cabin Fever* is, however, somewhat exceptional. There is, in this recent diorama, no identifiable, generic narrative. There is,

¹¹⁹ Brian Massumi describes a similar scenario, in a different context, in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), 26.

for example, no score or soundtrack. From the start this experience is much less determined than it is in the walks and theatres. In the other more typically “suspenseful” works it is more difficult to shed the overwhelming narrative order. The potential is still there, I suspect, but it is increasingly improbable – though one might argue, all the more effective for its improbability.

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This art, however, is not primarily concerned with a critique, or even an examination, of knowledge, narrative and history. It is not particularly concerned with a critique or celebration of “a coherent knowledge of the past that can only estrange us from experience” – as the Dutch historian F.R. Ankersmit describes history.¹²⁰ This art seems, rather, to be far more concerned with a more direct and immediate experience.

Ankersmit, in contrast to this description of history, suggests the possibility of “a direct and immediate contact with the past, a contact that is not mediated by historiographical tradition, by language or aspects of language, by theory, narrative, ethical or ideological prejudice.”¹²¹ He calls it “historical experience,” and it suggests a language to describe the logic of this art. The experience of Cardiff and Miller’s recordings seems to ask for just such a direct historical experience. Every sound is palpable and seemingly present, despite its temporal displacement and its history. In

¹²⁰ F.R. Ankersmit, “Historicism: An Attempt at Synthesis” *History and Theory* 34.1 (1995): 161; quoted in Jay, 257.

¹²¹ F.R. Ankersmit, “Can We Experience the Past?” in *History Making: the Intellectual and Social Formation of a Discipline* (Stockholm: Coronet Books, 1996), 56; quoted in Jay, 256-7.

other words, these historical events are made to function in the present. Indeed, the present experience of these historical recordings is particularly intense, and we respond to them physiologically as though they are present; the sound of a dog barking suddenly and loudly causes the release of adrenaline and a raised heart rate. Ankersmit describes the intensity of historical experience as a “momentary dizzying experience of the sudden obliteration of the rift between present and past, an experience in which the past for a fractional moment reveals itself ‘as it is, or was.’”¹²² Again it provides us with a fair description of the experience of this art, of the particularly intense and immediate and direct experience of the moment in which a dog barks, or a car passes, “as it is, or was.” There is a certain obliteration of the distance, here, between the past and the present, a certain immediacy.

More interestingly, perhaps, we might also speak of an immediate and dizzying experience of the voice of the woman. Certainly Cardiff’s presence haunts the works in which her voice is heard; the experience of this art is far more an experience of her presence than her absence. The intense and present experience of her voice suggests the kind of “direct experience” that the artists desire. It also suggests an “authentic experience” and some kind of direct connection, even some kind of union (we’ll come back to this later). For sure such a notion of direct experience, what Ankersmit calls historical experience, and the idea of presence that lies beneath, is another problematic fetish. And it is potentially a site of mystification, a transcendental truth - what Derrida

¹²² F.R. Ankersmit, *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 200; quoted in Jay, 257.

famously critiques as “the metaphysics of presence.”¹²³ But perhaps there is a way to understand such an intense experience in its intensity, and not in its structure, an experience that is no longer concerned with truth or falseness (though it is difficult to think without structure and Derrida would surely deny it). Perhaps we might approach this experience with a different set of terms, these taken from Roland Barthes. Barthes famously suggests that in the photograph “the presence of the thing is never metaphoric ... it certifies that the corpse is alive, as *corpse*: it is the living image of a dead thing.”¹²⁴ The recording of Cardiff’s voice, like the experience of the photograph that Barthes describes, suggests a desire for this same non-metaphoric intensity. Is the guide’s voice the corpse of the artist, the living image of the dead author? Is her presence somehow non-metaphoric, and therefore direct? The *punctum* of the photograph, Barthes suggests, “is no longer of form but of intensity.”¹²⁵ Might the same be said of the experience of Cardiff’s voice, the voice of authority, no longer of form but of intensity? Where this gets us, exactly, might be better understood if we take up the terms of corporeality and the experience of the body.

¹²³ See Jacques Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*, trans Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 60-63; quoted in Jay, 363.

¹²⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 78-9.

¹²⁵ Barthes, 96.

Chapter four: The experience of corporeality.

This chapter focuses a little more closely on the particularly intense corporeal experience of this art. It describes the experience of embodiment and disembodiment but argues that it is the experience of corporeality itself that is most important. It suggests how the experience of the body is a means of control, but it also suggests how such corporeality might allow a particularly productive experience of heterogeneity and difference.

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Cardiff and Miller's art is especially and intensely corporeal. In all the installations, from the early works like *To Touch* (1993) and *The Dark Pool* (1995), through the more recent theatres, and all the walks, "we become physically engaged," as one critic writes.¹²⁶ "I wanted," explains Cardiff, speaking of the installation *Forty-Part Motet*, "to be able to 'climb inside' the music."¹²⁷ Elsewhere, demonstrating the same logic, Miller says that he abandoned painting because he "wanted to get inside the painting."¹²⁸ Clearly both artists desire an embodied experience.

¹²⁶ Fleming, 34.

¹²⁷ Christov-Bakargiev, 142.

¹²⁸ Kollé, 18.

The experience of this art is the experience of an affective body. Perhaps the most remarkable and self-consciously corporeal experience is the involuntary physiological response to the simulated audio-scape that this art produces, the rush of adrenaline at the sound of a dog suddenly barking on the left, or a car quickly approaching from behind. As another critic describes the experience of a walk, “following a narrative wasn’t uppermost in my mind, not in comparison to the transformation of my body.”¹²⁹ “One of the main things about my work,” Cardiff says in an interview, “is the physical aspect of the sound ... it’s much more about how our bodies are affected.”¹³⁰ And in another interview, Cardiff, speaking for Miller and herself, similarly suggests that “the way we use audio makes you much more aware of your own body.”¹³¹

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In part, the experience of this art is an experience of embodiment and disembodiment. The participant is placed in front of a diorama, or a movie screen, where he or she is usually asked to abandon the body in disembodied spectatorship. The art, at the same time, asks the participant to remain aware of his or her body (disrupting the habit of disembodiment, we might say). The space of the theatre invades the experience; a whisper from the left, a creaky chair on the right, laughter behind, all insist on an

¹²⁹ Watson, 24.

¹³⁰ Cardiff interviewed in “Pleasure Principles: the art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller” *Border Crossings* 20.2 May (2001): 35.

¹³¹ Christov-Bakargiev, 16.

awareness of the relation between these sounds and the listening body seated in the theatre.

The embodied sounds of the theatre are, of course, just as fictional as those from the film played in the background. It is, we should not forget, all illusion. In the broader context it is, as one critic describes it, an experience of “radical disassociation.”¹³² The listener immersed in the fictional audience is, in a sense, disassociated from the gallery and the installation.

There is a similar if ultimately more equivocal dynamic at work in the audio walks. Walking through the gallery and the street the displaced recording first emphatically asks the participant to abandon his or her body, suggesting “an ‘out-of-body’ experience.”¹³³ This happens in the replay of recordings taken from the site from another time, but the experience is most intensely disembodied in the samples of sounds from completely different kinds of space - a musical score, for example, or a sample from film. Here the experience asks that the body of the listener be abandoned, and it suggests, at least in part, a particularly intense experience of disengagement. And yet again, these walks often place the participant in a physically vulnerable position – navigating the streets through the confusion of real and fictional sound effects – that emphasizes an acute awareness of the now increasingly vulnerable body. It all amounts to an acute awareness of the processes of corporeality itself.

¹³² Watson, 25.

¹³³ Watson, 26.

Kitty Scott argues that “the audio-walks simultaneously spectacularize and subsume your body.”¹³⁴ Indeed, the experience of disembodiment is the experience of a “body” that is increasingly subsumed within the machinations of late capitalism and the mass media. It is an experience of the body constituted within these technologies. It is an experience of the body constituted by what Michel Foucault names bio-power: “a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures ... the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power ... creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way ... controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way.”¹³⁵ The image of Drogan wired to the machine returns here, his body stimulated, intensified, penetrated and controlled, along with the numerous images of mysterious physiological experimentation encountered throughout this art. No doubt the participant is made acutely aware of the physiological control this art employs. Like Drogan, the participant’s corporeal experience is determined by the machine, his or her body seemingly penetrated by the physiologically convincing sound effects. As one critic notes, even “the closeness of the voices, especially Cardiff’s, presumes an intimacy and penetrates your body.”¹³⁶

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¹³⁴ Scott, 110.

¹³⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, trans Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), 105-7.

¹³⁶ Scott, 115.

The experience of the constant play between intense embodiment and a sudden, spectacular disembodiment asks the participant to be especially conscious of the processes of corporeality. Cardiff suggests that her and Miller's particular use of audio "makes you much more aware of your place within the world, of your body as a 'real' construction."¹³⁷ "Construction," here, suggests the post-structural argument that "bodies cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way: they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself."¹³⁸ There is, perhaps, a certain exposure of the constructions of the body in the experience of this art. There is, perhaps, also an exposure of the Cartesian terms of mind and body, which, as Elizabeth Grosz argues, function in Western thought in relation to a number of hierarchical binaries, among them, outside and inside, self and other, depth and surface, appearance and reality, temporality and spatiality, psychology and physiology – binaries which are also suggested by the experience of this art.¹³⁹ Again, this art is invested in these constructions while it also displaces them, as if they are on display or even exposed. In other words, the critique of these constructions is allowed, but not articulated.

There is also, it is sometimes noted, a similar exposure of the especially modern division of the senses. The division is, for example, radically overdetermined; the ear that hears voices, the eye that sees an empty room. It is, perhaps, an exposure of the

¹³⁷ Christov-Bakargiev, 16.

¹³⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: towards a corporeal feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), x.

¹³⁹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 3.

modern construction of the body, of “the entire lived body as a locus of experience ... replaced by the five senses.”¹⁴⁰ In the modern organization of the body the sense of sight, of course, is privileged. While one critic suggests that this art fundamentally “resist[s] contemporary cultures privileging of the visual,”¹⁴¹ and another argues that “Cardiff realizes a space where vision loses its ability to master and objectify,”¹⁴² it is worth noting that in all this art the visual is the sense to which the participant returns, to find the truth, while the ear deceives. The ear is a deceptive organ here; the eye is not. The eye is never fooled by the diorama of the theatre, for example. In the end the eye remains privileged – and perhaps this is another reason why this art is seemingly so easily incorporated into the collections of conservative galleries. And yet again we might see that this privileged sense is exposed or on display and open to critique, in so far as it is overdetermined. But I would argue, as I have at various moments in this thesis, that this art is not particularly engaged in such a critique. It evokes the terms and the debate, but does not enter them.

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Let us not forget the artists’ quest for the “authentic experience.”¹⁴³ Indeed, Cardiff speaks of the construction of the body, but she also suggests that it is “real.” We have, of course, encountered this fetish for the “real” before. We encounter it again in *The Missing Voice* when the guide (who is Cardiff) says, “I started these recordings as a

¹⁴⁰ Jay, 42.

¹⁴¹ Woodstock, 5.

¹⁴² Scott, 113.

¹⁴³ Kollé, 15.

way ... to make life seem more real.” At least one critic reiterates this desire, suggesting that Cardiff’s intention is “to provide the viewer with an experience as real as possible.”¹⁴⁴

I want to suggest that, beyond the critique of this fetish for the real and the authentic as naïve, we might also want to consider the possibility that the “real” body might suggest an immediate and direct experience of the body itself. It just might suggest, to be more specific, an experience of the body in relation to the world - “the felt reality of relation,” to steal Brian Massumi’s phrase.¹⁴⁵ It does seem to allow a privileged or intensified access to the direct and immediate experience of the affected body in its construction: a real experience of construction, we might say. It is an especially intense awareness of the body’s transformation in response to the convincing sound effects. There is, for example, an intense awareness of the body “inside” the music of the Motet, the body as it constitutes and is constituted by the music in which it is immersed.

Such an intense experience (this is the same intensity with which the last chapter ended) might also, in turn, suggest an unstructured and increasingly heterogeneous experience of the body, a body in its heterogeneity and difference. The body of the participant is involved in an always unique experience of the music of the motet, for example, and perhaps the participant is physically and intuitively aware of this singularity.

¹⁴⁴ Himmelsbach, 463.

¹⁴⁵ Massumi, *Parables*, 16.

Roland Barthes, to return to his writings, describes two bodies with which he experiences film: “a narcissistic body which gazes, lost into the engulfing mirror, and a perverse body, ready to fetishize not the image but precisely what exceeds it: the texture of the sound, the hall, the darkness, the obscure mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, entering the theatre, leaving the hall.”¹⁴⁶ The perverse body, the irrational body, is perhaps the “real” body that Cardiff and Miller desire. Indeed, there is a certain fetishization of that which exceeds the image in this art, a fetishism of the sounds of the theatre. But there is something more, here, too, something like the experience of the body in excess. Barthes goes on to write of the experience: “I complicate a ‘relation’ by a ‘situation.’”¹⁴⁷ Barthes’ “situation,” I think, suggests a heterogeneous event - where a “relation” suggests an abstract, homogenized idea of the event.¹⁴⁸ A situation, in other words, constitutes a body in its difference from an identified and consequently homogenized body. It is the body of the participant in its difference from the dis/embodied body of the spectacle. It is an increasingly complicated body in excess of itself. And it suggests a being-in-common, a mutual constitution, a profound experience of construction that has, just maybe, abandoned any notion of an independent, identifiable, original body.

This is to suggest some of the more positive and productive characteristics of a potentially direct and authentic experience of the body, suggesting an experience of difference and heterogeneity that may function elsewhere, in other similarly intense and

¹⁴⁶ Roland Barthes, “Leaving the Movie Theatre” in *The Rustle of Language*, trans Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 349; quoted in Jay, 384.

¹⁴⁷ Barthes, “Leaving the Movie Theatre,” 349; quoted in Jay, 384.

¹⁴⁸ This is a particularly Deleuzian reading of Barthes.

direct experiences. In the chapter that follows, on subjectivity, we will look again at a similar kind of experience, at the construction of the subject and the potential experience of subject-less-ness.

Chapter five: The experience of subjectivity.

This chapter is concerned with the experience of subjectivity in this art. It begins from the unified subject, and follows the potential for its dissolution in this art, as it is variously claimed. It looks at the constitution of the subject/participant, specifically through the direct address this art performs, and suggests the potential for an experience of identity-less-ness, an experience of singularity.

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In keeping with the discourse of the real, the direct, the immediate, and the authentic, Christov-Bakargiev suggests that the experience of this art “offer[s] a sense of an authentic self.”¹⁴⁹ And the artists’ claims for authentic and direct experience no doubt implicitly apply to the experience of subjectivity. But again the experience of subjectivity, like the experience of the body, is complex and varied.

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We might start, following Foucault, with “the moment which has sustained the wisdom of the West at least since the time of Socrates, that is, the wisdom to which

¹⁴⁹ Christov-Bakargiev, 16.

philosophical language promised the serene unity of a subjectivity which would triumph in it, having been fully constituted by it and through it.”¹⁵⁰ The unity of subjectivity is, as Foucault convincingly demonstrates, deeply ingrained in Western thought. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari dryly put it: “you will be a subject, nailed down as one ... otherwise you’re just a tramp.”¹⁵¹ Of course, the later half of this century has seen this subject widely critiqued, by Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari and others. Today we are, for example, increasingly aware of “the hegemonic dialectical tradition of alienation and interiorization” in the production of the subject.¹⁵² And we understand how, at least in part, “it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted by them,” as Joan Wallach Scott suggests.¹⁵³

This art is, in many ways, alienating and interiorizing. We are immersed in the interiorized audio-scapes of this art, alienated from the world that does not know our experience. As one critic writes, “many of Cardiff’s works focus on a type of situation that makes one feel alone in a crowd.”¹⁵⁴ It is what this art is especially good at. The participant is isolated by the headphones, alienated from the space and the public through which he or she, nonetheless, is made to pass. We are made particularly aware that there is little interaction or communication. The guide in *The Missing Voice* confesses, “I like not talking to anyone all day It’s like you’re invisible.” It is the participants’ experience too. Even the narrative is estranging: a strange guide leads us on a strange

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, “A Preface to Transgression,” 43-4; quoted in Jay, 393.

¹⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987), 159.

¹⁵² Jay, 393.

¹⁵³ Joan Wallach Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 779; quoted in Jay, 250.

¹⁵⁴ D’Souza, 112.

walk through a city populated by strangers and involves us in a strangely fragmented story. In other words, this art, in part, demonstrates rather well the hegemony of alienation and interiorization in the traditional production of the subject.

In comparison, Daniel Birnbaum, writing about *The Paradise Institute*, impressionistically describes the experience of subjectivity in the experience of the fragmented narrative. He writes, “and yet ... and yet ... denying temporal succession, denying the self.”¹⁵⁵ He claims that the fragmented narrative denies the constitutive role that a unified and unifying narrative performs in the production of subjectivity. In other words, despite the processes of alienation and interiorization, Birnbaum suggests that the experience of the art denies the unity of subjectivity.

Christov-Bakargiev suggests instead that Cardiff and Miller’s art “reveals the ambiguities of our contemporary ‘fictional’ selfhood,” and, in turn, the “constructed nature of experience.”¹⁵⁶ This is to suggest that this art displays and exposes these hegemonic forces of alienation, interiorization, narrative and meaning in the processes of subjectivization, and also the mutually constitutive relationship between the subject and experience.

Cardiff describes the experience of the art a little differently. “Subconsciously,” she suggests, “participants begin to breathe and walk in synch with the virtual body on

¹⁵⁵ Daniel Birnbaum, “The Paradise Institute” in *The Paradise Institute* (Winnipeg: Plug In Gallery, 2001), 7.

¹⁵⁶ Christov-Bakargiev, 16.

the tape.”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, she explicitly asks listeners to synchronize themselves with her in the walks again and again: the guide asks, “try to walk to the sounds of my footsteps” in most every walk, and, in *Louisiana Walk #14* she whispers, “we’re connected now, my breath a part of yours, my thoughts transferred to your mind.” Elsewhere she specifically claims to be “blurring the distinction between self and other.”¹⁵⁸

In part such claims suggest some kind of fusion or dissolution of the subject. Christov-Bakargiev argues that in the experience of this art “it is as if Cardiff and the participant have fused.”¹⁵⁹ Another critic writes impressionistically of the intrusion of the guide’s voice into her head, “I am no longer myself.”¹⁶⁰ These descriptions suggest a popular notion of self-less-ness in fusion with another. The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy critiques this logic. He describes a “fusion into a body, into a unique and ultimate identity,” a transcendent religious experience, akin to a union with God, as *communion* (to which he opposes community and being-in-common).¹⁶¹ He describes it as a subject position “that would no longer be exposed.”¹⁶² In other words, it suggests an impossibly absolute, transcendent subject position, untainted by the messiness of intersubjectivity. It proclaims an ostensibly higher state of unification. It is, perhaps, in part, the impossible dream of these artists and these critics, of some technologically enhanced union and unity.

¹⁵⁷ Christov-Bakargiev, 80.

¹⁵⁸ Christov-Bakargiev, 80.

¹⁵⁹ Christov-Bakargiev, 31.

¹⁶⁰ Christov-Bakargiev, 110.

¹⁶¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed Peter Connor, trans Peter Connor and others (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1991), xxxviii.

¹⁶² Nancy, xxxviii.

It is worth noting how, in a number of ways, this art does not especially encourage the dissolution of the stable subject. Statements like, “have you ever had the urge to disappear,” from *The Missing Voice*, and “sometimes you have to lose yourself,” from *Villa Medici Walk*, seem to point to the stubborn persistence of the stable subject more than anything. And, despite its celebrated potential, it is not so easy to fuse with the guide – even Christov-Bakargiev describes “the tension, panic and fear of going astray, of not being able to follow her directions.”¹⁶³ The experience of “blurring the distinction between self and other” that Cardiff suggests is not necessarily inviting, either.¹⁶⁴ The intensely disorienting experience of the art, for example, suggests a kind of delusional, schizophrenic dissolution - “the overall sensation is surreal, schizophrenic even,” suggests one critic,¹⁶⁵ while Christov-Bakargiev herself also describes it as schizophrenic.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, the dissolution of the stable subject looms as a kind of threat in this work.

Art critic Hal Foster argues that in the art and society of the 1990s there is a “new intensity of dis/connection,” marked by “the paradox of immediacy produced through mediation.”¹⁶⁷ And he rhetorically asks, “is it any wonder that this subject is often dysfunctional, suspended between obscene proximity, and spectacular separation?”¹⁶⁸ It is, perhaps, an appropriate description of this art and the experience of subjectivity: the participant’s mediated experience of immediacy, a subjective experience of almost

¹⁶³ Christov-Bakargiev, 31.

¹⁶⁴ Christov-Bakargiev, 80.

¹⁶⁵ Biagioli, 12.

¹⁶⁶ Christov-Bakargiev, 25.

¹⁶⁷ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: the avant-garde at the end of the century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 222.

¹⁶⁸ Foster, 222.

obscene proximity, especially with the voice of the guide, and a simultaneously spectacular separation from her and the world beyond the recording. Is the participant dysfunctional, then?

Christov-Bakargiev, after arguing for the revelation of the ambiguities of the fiction of contemporary selfhood, goes on to undermine her own claim for the subject, arguing that despite revealing the ambiguities of contemporary fictional selfhood the participants “willingly capitulate to its seduction, and even encourage its sweet lies.”¹⁶⁹ In other words, the participants ultimately remain invested in the wisdom of the serene unity of subjectivity.

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But again, we might want to look for a more productive experience, here. For example, there is a particularly intense experience of subjectivity when this art addresses the listener. “I want you to walk with me.” So begins the experience of a walk. The participant is immediately asked to perform a rather complex negotiation with this art – one that, I will argue, is potentially radical.

We are immediately and directly addressed. Linguistically we are constituted as the “you” to whom the guide speaks, just as we are, formally and structurally, the listener and the audience to whom all this art implicitly addresses itself. And yet we remain largely unidentified and undifferentiated. The “you” could be just about anyone.

¹⁶⁹ Christov-Bakargiev, 16.

This is not entirely true. The “you” must be a fairly able-bodied participant, with eyes and ears. It must be someone who understands English well. It must also be someone who is more or less familiar with these pop culture references. And it must be someone with good credit rating and proper identification – in order to borrow the equipment. There is, in other words, a certain bourgeois anglo-centrism here, no doubt, and the experience, for one who does not fit these general assumptions is surely quite different, and, I suspect, rather simply and one-dimensionally oppressive.

For those who know it, the address of the guide evokes the narration of the hard-boiled detective, of course. The feminist scholar Mary Ann Doane argues that in the film noir, “the voice-over commentary ... speaks[s] more or less directly to the spectator, constituting him/her as an empty space to be filled with knowledge about events, character, psychology, etc.”¹⁷⁰ Doane implies a critique of the evacuation of the specificity of the spectator, a certain oppressive homogenization. And it would seem to apply to this art. Indeed, when Cardiff states, “we hoped to create an environment that removed the viewer from the art gallery and transported them into another space and time so that they forgot where and why they had come,” the emptying of the participant/subject appears a rather dubious, homogenizing, and suspect desire.¹⁷¹

But what if the subjective experience of “empty space,” as Doane describes it, were seen to be productive? Firstly, the address, as a force of homogenization, might not

¹⁷⁰ Mary Ann Doane, “The Voice in the Cinema” *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980): 43.

¹⁷¹ Christov-Bakargiev, 56.

be all that effective on an increasingly knowledgeable, aware and critical audience. This allows another effect, I suspect. Critiquing a traditional notion of experience as it is invested in a unified subject, Jean-Francois Lyotard suggests that such experience “needs a subject first of all, the instance of an ‘I,’ someone who speaks in the first person.”¹⁷² We might see that, in comparison, the participant in this art is not asked to speak in the first person. There is no moment that demands an “I.” Despite the direct address, we are surprisingly undetermined, a kind of potentially productive empty space. When Cardiff claims, “the work I’ve made allows you to forget yourself,”¹⁷³ it suggests, perhaps, just such a subject-less-ness, in so far as the participant might forget the “I” which he or she normally assumes. Perhaps in this nondescript and paradoxically intense and direct address there is an equally intense sense of freedom afforded the listener: freedom from the chains of identity.

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Foucault famously writes: “do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order.”¹⁷⁴ This art, I suspect, makes a rather clever response to such a desire. In the participant’s experience, it is not the artists that demand that our papers be in order, but the institution. The artists are, of course, complicit, but our experience of it suggests otherwise. The art

¹⁷² Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jacques Monory, *The Assassination of Experience by Painting*, trans Rachel Bowlby (London: Routledge, 1998), 85; quoted in Jay, 361.

¹⁷³ Christov-Bakargiev, 17.

¹⁷⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 17; quoted in Jay, 397, footnote 150.

and the artists do not ask who we are, and do not ask that we remain the same. Though this may simply be indifference, or worse, it is, I find, an especially profound experience.

Giorgio Agamben argues that “the spectacle – under whose form humanity appears to strive blindly towards its own destruction – also contains a great potential which is positive and should not be allowed to escape under any circumstances.”¹⁷⁵ This art is surely a spectacle, and due its necessary critique. But the experience of it might just contain this great potential (though it is one we must surely be suspicious of). Agamben argues that the dissolution of social identity forms certain identity-less singularities. “That is what the state cannot tolerate in any measure,” he continues,

because it is certain that the society it has fallen to our lot to live in is one on which all social identities have been dissolved and in which all that, over the centuries, constituted truth or its opposite for successive generations on earth has lost its meaning ... and so if one may make a prophecy about the politics of the future, it will not be a question of a struggle for the conquest or control of the state by new or old social subjects, but rather a struggle between the state and the non-state (humanity), an irretrievable disjunction between an unidentified singularity and the statist organization The singularity which seeks to appropriate the fact of belonging, its own being in language, and which thus refuses all identity and all conditions of membership, is the new protagonist – neither subjectively nor socially consistent – of a future politics.¹⁷⁶

Perhaps participation in this art, the performance of the listener, the performance of the undifferentiated “you,” is the experience of a spectacular dissolution of identity. This is tenuous at best, for sure. The participant might be displaced from his or her own “being in language” through the guides’ inappropriately familiar address, and might just refuse all identification and conditions of membership. When the guide asks, “I want you to walk with me,” is she really asking, *I want you to become the new protagonist of a future*

¹⁷⁵ Agamben, 79.

¹⁷⁶ Agamben, 80-81.

politic? Is this again an experience of disjunction from all statist organization, from all hierarchies of power?

Maybe it all leads to a profound experience of the unidentified singularity of humanity, even a shared lack of identity. Foucault writes that “an experience ... cannot have its full impact unless the individual manages to escape from pure subjectivity in such a way that others can – I won’t say re-experience it exactly – but at least cross paths with it or retrace it.”¹⁷⁷ The identity-less-ness that Agamben describes, and that I am suggesting is encouraged in the experience of this art and that might just allow an escape from pure subjectivity, might just, in spite of itself perhaps, allow a shared lack of identity, an experience in which others might cross paths and retrace, just as others will retrace our path through the city and through Cardiff and Miller’s stories in these walks.

This is to begin to describe a subject-less experience. It is potentially a radical response to the modern constitution of experience, and its serene unity of subjectivity. No doubt, this is all fairly tenuous hypothesizing, too – suggested, perhaps, by these theories as much or more than by the experience of this art. And clearly there is a very real danger that the participant simply remains enamoured of the sweet lies of the subject. But there is, I think, a great potential, here. It is the potential to begin to experience subjectivity without the necessarily incomplete processes of identification, without the baggage of binaries and dualism and a whole host of hierarchies and relations of power that constitute these identities. It also recalls and suggests the intense experience of the

¹⁷⁷ Foucault, “How An Experience-Book is Born,” 40; quoted in Jay, 399.

voice, and the intense and heterogeneous experience of the body, in so far as it is an experience of subjectivity that is of intensity and not of form.

In conclusion: The aesthetic experience.

This art functions within a fairly conservative aesthetic structure. As already noted it does not, for example, function within the pragmatic micro-territories of the everyday. If not always literally in a gallery, the art is always conventionally associated with the art world, always commissioned or exhibited by an institution. And it is largely an abstracted, disassociated, displaced, formal experiment - as this thesis has argued.

Perhaps this art implicitly privileges the increasingly formal aesthetic experience above all. It might assume, like some inheritance of the historical avant-garde, that aesthetic experience presents “the model for a privileged mode of knowledge of the real, a moment of subversion of the hierarchized structure of the individual and society, and thus an instrument of true social and political action.”¹⁷⁸ For sure the later call for social and political action is not explicit in this art, but there is, in the artists’ interest in disruption, and in the critical response generally, an underlying sense that something radical or revolutionary is implied - though this may be more a complacent habit of those responding to the art, than anything else.

¹⁷⁸ Gianni Vattimo, “The Death or Decline of Art” in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed Clive Cazeaux (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 188.

More importantly, does the aesthetic experience here assume authority? Is this an experience of a “foundationalist authority” of experience that, as Jay notes, “makes its recent critics so uneasy?”¹⁷⁹ Surely this art is open to a post-structural critique. Indeed, it self-consciously opens to the critique itself. It does seem, at times, a “*mystico-religious* pursuit of transcendental experience,” to quote Juliet Mitchell.¹⁸⁰ No doubt such experience is dubious in so far as it claims authority, and in so far as it mystifies that authority.

On the one hand this art is oppressively authoritative, in so far as it immerses the participant in a world largely determined by the artists’ inescapable recordings. And yet this experience of immersion is, on the other hand, arguably so over-determined and oppressive (as some describe it) that it undermines its own authority. Indeed, this art immediately and literally exposes its own authority in the voice of the artist - a voice, it is worth noting, the listener is not asked to take altogether seriously.

I do not so much want to argue one or the other experience. Rather, I want to suggest, as I have before, that maybe the aesthetic “mystico-religious” experience here need not “transcend” anything - as Mitchell describes it. Maybe it need not rest in authority. And maybe it need not suggest any kind of metaphysical order or truth. Perhaps it is experience as Foucault describes it: “neither true nor false.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Jay, 4.

¹⁸⁰ Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Penguin, 1974), 240; quoted in Jay, 245.

¹⁸¹ Foucault, “How an ‘Experience-Book’ is Born,” 36; quoted in Jay, 398.

Of course we must beware the other trappings of a too-simple privilege of experience as an end-in-itself. Indeed, the experience of this art threatens to become what Jay describes as the “psychologism” of the early twentieth century in which “the object of devotion had been obliterated as a result of the exaggerated fascination with the subject’s mode of experiencing it.”¹⁸² Problematically, in both religious and aesthetic experience, Jay argues, “the objects of that experience ... have tended to recede into the background.”¹⁸³ In the context of political experience Jay similarly warns of a scenario in which the “intoxicating experience of ‘engaged’ or ‘committed’ involvement in a dynamic ‘movement’ [is] more important than the actual realization of its goals.”¹⁸⁴ It is the danger that experience is empty, the danger that aesthetic experience is, for example, “a displacement of ‘real’ politics, a way to gesture towards redemption without a means to realize it through what normally passes for political practice.”¹⁸⁵

Later Jay argues that, “unless some sort of tension is preserved between the subject of experience and the object, there is a danger of losing precisely the very encounter with otherness ... so deeply embedded in the concept of experience in most of its guises.”¹⁸⁶ This is a danger that this art certainly flirts with. In other words, the danger here lies in the possibility that the experience of experience is a simple fetishization of experience that is, in turn, merely a distraction from the complexity of navigating the contingencies of the experience of the world. When Cardiff says, “we

¹⁸² Jay, 102.

¹⁸³ Jay, 174.

¹⁸⁴ Jay, 174.

¹⁸⁵ Jay, 167.

¹⁸⁶ Jay, 221.

hope to invoke some basic philosophical questions”¹⁸⁷ - and everywhere this art evokes pseudo-philosophical rumination - there is a sense in which philosophy (that great encounter with otherness) is merely decoration and atmosphere.

In other words, the danger here is that there is no longer any danger. Near the end of *Songs of Experience* Jay suggests that “experience is an openness to the unexpected with its dangers and obstacles, not a safe haven from history, but a reminder of the encounters with otherness and the new that await those who, despite everything, are willing and able to embark on the voyage.”¹⁸⁸ This is his take on what he suggests is Adorno’s definition: experience as “a non-dominating relationship between subject and object ... a passive suffering, or undergoing through an encounter with the new and the other, which moves us beyond where we, as subjects, were before the experience began.”¹⁸⁹ If the experience of Cardiff and Miller’s art is a voyage, as Jay describes voyage, is anything risked?

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One final argument. If we must judge this art, perhaps we might begin from this sense of a dangerous encounter that moves us beyond where we are, and consider, as Brian Massumi suggests, “the extent to which [it] enable[s] triggerings of change (induce[s] the new).”¹⁹⁰ This is to consider the extent to which the experience of this art

¹⁸⁷ Kollé, 17.

¹⁸⁸ Jay, 360.

¹⁸⁹ Jay, 359.

¹⁹⁰ Massumi, 43.

is an experience of otherness, an experience of community and being-in-common, an experience of the body in excess, an experience of the intensity of the past made present, a productive experience of disruption, or of alternative, virtual realities. Such experiences do not escape the relations of power or the machinations of capital. Clearly affect is not itself an escape - “the oddest of affective tendencies are okay, as long as they pay,” Massumi reminds us.¹⁹¹ But these intense affective experiences suggest, nonetheless, the possibility of what Massumi describes as a “local and individual style” of resistance,¹⁹² a resistance without authority, a resistance without identity, a resistance in an always immediate situation.

¹⁹¹ Massumi, 43-4.

¹⁹² Massumi, 86.

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