Lord, make me a great composer! Let me celebrate your glory through music—and be celebrated myself! Make me famous through the world, dear God! Make me immortal! After I die let people speak my name forever with love for what I wrote! In return I vow I will give you my chastity.

Old Salieri, *Amadeus* (Scene 19)

... chastity is a flux.

Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues* (90)

To begin again—ever again—I return to the question of Chaste Cinematics to discuss three films from an array of film economies, with all three directed, supposedly, by biological males: *Amadeus* (Miloš Forman, 1984, 2002), *Henry Fool* (Hal Hartley, 1997), and *Multiple Maniacs* (John Waters, 1970). I discuss each film in terms of Chaste Rapes.¹ I variously approach the films by ways of “extras,” behind-the-scenes commentaries often found as *supplements* in DVDs—specifically, three such commentaries—one for each film—in the form of imaginary polylogues among people involved in the making of the films, including the directors.² In addition, there are commentaries from

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1 See my *Sexual Violence in Western Thought and Writing: Chaste Rape*.

2 I am avoiding the notion of an *imaginary dialogue* for a word spelled *p+o+l+y+l+o+g+u+e*. The term is claimed by many users. But my own inevitable misuse of the term is from Julia Kristeva’s practices. Kristeva,
people whose writings and discussions have shaped my thinking about *Chaste Cinematics*. I call this supplementary para-genre *DVD installations*. But I could as well call them “refrains” (cf. Deleuze, *Dialogues* xiii; Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand 310–50*). For some readers, these installations would be but another impertinence or at best a trick of metacinema as well as metafiction. Let us suppose, however, that these conversations are fluxes (struggles and play) recombining with other fluxes.

I find that the directors and screenwriters, as well as editors, of the three films progressively merge canonicity (establishing a canonical text of excess) and pedagogy

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3 There is, here, added footage of the behind-the-scenes making of *Amadeus* (both versions), with interactive menus, production notes, cast/director highlights, theatrical trailers, scene access, languages, subtitles. Hartley and Waters’s films, to date, do not have these additional features. I perversely add my installations to the three. Water’s film remains legally in VHS format.

4 Simply put, flux for my purposes takes One actuality and turns it to radical multiple actualities. Reel-alities. A Deleuze sampler: “To write has no other function: to be a flux which combines with other fluxes—all the minority-becomings of the world. A flux is something intensive, instantaneous and mutant—between a creation and a destruction. It is only when a flux is deterritorialized that it succeeds in making its conjunction with other fluxes, which deterritorialize it in their turn, and vice versa” (*Dialogues* 50). The fluxes composing chapter 1 continue, intermittently, through the other chapters to the last excursus and beyond. At times, the fluxes manifest themselves as *test drives*. Gone wild.
(teaching a perverse lesson) with acts of Chaste Cinematics of Rape (trafficking in communicative exchanges by way of women, and yet, reaching for a third exchange, by ways of the obtuse, the neutral). I say “progressively,” for there is no overt, but implicit act of rape in Miloš Forman’s, or Peter Shaffer’s, *Amadeus*. I say “obtuse” and “neutral” in the sense given by Roland Barthes (“Third Meaning [Sense]”). This generic work called “Amadeus” itself is exceptionally fruitful to deal with, for it has gone through many revisions as a play—with productions in England and the United States—and exists in two versions as a film, the theatrical release and the so-called Director’s Cut, restoring twenty minutes that had been cut.⁵ Again, the trans-formations: play, film, cut. *Amadeus*, in its avatars, should remind us—and this is the gift of fluxes—that there is a compossible world of *Amadeus*, with a radical infinite finitude of incompossible (co-extensive) worlds of this much-revised story of master and divine rape.

As we progress (virtually, regress) across the three films, however, the act of rape becomes less implied, more emphatic, until we get to John Waters’s film *Multiple Maniacs* in which rape takes three different forms, all represented as perverse “Divine” rapes. All three films, however, represent rape in a (bizarre) Chaste Cinematic

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⁵ See Shaffer’s preface and film introduction to *Amadeus* (the play), for the history of the play (specifically, Peter Shaffer’s *Amadeus. With a New Introduction to the Film Edition by the Author*. NY: Signet, New American. 1984). When commenting on *Amadeus*, I designate the citation from this edition of the play and in terms of Act, Scene, and page numbers. See the Works Cited for two other separately published versions. I also intermittently cite passages from the film shooting scripts (by scene number). See the Works Cited for the scripts that I work as well as play with. In all cases, however, I have cross-checked with the film itself, to make sure that the script is as it is in the film. When commenting on the Director’s cut, I also refer to the film itself.
manner. All three films, moreover, are informed with a deep concern for the absolute (the Divine)—for immanence, for subjectivity, for immortality, and for a sacrificial and rather perverse-Chaste attitude toward an economy of community fixed, fixated, on rape. All three films recapitulate, in various ways, the very mixed etymology of the word “Chastity” as well as “caste” itself.6

As we revisit the films, we will see how the absolute as well as immanence informs a notion of divine rape. Moreover, as we revisit the films with their co-extensive possibilities (i.e., incompossibilities), however, we will also see them as less totalized and more fragmented, or more powdery. Yes, powdery! With the death of God, the desert, or nihilism, continues to grow. As Zarathustra teaches: “Wilderness grows: woe unto him who harbors wildernesses!” (Nietzsche, Thus Spake 417; cf. Heidegger, What Is 29–30, 49–51, 55; Nikolopoulou 112–16). Therefore, though perhaps paradoxically, as nihilism moves from passive to active and then on to accomplished nihilism, radical multiplicity also grows (see Vattimo; cf. Steigler’s discussion of negentropy in Technics 1 54, 61, 68–69). Throughout the

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6 A reminder: My use of the word “Chaste” and its variations is borrowed and recycled from Stephanie Jed’s title Chaste Thinking, which deals with rape and the cover-up of rape in especially Humanistic thinking. A Test Drive (Ronell). Your first major assignment. A study of etymologies in flux. Including conductive paralogics. I will leave it to you, readers, to conjugate the various proto-meanings of and allusions to “Chastity.” Including improper proper names. Keep in mind that when conjugating the paradigm, so much unrealizable is far left over (see Barthes, Neutral 6–7). So to repeat: I leave it to you to determine or over-determine: see <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=chastity> along with the associations of cleansing, innocence, integrity, chaste, incest, honesty, honor. And then caste: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=caste&allowed_in_frame=0>. While you are at it, check out the etymology of rape <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=rape>. What is rape’s relationship with turnip? What is the folk etymo-logic that connects the two? Three?
three films, there is a flux-movement toward an accomplished third figure.

In an attempt to balance the overly masculine and eccentric gender-bending of the cinema-shadows to be cast on the discussion in this chapter, I mirror chapter 2 opposite this chapter: Therein I discuss the controversial film BeFreier und Befreite (by Helke Sander, a German female director, 1992) that documents the liberation of women in Berlin from fascism, and yet the mass rape of them by the occupation soldiers in 1945; hence, as the title in German suggests in English: the liberators take (took) liberties. (But this mirroring is not a mere contrast in a male versus a female director. The males succeed in over-coming their selves as well as the females, in their own different ways. Just as commentators on the film reach for a third, non-transcendental way to rethink the event.) Along with Sander’s documentary, I will in passing test drive (Ronell) the equally controversial film Baise-Moi (written and directed by Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi, 2000, based on Despentes’s novel, 1995). Baise-Moi is for me the most reactionary film on rape and murder that I could find as an exemplar. And yet, is it a reactionary film? Hence, the call for a test drive. The overall mirroring will work in this manner: Forman-Hartley-Waters $\rightarrow|\leftarrow |$ Sander-(Despentes). Think of mirroring as a series of beginnings or redoublings. A multiplication of fluxes. In the history of the word “Chastity.”

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7 By way of a shadow, the balance I search for is in terms of Nietzsche’s “mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA” (Twilight 41). Cf. Zupancic, 27. But, apparently and perhaps inevitably, the shortest shadow becomes the error of the longest shadow. Hence, in ch. 2, possibly, the necessity of the inessential shadow narratives, which I previously mentioned in the Preamble to this point and thereafter beyond: It is shadows casting shadows until the end.
Given all this mirroring, there may be the risk of a “desert of mirrors” (Abé, *Face* 232). My mis/understanding, as I take my lead from Avital Ronell, however, is that the risk of mirrors is no longer a risk, for “we” as a community without a community, are “a community shattered and way past the mirror state of self-recuperation” (*Finitude’s Score* 2). And as I follow Jean-Luc Nancy, I think, “Maybe it is still true to say that ‘the desert is growing.’ However, the curtain has fallen on the luxuriance and fertilities by comparison with which our ‘desert’ could be measured. . . . The growing of the desert could indeed unveil for us [as it did for Kobe Abé’s man in *Woman*] an unknown space, an unknown, excessive aridity of the sources of sense. The end of sources, the beginning of the dry excess of sense” (*Sense* 24; emphasis mine. Cf. Nancy, *Experience* 142–47. For Abé, see *Woman* 230–32). There are worlds, not the world. There are senses, not the sense. There are multiple scents. Pulsations. Fluxes. (Of still frames that remain intense.) Let us enter into the excess of compossible-incompossible worlds. Let us search in a polyphony (towards cacophony), in a polytheism (towards struggle, war, play) for the filmic, or third neutral meanings. After all is said and undone, all that is solid melts in the air, which is the experience of modernity.

8 cf. Nancy, *Inoperative Community* 71; Blanchot, *Unavowable Community; Agamben, Coming Community*).

9 Again, the filmic, along with the obtuse, refers to Barthes’s third meaning (sense). And additionally refers to Barthes’s neutral (*The Neutral* 6–7). This third (a turd) should not be confused with the syllogistic third figure. Also, my discussion of mirrors and desert seems to preclude the possibility, incomposibility, of “the desert of the real,” which is established by Baudrillard and referred to in the film *Matrix*. See Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 1; Žižek, *Welcome* 15.

10 I am alluding in italics to Marshal Berman’s book, in which he writes: “Others believe that the really distinctive forms of contemporary art and thought have made a quantum leap beyond all the diverse sensibilities of
modernity, and earned the right to call themselves ‘post-modern.’ I want to respond to these antithetical but complementary claims by reviewing the vision of modernity with which this book began. To be modern, I said, is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom, to find one’s world and oneself in perpetual disintegration and renewal, trouble and anguish, ambiguity and contradiction: to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air. To be a modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom, to make its rhythms one’s own, to move within its currents in search of the forms of reality, of beauty, of freedom, of justice, that its fervid and perilous flow allows” (*All That Is Solid*, 345–46). Berman’s understanding of Modernism (Modernity), of course, is at odds with others’ understandings but also with others’ notions of Postmodernism. This disarray of understandings, therefore, is in flux itself, which requires, at least, some of us to remake ourselves perpetually somehow or other in an uncanny home in flux (cf. Marsh, Caputo, Westphal, *Modernity* 12, 15–17, 24–25; also Vidler, *Uncanny*). Obviously, however, the title of Berman’s book is a direct reference to Marx and Engel’s *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: They write: “All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind” (5).
Short Cuts

I took my “little movie” photographs for years without telling anybody. It all started with my obsession to have a still from one of my older films which was never taken on the set. I remember Divine’s face in the one moment [instant] between rape and miraculous intervention where he lived up to the spiritual side of his name, but I didn’t have the picture to prove it. I took hundreds of shots off the TV monitor, blundering my way into photography the same way I blundered into films, until I finally produced the still I wanted.

John Waters, Director’s Cut (283; emphasis added)

No one could scan the cut….

Avital Ronell, Crack Wars (69)

[A] finished finitude, infinitely finished … occurs in an instant … which means not within an instant, in the present time of an instant, but by a cut in the middle of the instant: the cut of freedom that unexpectedly comes up in this time and fills it.

Jean-Luc Nancy, The Experience of Freedom (118)

In the first two films—Amadeus and Henry Fool—there is a typical bonding, a forming of community, between men at odds or in rivalry, while in the third—Multiple Maniacs—there is an atypical diffusion among freaks banding together for mayhem. All three films are located in homosocial space (Sedgwick). Or so I will say at first. But this space as homosocial is totalitarian, with the world as controlled by the O/one, or the exaggerated masculine itself. It is a world that must become, as Nancy would have it, “always the plurality of worlds: a constellation whose compossibility is identical with its fragmentation, the compactness of a powder of absolute fragments” (Sense 155). Or a powder of sand grains. ParaFragments. Crumbs.11

11 There is absolutely no connection whatsoever between the word “powder” here and the film Powder (1995).
Unlike Leibniz’s compossible world that is dominated by the monad of God Himself (the divine, transcendental signifier), this world is without an archi-world to direct or limit incompossible (co-extensive) worlds. This world has no stasis point. In such a compossible world, there are not just men, nor just men and women—this is not to say, however, that there is no man or woman as such—but to say that there are singularities of sexual pluralities, or what some might call a cavalcade of perversions, or third sexes (cf. Nancy, Corpus 34–39; Fausto-Sterling).

Cut to One: In Amadeus, Antonio Salieri is a mediocre artist, yet the much celebrated court composer, while Mozart is a genius, yet unappreciated by his contemporaries (with the exception of Salieri), but is to be remembered and canonized as the great genius-artist of the court, the world, and heaven (at least, as Salieri recounts). While Amadeus is lucky with women, Salieri is not. (For his part, Salieri as a child promises God to remain Chaste if God would only give him great music to write, but God gives Amadeus both women and angelic music and Salieri nothing, at least, in most of the revisions [versions, incompossibilities] of the story.) As a result, Salieri curses God and promises to frustrate His attempts through “Amadeus” (meaning “love of God” or “beloved by God”) or, if necessary, to murder Amadeus (suggested meaning a mad [d]eus, or mad, perverse “love of God”). In both cases, the men share in a love-hate bond (Salieri-God-Amadeus, Salieri-Music-Amadeus, Salieri-Katherina Cavalieri-Amadeus) and in the success of (the) one. The sharing is emphasized further, when Salieri demands sex from Constanze (film, scene 74; play, Act 2, Scene 1: 79–80) in exchange for recommending Amadeus as the teacher of the Princess Elizabeth. But Salieri rejects Constanze and humiliates her when she returns to accept the bargain, just
as he has the Emperor, Joseph II, also reject her husband, Amadeus, as a teacher of the Princess on the grounds that Amadeus “molested” one, if not more, of his piano students (film, scene 81; play, Act 2, Scene 2: 82).

This story line, comparable to Henry Fool, is inextricably entwined with sexual, though not always practiced, perversions. In some versions, Salieri gives up his chasteness and, against both God and Amadeus, beds Katherina, who remains, Salieri boasts, his “mistress for many years behind my good wife’s back” (play 81). Though Amadeus had seduced Katherina (Act 1, Scene 8: 44, 46–47; Scene 10: 57), Salieri claims, “I soon erased in sweat the sense of his little body, the Creature’s, preceding me” (Act 2, Scene 1: 81). But in the exchange between the two men, the traces remain to propel Salieri into acting against Amadeus. (In the first Installation that follows, I examine more fully how a perverse, Divine Rape brings the two composers together along with their women.)

At the end (a beginning), old Salieri is the narrator (when confessing his alleged murder of Mozart) of the grand story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In the very act of confessing this musical saint’s story—in his hospital room—Old Salieri himself is immortalized, canonized, yet strangely becoming “the patron saint” of “mediocrities everywhere” (Act 2, Scene 18: 150). In a section that was cut from the script of the film and not re-added in the Director’s Cut, Shaffer has Salieri say: “From now on no one will be able to speak of Mozart without thinking of me. Whenever they say Mozart with love, they’ll have to say Salieri with loathing. And that’s my immortality—at last! Our names will be tied together for eternity—his in fame and mine in infamy. At least it’s better than the total oblivion he’d planned for me, your merciful God” (Scene 174). But it is clear from what remains in the text of the play, Salieri
is not confessing his sins to Father Vogler; rather, he is putting forth an apologia (for his life): “[He comes down-stage and addresses the audience directly.] This is now the very last hour of my life. You must understand me. Not forgive. I do not seek forgiveness. I was a good man, as the world calls good. What use was it to me? Goodness could not make me a good composer! . . . Was Mozart good? Goodness is nothing in the furnace of art. [Pause] On that dreadful Night . . . my life acquired a terrible and thrilling purpose. The blocking of God in one of His purest manifestations” (Act 2, Scene 1: 78).

While *Amadeus* in its various metamorphoses (incompossibilities) is this and that way and then altogether otherwise, *Henry Fool* has a stable story line, though there are deviations, as expected, from the shooting script in the film itself (see *HF* xxvi). What is especially interesting, however, by way of comparisons is that the character Henry Fool himself in two sections of the film script begins to speak of Leibnizean compossible and incompossible worlds for the characters of the story (see *HF* 67, 85) and equally interesting is that Hartley himself “think[es] of this story in terms of it having many sequels.”¹² Let us turn to the story-film.

¹² Hartley continues: “At the very beginning, I was thinking of *Henry Fool* being part of an epic series of movies about Henry. So when Fay lets Henry go off to Sweden at the end of the film, it opens up all sorts of possibilities” (“Responding” xviii). In fact, on the table of contents page, the screenplay is referred to as “Henry Fool, I.” And as we have come to see Hartley eventually refers to his films, in the credits, as “Possible Films Production.” In *Fay Grimm*, the number of incompossible films (or counterfactual possibilities) become countless. Thematically, in this follow-up film, Henry’s over-production of stories parallels “the harem fool” or male-Scheherazade seducing the sultan’s concubines. As the story continues, the sultan allows the “fool” to confess his sins before death, which Henry Fool engages in. But the confessions themselves, taking forever to tell, are metafictions.
Cut to Two: In *Henry Fool*, Henry walks into town like a Rabelasian man and changes the lives of Simon Grim and his family (his sister, Fay, and mother, Mary, and several other characters, if not the whole world indirectly). He takes a room in the *basement* of the Grim family house. Immediately, Henry boasts of his writings collectively called “my confessions” (which are in several volumes of manuscripts, and which—when eventually read by Simon and Angus James, the book publisher—prove to be unremarkable, mediocre at best, without an audience, and therefore unpublishable [*HF* 118–21]). However, Simon, a trash man at the local dump, whom Henry had encouraged to write, had tutored, and had sent to Angus, is silent about the long, allegedly pornographic, poem he writes (which, after originally published on the Web [*HF* 102–03, 111] and then in print by Angus, wins the Nobel Prize for Literature seven years later. Given the epic proportion of the story, Hartley is able to get away with this kind of exaggeration). Simon becomes so in/famous that a young girl whom Simon had given a note to (*HF* 60) in the local library “warn[s] other girls [on the Internet] about [his being] a potential rapist” (101) and that even the Pope warns against reading him (13). Henry, however, has a real history of statutory rape (a 13 year old girl) for which he spent seven years in prison (*HF* 62). He is driven by his sexual impulses: As a case in point, he “rapes” Simon’s mother, Mary (40), who is in a depressed state and on

13 Henry “rapes” Simon’s mother. I enclose the word *rape* in quotes, for Hartley in the script and film itself slightly undercuts and makes ambiguous the accusations from within the characters’ perspectives. E.g., when Henry in later scenes returns to the Grim house and sees Fay—who says, “Oh, shit! Not you again!”—Mary blurts out, “Beast! Fiend! Rapist!” (*HF* 46). Immediately, however, Fay says to her mother: “Oh, shut up, Mom!” The directions read and the action is “Fay stomps back upstairs. Mary slams her door shut. Simon runs out after Henry.” In the next scene, Simon and Henry discuss the situation: Simon, following Henry, says,
sedatives and who suffers from the loss of her husband in Viet Nam and from having no interests in living. Mary’s daughter, Fay, is depicted at first as rather angry and promiscuous, bringing men home to have sex with them while her mother and brother are downstairs. And Mary’s son, Simon, at the beginning is withdrawn, inarticulate, stammering, and possibly retarded.

Simon’s poem, which we never get to read or hear even a part of, has a rather odd influence on those characters who have read the manuscript in part or in whole: Gnoc (Mr. Deng’s daughter), who has never spoken in her life, begins singing (HF 21–22); Fay says that her period comes early (67); and Mary commits suicide. Simon comes home and finds his mother in the bathroom, having cut her veins and bled to death, during which Henry and Fay are having wild sex in Henry’s basement apartment. (The two scenes are cut and folded into each other [92–95]. Everyone is implicated in every scene.) Eventually, Henry marries Fay, for she is pregnant with their son (HF 107), Ned, and has to take a position at the local dump (HF 100) to support his family. Simon, however, makes so much money from his book advance of $200,000 that he leaves the dump. Both men, like Amadeus and Salieri, thereby exchange positions of prestige and fame. It is a seesaw effect (with

“Henry, wait up!” Henry says, “I am not a rapist!” At that moment the two of them are interrupted by Officer Buñuel, Henry’s parole officer (46–47). Buñuel! The event of Henry having “raped” Mary is never referred to again. Complicating the incident is a span of possibilities and interpretations of what took place among the various incidences of Henry’s having raped Susan (prior to the film) and having gone to prison for seven years, Henry’s “rape” of Mary, and Henry’s helping Pearl, who is being sexually abused by Warren. Hartley suggests in the film with this span of possibilities (rather, incompossibilities) that Henry is progressing away from his propensity to rape. In any case, rape remains Chaste in the film.

14 The cause and effect for Mary’s suicide is set forth by a series of scenes, which I reclaim later in the second Installation. Hartley suggests that Mary’s loss of her husband is the source for her desperate act.
only one round, and yet perhaps another and still another in this compossible epic) or it is a scale of justice (again, with only one, and yet with many sub-scenes, balancing) act that drives both films. In any case, both sets of men are immortalized, canonized. If there is any saving grace at all in Henry, it takes place one night when Fay is upset with him—Henry has taken Ned to the “Inferno,” a strip joint—and tells Henry not to come home. True to his nature, Henry returns home to his potential trouble (but) in the basement apartment to sleep where he finds Pearl (14 years old), who has repeatedly been sexually abused by her stepfather, Warren. She offers Henry sex in return for his killing Warren (HF 135). He rejects the offer and goes to Pearl’s home to see if Warren’s wife, Vicky, who has been physically abused by Warren, is okay and to speak with her about the sexual abuse of Pearl. While there, Warren awakes and repeatedly beats Henry, but in a scuffle Henry accidentally causes Warren’s death (136–37). There is a sense of justice in this scene.

In a rather unexpected ending—another beginning?—to the film, Simon further bonds with Henry and balances the scales of justice as well as lives up to his ethical promise to Henry (HF 116–17; 122–27). Simon knows that Henry has had a great influence on getting him to write his opus. He sees Henry as his teacher-pedagogue, but with all of its etymological connections. (Part of their exchange—besides communicating by trafficking in women, both Mary and Fay, Vicky and Pearl—is cemented in Simon’s promise to Henry that, as repayment for all that Henry has given him, he will not sign a book contract for his poem without requiring the publisher’s having also to publish Simon’s “confessions”—which of course the publisher, Angus, flatly refuses to do. Simon—in the famous hospital scene of the birth of Henry’s son, Ned—relates to Henry why he has reneged on the deal. They do not part amicably.
Seven years later, Ned brings the two men together, and Simon, out of a sense of his promise to help and acknowledge his mentor and brother-in-law, ends up sending Henry to Sweden in disguise as himself to accept the Nobel Prize in Literature. In this closing scene the ethical bond between the two appears to be in balance.\footnote{It is difficult, however, in the closing shots of the film to tell whether Henry is running toward or away from the plane on the tarmac that is waiting to fly him to Sweden. Hartley says the film has an ending, purposefully left open for the audience (“Responding” xx–xxi). Later in Fay Grimm, this same notion of not knowing, or openness in the film is made fun of in the script itself, with the actors-characters in their discussion with authorities. Hartley and others also in the interviews, extras on the DVD, make fun.}

In both cases—\textit{Amadeus} and \textit{Henry Fool}—a mediocre composer or writer becomes attached to the canonization of the ingenious, great composer-writer. In both cases, the bonding and canonization are linked conductively with the themes of rape and pedagogy, but more so in the second film. (Rape becomes progressively more pronounced, and yet remains Chaste, as we move from film to film.) In John Waters’s film, rape and canonization take on major perverse, campy Christian, Catholic, universal, overtones, adding to the theme of Divine Rape and to its being undercut by parody and pastiche (cf. Frappier-Mazur).

Cut to Three: Among the three films, \textit{Multiple Maniacs} (1970)\footnote{For the script, see Waters.} is the most complicated: Quickly put, men (or clear binary-gender distinctions) are less important; third sexes-freaks are more so. There are three rapes: Lady Divine is raped in the streets by a male while being pinned down by a female; Divine is raped anally in a church with a crucifix attached to rosary beads by a female, Mink Stole; and finally Divine, in a crazy state of mind, is raped by a fif-
teen-foot (mechanical) Lobster, or Lobstora, which can be traced back to an actual postcard that advertises Baltimore. The thematic of canonization (great art, film, to be immortalized) informs this film in its production, execution, and distribution and in its characters (all outcasts, remainders, multiple maniacs, freaks in “a Calvacade of Perversions,” riding on the prior infamy of Russ Meyer and specifically Herschell Gordon Lewis’s *Two Thousand Maniacs*, 1964, and Tod Browning’s *Freaks*, 1932). *Multiple Maniacs* is an underground film that has been perversely canonized. There is a hilarious scene of Christ feeding the hungry ones with Wonder Bread (a precursor to Holy Communion) and canned tuna (symbolic of Christ himself). Waters is good at recasting our cultural, or Absolut/e, canonized heroes, in commercials that inform our contemporary lives.

Divine is God (though a rather Mad God, a *maDeus* [cf. Genet, *Our Lady*]). The theme of Divine Rape permeates the entire film,\(^1\) with Divine becoming obsessively hysterical, until s/he, like a monster (GODzilla in a “B” film within an underground film)—the implications of the foldings in this film border on being inexplicable—is shot down in the streets by the National Guard. The divine freak “Lady Divine” is dead! Though she continues to cast a shadow in the caves of our memories and in yet other Waters’s films such as *Pink Flamingo*.

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\(^{17}\) As I have pointed out in the Preamble, immortals (gods) raping female mortals is a common theme in mythology, which informs our view of what drives the constitution of the Greeks and Romans and modern-day notions of nation building.
Scanning the Cuts

He was my idol! I can’t remember a time when I didn’t know his name! When I was only fourteen he was already famous. Even in Legnago—the tiniest town in Italy—I knew of him.

Old Salieri, Amadeus (film, Scene 15)

Mozart! Mozart! I cannot bear it any longer! I confess! I confess what I did! I’m guilty! I killed you! Sir I confess! I killed you!

Old Salieri, Amadeus (Scene 2)

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: “I seek God! I seek God!”…”Whither is God?” he cried; “I will tell you. We have killed him—you and I…. Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose.”


Installation, DVD One (Shaffer and Forman, Amadeus, Canonization): Set, In a workroom. Bookshelves, filled with books, photocopies, CDs, videos, and curios. On various tables, three computers with screens lit. Against a wall, a set of old drums covered and nested one over the other. On a wall, a print of Karl Marx and a signed original print of Andy Warhol’s Campbell’s Tomato Soup shopping bag. The floor is littered with stacks of papers and magazines. V.V. sits at a computer, which has a full screen picture of Old Salieri. To his left are notes and versions of Shaffer’s and Forman’s scripts. He sits listening to a roundtable of discussants on a DVD of Amadeus—call it Vitanza’s Cut—while composing and interjecting his comments:

PETER SHAFFER: “To me there is something pure about Salieri’s pursuit of an eternal Absolute through music, just as there is something irredeemably impure about his
simultaneous pursuit of eternal fame” (“Introduction,” Amadeus xvii).

ANTONIO SALIERI: Yes, “I wanted Fame…. I wanted to blaze like a comet across the firmament of Europe! Yet only in one special way. Music! Absolute music! … A note of music is either right or wrong absolutely! Not even time can alter that: music is God’s art” (Amadeus, Act 1, Scene 2: 11).

Shaffer’s plays (Miloš’s films) interrupt this myth of God’s presence—immanence—in music.

JEAN-LUC NANCY: For me, there is something too pure (i.e., too substantially a tantalization refined of remainders) about Salieri’s pursuit of an absolute myth of the presence of God in music—in communion, community—just as there is something equally too pure about Salieri’s desiring fame for himself. He would be—as the myth of the Eighteenth century would have it—he thinks he, not Mozart, should be—the incarnation of God, the magic flute of God, on Earth. But he is apparently frustrated by his God, who favors Mozart. Hence, opting for infamy, he is given to rivalry with God through Mozart. It is the case—in this case—that the thinking of subjectivity, of fame, or even infamy, of canonization, “thwarts” community (Inoperative 23). Unless one would insist on sacrifice as the basis for community!

“DOCTOR-BIOGRAPHER” of KARL MARX: “He [Marx] writes with nostalgia and longing for something thwarted. For something that didn’t happen” (Kipnis, Ecstasy 249; emphasis mine). Why did this god communism fail him! Fail in founding a new man and community!
As Nancy summarizes and argues—and Blanchot picks up on—“the word ‘communism’ stands as an emblem of the desire to discover or rediscover a place of community” (Nancy, Inoperative 1; Blanchot, Unavowable 1–3). But “Community,” as Nancy says, “has not taken place” (11; Nancy’s emphasis). What has taken this place of communism (or of the canonization of the proletariat) is the idea that man, through his work, produces his own essence, “and furthermore producing precisely this essence as community. An absolute immanence of man to man—a humanism—and of community to community—a communism—[but One that] obstinately subtends [delimits]… all forms of oppositional communism [or resistance, seen as counterrevolutionary]…. [I]t is precisely the immanence of man to man… that constitutes the stumbling block to a thinking of community…. Essence is set to work in them; through them, it becomes its own work. This is what we have called ‘totalitarianism,’ but it might be better named ‘immanentism’” (2–3; Nancy’s emphasis).

Therefore, it does not matter, man or God, God or man, or for that matter, G/goddess or woman. But it could as easily be, as it has been repeatedly, the man’s own essence emanating a Stalinist community, which would be the rapedeath of community (Inoperative 12).

For Salieri, it is God emanating through Amadeus directly to him. Hence, GOD → (ravishes) → Amadeus but only indirectly Salieri himself. Shaffer describes this indirect ravishment of Salieri, as if he were Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, being raped, impregnated by
God Himself, for the second coming. Shaffer has Salieri reading Amadeus’s manuscripts: Salieri recalls, “Here again was the very voice of God!” Then Shaffer gives his stage directions: “The music swells. What we now hear is an amazing collage of great passages from Mozart’s music, ravishing to Salieri and to us. The Court Composer . . . walks around and around his salon, reading the pages and dropping them on the floor as if in a rough and tumbling sea; he experiences the point where beauty and great pain coalesce. More pages fall than he can read, scattering across the floor in a white cascade” (scene 70; emphasis mine).

MILAN KUNDERA: Yes, I have written much about the beloved and music, about the failure of communism, and the trickiness of immortality. I have written a whole novel—Immortality itself—that is based on a fictive character named Agnes and her gesture and have used it paradigmatically in association with Bettina née Brentano’s confrontation with Goethe’s wife, Christiane, and Bettina’s subsequent attachment to the Maestro himself, Goethe, which to this day has guaranteed Bettina’s own canonization and immortality (45–47, 56–58). The pièce de résistance, of course, took place when Bettina jumped into the lap of Goethe, hugged him, and fell asleep, or so she tells us in her writings. It really does not matter if this is

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18 In Amadeus (Act 1, Scene 6: 30), Salieri prays to God to “enter” him, yet He does not. (Cf. Schreber, Memoirs.)

19 This scene of ravishment is filled with double entendres. E.g., Amadeus boasts to his Majesty Joseph II, about how long he can keep it up. In response to the Absolute, elevated themes of gods and legends, in the film, Amadeus responds to Von Swieten: “Elevated? What does that mean? Elevated! The only thing a man should elevate is—oh, excuse me. I’m sorry. I’m stupid” (script, scene 113). In the play, Amadeus says: “Oh, elevated! Elevated! . . . The only thing a man should elevate is his doodle” (Act 2, Scene 4: 89).
the way it was, for “she is revealing to us how she wants us to see her” (57). She offers us a photograph. An instance. A still. A quick cut! She directs her own cut!

JEAN-LUC NANCY: But how are we to read Shaffer’s rendering of Amadeus’s deathbed scene and burial. As sacrifice? Or as the beginning of a community without a community, as infinite finitude? As an exposition but simultaneous exscription?

AVITAL RONELL: Or as the occasion for finitude’s score!

There is the notion in eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature, as Lawrence Kramer reminds us, that characters die in “the lovedeath,” to advance the spectators (who might be another actor or members of the audience, as in the play Amadeus). Kramer writes: “Their death absorbs, and turns to bliss, the guilt that the spectator feels for desiring what they do. . . . Only the spectator can both experience and survive the lovedeath. Only the spectator can both ‘have’ jouissance like a woman (the imaginary experience) and ‘know’ it like a man (the survival)” (134–35). This is drama, still, as a sacrificial rapedeath and lovedeath rite.

JEAN-LUC NANCY: What must be thought, instead, is a community without community, a community constantly coming, never arriving and staying fixed in music (Inoperative 71). This community without is based not on religion and sacrifice (135) nor on any “theologicopolitics” (Sense 89, 91–92, 105–06), but on finitude.

AVITAL RONELL: Yes, on finitude’s score. Let me elbow back in here and say: “Finitude is not about the end in terms
of fulfillment [e.g., *jouissance*] or teleological accomplishment but about a suspension, a hiatus in meaning, reopened each time in the here and now, disappearing as it opens, exposing itself to something so unexpected and possibly *new* that it persistently eludes its own grasp” (*Finitude’s Score* 5; Ronell’s emphasis).

Finitude may be a Heideggerian *Ereignis* (an event, expropriation), or interruption, or caesura. Or as demonstrated in all versions of *Amadeus*, a giggle. A childish giggle. A *becoming* child of a giggle that interrupts an absolution of all who are but mediocrities. In a hospital madhouse. As a voiceover at the end of the film (or as the virtual curtains fall). Seen or experienced as a Wink: As Nancy writes: “This presence of no god could however carry with it the enticement, the call, the *Wink* [nod] of an à-dieu: a going to god, or an adieu to all gods” (*Inoperative* 137; Nancy’s emphasis. Cf. 115, 119). As Salieri exposes himself and all those other so-called mediocrities, he also exscribes himself as in what Deleuze calls a conversation with Amadeus.

JEAN-LUC NANCY: “[O]ne begins to imagine”—having viewed *Amadeus*—“that what has been most genial in Europe, and maybe even its very idea of genius, arose above all out of a formidable necessity of putting on stage the sense of sense [i.e., to represent the Divine, the very desired community—communion, communism—itself, which can but end in violence (sexual violence, rape) as a founding event of community]... No doubt the cycle of dramatic [violent] representations is closed. It is not by chance that theater today is without any new fable, without *mythos*, having exhausted the total fable... the fable of the end of
fables. . . . The curtain has fallen on the metaphysical scene, on metaphysics as scene of (re)presentation” (Sense 23).

Nancy makes clear, the fable in Chaste form—none-theless, an immanentism—lives on and on and on. (See Weber, Theatricality as Medium.)

JEAN-LUC NANCY: But again, How are we to read Shaffer’s rendering of Amadeus’s deathbed scene and burial. As sacrifice? Or as the beginning of a community without a community, as infinite finitude?

AVITAL RONELL: Or again, as an occasion for Finitude’s Score!

Ronell and then D. Diane Davis strongly suggest something about Mozart by way of Deleuze, which can help us in responding to Jean-Luc’s enquiry. Ronell’s scanners pick up on Deleuze, whose “example for becoming with regard to Conversation calls in the birds [that] signal the uncanny space that travels between us when we converse.”20 Ronell quotes Deleuze: “It is like Mozart’s birds: in this music there is a bird-becoming, but caught in a music-becoming of the bird, the two forming a single becoming, a single bloc, an a-parallel evolution—not an exchange, but ‘a confidence with no possible interlocutor,’ as a commentator on Mozart says; in short, a conversation” (xvi; Deleuze, Dialogues 3). But what is alluded to in terms of a “conversation”?

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Ronell, in *Dictation*, answers: “For his part, Deleuze develops an understanding of Conversation that conditions a commonality in which the ‘we’ does not work together but between the two. Writing between themselves they are writing à deux, each witnessing the other in his solitude…. The evolution of a between zone, with which this work tries to negotiate in the cases of [Amadeus and Salieri], makes it necessary to consider not only what happens between two proper names but also to read the place which emerges between [Shaffer] and his mutating text. This place, which is a place of testimony, remains essentially atypical, however, as it does not take place in one or two of the terms but tries to articulate what there is between, in the dynamic between that sets relations into provisional positions” (xiv–xv; Ronell’s emphasis and bracketed interpolations mine).

JEAN-LUC NANCY: Then, what you are getting at, Victor, with your interpolations (interruptions, finitudes) is that “we” should read Shaffer’s rendering of the final death-bed-writing scene of Amadeus’s writing “his” Requiem and Salieri’s copying it as what Deleuze calls a conversation and what Ronell calls dictation, or a writing à deux, a writing in between.

AVITAL RONELL: So then, Victor, the conversation between the two composers, with the stand-in of it as the Requiem, is Finitude’s Score. In fact, all the music referred to in the film—not just the mass—is part of that Score. And yet, as I say in *Dictations*, none of the conversation between the two is in the film, for what is in between is “the noncanonical excess of [Mozart’s] signature” (ix). It’s not about the subject Mozart and the signature “Mozart,” or “Amadeus,” just as it is not about the so-called successful and unsuc-
cessful composer but what lies in between—in some third figure—as noncanonic excess. Which, yes, the versions of the play and the film are filled with!

Yes and Yes. It is, as Jean-Luc might say, not only in terms of immanence a story necessarily to be read or seen, hermeneutically, in the realm of being, but also in paraterms of finitude a parastory to be anticipated-ly listened to—in the realm of relations. (I say “para”story, for it is a radical finitude of stories that lies alongside, or in between, the so-called stories of Amadeus-Mozart and Salieri, the ones that would be canonized.) One would have to be hysterical to proffer them. One would have to hear. . . .

PETER SHAFFER: “. . . a high-pitched giggle, which is going to characterize Mozart throughout the film” (film, scene 25; cf. play 24).

Yes, the giggle, or Wink (the nod), as Jean-Luc discusses it, an à-dieu, to an absent god. . . . The parastory, as you might say, Avital, “points to the thirdness that they [Amadeus and Salieri] conceived between themselves and subjected to consistent morphing” (Dicta-
tions xii; emphasis and interpolation added). We can hermeneutically-communicatively say that the music is Mozart’s and the frame of the story is Salieri’s (or Shaffer’s) rendering. But the parastories between them are not in any realm of being, or immanence. We cannot say that they are theirs. They belong to no subject (they are not substantial). As a caseless in pointless, Amadeus cannot control t/his giggle. When he attempts to be serious, inevitably, contrary to his intentions, he but giggles, or butt f/arts, which is how Shaffer introduces Amadeus to Salieri and to us.
Causing consternation around him and for himself. Mouths open agape. Out of the mouth of the adult, but obscene childish beast (*infans*), comes giggles. Out of the mouths of Amadeus’s fictive contemporaries comes . . . (silence that assaults our eardrums). The entire framing device that Shaffer constructs for Salieri’s apology is undercut—cut!—cut!—cut!—by the final Amadeusian giggle before all goes finally black on the stage or screen.

I must greatly emphasize what I have not yet said enough, for this parastory of finitude’s mis-take on Amadeus’s in betweens, his potential tweenings, is not one that can be easily told or read, given what counts for telling and reading, in terms of *being* and *difference*. Hence, the reasons for my referring in the introduction to this chapter to the men sharing a *homosocial space of trafficking in women*, which they *do* share in society. No doubt about it. This point, we, indeed, can immediately understand! For the parastory to be heard and listened to and read, however, would require, as Diane Davis might explain, that the story of Mozart, “Amadeus,” and Salieri—their in betweens—”would have to be radically redefined: not according to immanence’s registers of being and difference [not that kind of discourse] but according to finitude’s resisters of becoming and *différance*” (“Finitude’s Clamor” 135). And not just the between of the men, but the tweening of Amadeus and Constanze in their perverse fugue-(flux-neutral)-like scatalogical ex-change (play, Act 1, Scene 5; film, Scene: 29),

21 I am referring to the scene in which Amadeus is talking to Constanze in perverse-reverse strings of phrases and sentences. Salieri remains in hiding, listening with mouth agape at this person. *Amadeus*, in reverse
he sees that this obscene childish twenty-six year old man is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (Is it not also wonderful that Amadeus is the middle, the in between proper, but Oh, so improper, name!) WAM is driven to lose his (proper) names: Wolfgang and Wolfie. Amadeus and beloved by God. Mozart and belittled by Father. WAM tweens. Which is precisely what “Divine” (in Multiple Maniacs) attempts.

And yet, we can hear finitude’s clamor of the para-story—the nondialectical tweening back and forth, zigzagging—if we but retune our ears. One possibility would be to listen not deductively, inductively, or abductively, but conductively.

DIANE DAVIS: Yes, Victor, “Though finitude is, strictly speaking, unspeakable, it’s not incommunicable: It communicates itself constantly, irrepressibly, as inscription’s exscriptions. The saying continuously haunts the said, coming through in textual disturbances, interruptions in the manifestation of meaning and being” (“Finitude’s Clamor” 133; cf. Nancy, “Exscription,” Birth 319–40). My gods, have we not experienced enough of these kinds of hauntings and interruptions in y/our own earlier book, Sexual Violence in Western Thought and Writing: Chaste Rape! You make demands of y/our readers’ having to shift, to zigzag, between academic-immanence’s registers of being and difference and finitude’s registers of becoming and différance!

DIANE DAVIS: “Levinas says it comes through [to us] as ‘a blinking of meaning’ (Otherwise 152). Thanks in part to
the purely performative [theatrical] dimension of language, to what Paul de Man calls the ‘text machine’—which is responsible, Ronell writes, ‘for effects of meaning generated by sheer contingency, elements of uncontrol and improvisation’ (*Stupidity* 170)—the exscribed does leave a(n inassimilable) trace. That is, thanks in part to language’s finitude . . . the exscribed does manage to crash inscription’s party, intruding on the festivities by making some sssstatic-y noise, gesturing to us from the door (from the outside)” (134).

* Yes, Mozart *speaks*, but also, as you might say, Diane, “disruptive bursts of the unintelligible” *speak* Mozart (134; cf. Davis, *Breaking Up*).

DIANE DAVIS: Yes, “This we-who writes [and giggles, winks, nods] doesn’t work ‘together’ (in the typical sense of collaboration) but *between* the two, at the limit, where the encounter with the Other necessarily takes ‘you’ out: You are written, or as Ronell says, you are ‘overwritten’ (*Stupidity* 45) by it” (137; interpolations mine).

* It may very well be that the giggles are channeled through Amadeus by a mad god (*deus*)—and yet, an hysterically mad and obsessively made God—but the giggles are still more than enough excess to ever be canonized! Or Is this—after all has been possibly undone and redone by Capital—the case? (I will take up the issue, the replaying of, the Divine by Nancy in my discussion of *Multiple Maniacs*, in which the newest Divine is excess itself [ever-] confronting possible ap/propriation, canonization.)

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22 About a mad God (Deus) and the crucifixion, See Foucault, *Madness* 78–84.
But for now, let us say that the two—Amadeus and Salieri—minus God—minus immanence—form “a bloc,” as Deleuze would say, “of becoming” (Dialogues 7). Overwriting Finitude’s Score. A singular bloc of birds-cum-wasp and orchid. De-volving in a-parallel mannerisms (2–3).
If a teacher puts her mind to it, none of her students will succeed.
Elfriede Jelinek, *The Piano Teacher* (9)

At the center of... pedagogy is the fuck.
Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (180)

Let us take an example as simple as: x starts practicing piano again. Is it an Oedipal return to childhood? Is it a way of dying... Is it a new borderline, an active line that will bring other becomings entirely different from becoming or rebecoming a pianist, that will induce a transformation of all of the preceding assemblages to which x was prisoner?... Schizoanalysis, or pragmatics, has no other meaning: Make a rhizome... a becoming, people your desert. So experiment.

*Set simultaneously at “The World of Donuts” (a setting in Henry Fool) and in a piano classroom (a setting in The Piano Teacher)!

Pedagogy is everything in *Henry Fool*. Piano pedagogy! In a quasi-confessional scene, after Henry has “raped” Mary and told Simon that he has made “love” with Mary, Simon Grim talks alone in church with Father Hawkes about Henry:

SIMON: “...do you think Henry is... dangerous?”

FATHER HAWKES: “He needs help. Our help. Yours especially.”

SIMON: “But what can I do?”
FATHER HAWKES: “The best parts of himself come to the surface when he’s helping someone learn: I’ve seen this. Let yourself be taught. Show your appreciation for his guidance. In this way, you know, perhaps. Well. There’s hope for everyone. Even. Even Henry” (HF 65).

Simon willingly thereafter becomes Henry’s student, which raises the question of whether or not Simon is calling Henry’s attention away from Mary, his mother, and toward himself...

HAL HARTLEY (interrupting): I don’t think that in writing and shooting that section, I would have Simon drawing attention away from Mary. After all, Simon must know, given what Father Hawkes tells him, that Mary is only one possible student or person that Henry would give attention to, if a student at all. What constitutes a “student” here? And what constitutes a “lesson” in this film! There is that contrastive parallel between Mary and Pearl. Let us not forget that Henry gives attention to Pearl as well and attempts to teach Vicky to leave Warren and then attempts, though fails, to teach Warren, who may be uneducable, unchangeable except by the Owen Feers of the world, with their right-wing politics. Henry does change in the film just as Simon and Fay change...

...Good enough! But there is a huge leap away from the direction I thought this installation was drifting toward. So okay. The conductive links are among Henry-Mary-Simon. Henry is a naturally born teacher (pedagogue) and molester (pedophile) while Mary fails as a student and Simon succeeds. (Later, however, the pedagogical relationship between Henry and Simon is reversed as circumstances change every-
thing. When Simon’s poem becomes noticed and there is a chance it will be published, Simon has the authority and voice to tell Henry that he must marry his sister, Fay, who is pregnant.)

HAL HARTLEY: “Most of my films have had that kind of bildungsroman quality” (“Responding” xiii). Henry perhaps changes the most. “One handy phrase I used a lot during the writing was, ‘What happens if the most untrustworthy man in town were the best person in town?’ Henry is a completely unreliable, polymorphously perverse egomaniac, but he’s a good man—the most selfless, the most honest, the most truthful, the strongest. I love telling stories like that, when people just don’t fit into the box correctly” (xx). . . .

HAL HARTLEY: But I still think that one of the central scenes in the film is when Henry comes home and enters his basement apartment and Pearl is there waiting for him. “I wanted that scene in the basement between Pearl—who’s aged thirteen—and Henry to be really harsh, and I wanted us to at least fear that Henry is capable of doing something stupid and horrible again” (“Responding” xix; emphasis mine).

Prior to this scene with Father Hawkes, Hal, you write the scene of Henry giving Simon a piano-spelling lesson. What motivates this pedagogical scene is the previous one with Henry’s tearing a page from Simon’s manuscript and Gnoc’s displaying it for all to see in The World of Donuts. Vicky reads and denounces this page as pornographic.

HAL HARTLEY: Yes, people in the film respond to the poem in different ways. While it makes Gnoc sing (speak) for
the first time in her life, it annoys others (“Responding” xvii). We don’t see the poem; and yet, we see it by way of a variety of effects and affects it has on people.

Then after Vicky’s response, you introduce a quick cut to the piano-spelling scene with Henry at a piano, hitting one note for each possible spelling of the homophones there-their-they’re. (This thematic punctum of the one staccato note is prevalent in the film at strategic moments.)

HENRY FOOL: “See, Simon, there are three kinds of there. There’s ‘There.’ T-H-E-R-E. There are the donuts. Then there’s T-H-E-I-R; which is the possessive. It is their donut. Then, finally, there’s ‘they’re.’ T-H-E-Y’-R-E. A contraction, meaning they are. They’re the donut people. Get it?” (31).

I don’t know about Simon, but I get the DONUT progressively (or regressively as an ex-scription) to mean Do Not. (The transformation is part of the problem of spelling the various homophones for there, which is philosophically there is, es gibt, il y a. Get it?) There are the do-not people and their do-nots. People are what they do. Or do not do. Thou shalt not. Therefore, they do not, except to add to the do-not Decalogue. By telling others to do-not. Hence, there are and they’re the do-not people, making up—composing—the World of Do Nots. These are the people who obsessively engage in the hortatory negative. Against people like Henry, Simon, and Fay. Who act; suffer; learn.23 And yet, there is Henry who acts against the Decalogue; in fact, he thinks it is his vocation to do so.

23 But these are the major characters. What is remarkable—though a dramatic convention—is how much Amy changes in respect to Simon. (Cf. Hartley, “Responding” xiv–xv.)
The world of donuts and do nots is not an easy one to determine, anymore than anything that is happening in *Henry Fool*. Which is a film not about interpretation but about experimentation.  

On this piano in the Grim house there is a picture of a man dressed in a uniform, perhaps a U.S. Army uniform. Prior to the spelling-piano lesson, Henry is speaking briefly with Mary. The film directions read: “He stops and lifts a small framed photo of a soldier off the piano” (*HF* 22).

HENRY FOOL: “This your husband?” (22).

The film directions then read: “Violated somehow, she gets up and snatches it out of his hands. She puts it in a drawer and cringes as Henry plays one note on the piano.” Punctum!

MARY GRIM: “Stop that” (22).

This scene thematically links with the other piano lesson scene of Mary’s sitting at the piano and playing when Simon walks in on her and they exchange a similarly laconic exchange. But we are left with the question Who is in the photo?

HAL HARTLEY: It is most likely Mary’s husband. I’ve surmised, as a method actor might, that “the father probably died in the Vietnam War. I thought a lot about how different Mom could have been and I worked it out that she had once shown some promise as a pianist. I wanted her to be

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24 Cf. Deleuze, *Dialogues* 48–49; Lyotard’s “pagus” and “pagani” in *Differend* 151–81; and *Just Gaming* 9–10, 12, 14, 34, 49; Kittler, *Discourse Networks*. 
creative because I thought it was very important to get her and Simon into that scene when she’s playing the piano, and he says, ‘That’s nice,’ and she makes the distinction between ‘nice’ and ‘unremarkable,’ which is a harsh reality. [See HF 77.] I imagined she got knocked up in high school while she was waiting to get into music school, and then her boyfriend was drafted and got killed so she got stuck with these kids” (“Responding” xvi).

So Mary stops playing when Simon sees her because her playing is “not remarkable”! In the next scene Simon takes his manuscript to the publisher Angus, hoping that it will be remarkable and, therefore, publishable. But while he takes this risk of showing his poem, Mary takes her life by cutting her wrists. Though in the unfolding events of the film, Simon’s poem is rejected by the publisher, Simon’s poem becomes remarkable and the publisher changes his mind! Simon has a future. Mary thought she did not. She becomes a do not. It is the case, however, that she is totally overwhelmed by her situation—her life is as her name says, grim—she comes to being a do not.

HAL HARTLEY: Mary “is a total life-negating person” (“Responding” xvii).

I am tempted to say that Henry also is a do not. Because of his getting Fay pregnant, he has to give up, as he says, his “vocation” (HF 32, 48). But as Salieri is linked to Mozart, Henry is linked to Simon, who is the Nobel Prize winner. . . . Like Salieri and Amadeus, Henry and Simon are in a “conversation” together. That is what is between them. . . . Salieri does something. He’s constantly trying. . . . But the whole issue of whether or not Henry himself is a great writer is
indeterminable. In terms of Salieri and Henry, this is not the issue we should be concerned with.

HAL HARTLEY: Yes, “I didn’t . . . want us to be able to see either Henry’s confession or Simon’s poem, because I didn’t want us to get involved with judging them. That wasn’t really the issue. It could be that Henry’s confession is a great piece of writing even though Simon and the publisher guy dismiss it. I was much more interested in showing how the value of creative activity is often measured by the particular kind of reaction it elicits” (“Responding” xii).

HAL HARTLEY: Let me slightly modify what you have said in your comparisons between Salieri-Amadeus and Henry-Simon. Perhaps it is a different case with Salieri and Mozart. These are real people with real music. But our attitudes toward them could turn on a dime, contrary to the principle of canonization. Shaffer-Forman’s telling of Salieri’s telling brings Salieri to the forefront now. Our ears and eyes are taught to be obsessive, but they are given to becoming hysterical. Shaffer and Forman’s film Amadeus has taught us of Salieri himself and in a contrary way. If we could all be but patron saints of mediocrity! This apparently is an option. Simply recall Blake’s reading of Satan as the hero of Genesis. God-Satan-Blake form an assemblage, a bloc. There is something Satanic in both Salieri and Henry. They are angels but devils. And it’s the same with Fay and Mary! They enter the discursive scene and change how we hear and see the incompossible world of that scene, creating new incompossibilities. And we should not think of Amadeus and Simon as simply angels (cf. “Responding” xiv). Nor should we think that Mary must succumb to her end, for she does not in other incompossible worlds.
Yes. And yet, as we have said, we must be careful of recognition, immanence, the Absolute, immortality, subjectivity, verticality. Perhaps we can say again that the two sets of men are in the between zone. Your picking up on the change in the conditions for incompossibilities is what can help us avoid the myth of immanence. . . . And yes, yes, yes Mary.

As Avital said, finitude is “a suspension, a hiatus in meaning, reopened each time in the here and now, disappearing as it opens, exposing itself to something so unexpected and possibly new that it persistently eludes its own grasp.” I am thinking of the open mouth that runs throughout *Amadeus*. Who spouts out whatever does not come to mind. People cannot believe what Amadeus is saying as he moves from being serious to becoming vulgar and consequently their own mouths become agape. And, I would remind us, the open mouth runs throughout Jean-Luc’s writings.\(^{25}\)

Ah, and let us not also forget that this giggling, this pouring forth, “gushing” forth, from the open Amadeus (a Mad Deus) mouth of the jug, as Wolfgang points to and further develops from Holderlin and Heidegger (see “The Thing” in *Poetry*; 172–73), in terms of *Geviert* (the fourfold), is the gift. But what Wolfgang is pointing to is . . .

\(^{25}\) For the image-theme of the open mouth as an expression of finitude, see Nancy, *Experience* (90, 114, 145). Also, see Shaffer’s *Amadeus* (play, 90, 140, 144.); Fynsk, *Infant* (11, 17–20). But also, see Bataille, “Mouth” in *Visions* (59–60).
WOLFGANG SCHIRMACHER: . . . Homo Generator who has the capability, the nature, of originating new life forms. S/he (whatever sex, if sexed) can pour forth not just thirds, as Victor suggests, but four folds of life, bringing together what, heretofore, was never thought acceptable to combine. I worry when Victor talks about threes, for they do have a tendency to fall back into a Hegelian thinking and result in a synthesis. But I am well aware that Victor is willing to take that risk. And I applaud him; after all, I think: “Homo generator has no fear of his or her mistakes, for they are inseparable from his or her succeeding—as body politics teaches us” (“Homo Generator” 71). Homo Generator, like Amadeus himself, with all of Victor’s puns on the name, “is rebellious, takes no prisoners, interrupts quite violently the daily routine. But all that with a smile [perhaps a giggle!], please” (73).

Yes, Wolfgang, I think that you put it well, this whole notion of the interruption and on the basis of our daily lives. Wolfgang Mozart irrepressibly interrupts. For me what you say in terms of your fourth law of media—“mediation is the flow [the flux] of media”—captures well what we are wrestling with, and on the basis or baselessness of our lived lives. You write: “Mediation is no longer a deal between partners or a communication following established rules, but an innovative process of media to which we belong. In such a mediation there is not even the goal of mutual understanding, because the flow [the flux] needs breaks. Dissent is the salt of mediation and designed to eliminate anthropocentric arrangements, the mafia practices of humankind. Mediation floods any content, fills the artificial lifeworld, evokes the ‘fourfold’ (Geviert), and allows us to be life’s on artist” (79). What Amadeus stands for at court, with all those who
would flatter the Emperor Joseph II, is to evoke, in his communications with them, both in the play and the film, the pouring forth of lives upon lives.

I want now to slightly return to the spelling-piano lesson. There is something there that wants to be explored further in the light of what you just said, Wolfgang. Specifically, the complexity of and the implications within there. Da. When linked to the verb To Be. That is, There is. Da-sein. There is this wonderful habit that inhabits many of the scenes with Joseph II in Amadeus. He has the habit of saying “There it is.” Recall the scene that goes like this:

VON STRACK: “Your majesty, Herr Mozart.”

JOSEPH: “Yes, what about him?”

VON STRACK: “He’s here.”

JOSEPH: “Ah-ha. Well. There it is. Good.” (film, scene 45)26

This is Joseph’s typical expression of a conclusion to something that is to begin. An event (perhaps Ereignis, but only Gregor Samsa would be sensitive to such an event). As I read this expression earlier, it is es geht. It gives (itself)! It is...what Jean-Luc refers to as “the generosity of being” (Experience 147). This is what Amadeus listens to—this generosity—and its forever remainderless becoming. This is the conversation. Between Amadeus and Salieri in the deathbed scene. If we but listen. To. The caesura. The enjambment.

26 The lines are different in the play version (see Act 1, Scene 7: 33).
Interrupting and jamming the pull toward the immanent-transcendental signal. This gift is finitude’s score.

ROLAND BARTHES: I have wanted to interrupt this thought for some time. I recall having written, “I am increasingly convinced, both in writing [composition] and in teaching [pedagogy], that the fundamental operation of [is] fragmentation, and, if one teaches, digression, or, to put it in a preciously ambiguous word, excursions. I should therefore like the speaking and the listening that will be interwoven here to resemble the comings and going of a child playing beside his mother, leaving her, returning to bring her a pebble, a piece of string, and thereby tracing around a calm center a whole locus of play within which the pebble, the string come to matter less than the enthusiastic giving of them” (“Inaugural Lecture” 476–77).

GIORGIO AGAMBEN: Let us not forget that Vittorio discusses the child in great depth in his book *Sexual Violence in Western Thought and Writing: Chaste Rape*. He specifically discusses Freud and the child and Kristeva’s view of the centralization of the child in psychoanalysis as an error, and then goes on to discuss Derrida’s and my own views of the child in relation to infancy and history. He gives time to a rethinking of Heraclitus’s melancholy child playing a game of dice.

* Becoming-children can best play the game.

MILAN KUNDERA: Yes, and your saying such reminds me of Bettina (Brentano) and Goethe and the whole issue of immortality and attachment and the game. I have written: “In 1807, on the day of their first meeting, [Bettina] sat herself on [Goethe’s] lap, if we can trust her own description…. She said, ‘I am interested in nothing but
you.’ Goethe smiled and said the following fateful words to the young woman: ‘You are a charming child.’ … She felt so good snuggled up against him that soon she fell asleep. [...] Nothing is more useful than to adopt the status of a child: a child can do whatever it likes” (*Immortality* 57–58; see 59–74).27

Joseph Il: Ah, yes, this, too, reminds me of Mozart and Antoinette. When I introduced Mozart to my court, I recounted the time when Mozart “was only six years old. He was giving the most brilliant little concert here. As he got off the stool, he slipped and fell. My sister Antoinette helped him up herself, and do you know what he did? Jumped straight into her arms and said, ‘Will you marry me, yes or no?’” (film, scene 47).

But are these exemplars not the reverse of Salieri-Amadeus! Is not Salieri attaching himself to Amadeus, and is not Amadeus the child while Salieri is the surrogate, super-ego father! But perhaps, you two, are suggesting that it is Amadeus, the child, who

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27 The relationship between Bettina Brentano and Goethe is rather infamous. The letters that Bettina wrote to Goethe and that he encouraged are hysterical discourse. The letters are, as Kittler suggests, mere chatter or hysterical discourse becoming-literature. Goethe edited, polished, and saved the letters each day that he received them. Kittler writes, “Bettina published Goethe’s Correspondence with a Child, and she did it to finance a monument to her god that she herself had designed. Goethe sits on a throne, cloak buttoned around his neck, his gaze directed toward the clouds. Next to him Bettina, a graceful childlike menad standing on her little head, and the inscription: ‘Turn your tiny feet toward heaven only without care!’ She who once threw her dress over her head so as not to be recognized by the people of Frankfort, or so as to be recognized by the spirits, remains Bettina in marble, too; a menad with no shame in the presence of shame” (“Writing” 62; *Discourse Networks* 127–34). Bettina becomes the child of the father. For Betinna-Goethe’s letter writing and the postal system, see Siegert, *Relays* 62–73.
is attaching himself to Salieri, instead of the other way around that I have pointed to in the play and film. Hence, the child, again, would be father of the man. It is, after all, what Salieri himself announces when, as a child, he idolizes Amadeus-the-child (film, scene 15). Who remains for the most part a child throughout the story-confession. These positions, too, are immi-
nently reversible: Salieri-Amadeus and Amadeus-Sa-
lieri. Referring directly to Deleuze again, I can say that the bloc of the wasp and the orchid can change positions, refolding into different assemblages. It is, as Deleuze says, a “double capture since ‘what’ each becomes changes no less than ‘that which’ becomes” (Dialogues 2). Salieri becomes part of Amadeus’s creative apparatus (a mad deus) at the same time as Amadeus becomes the creativity of Salieri (a patron saint of mediocrities).  

HENRY MILLER: If I might be impertinent, “I remember sitting at the piano in my nightshirt, working away at the pedals with bare feet. . . . I was on the piano stool and doing a velocity exercise. I always began with Czerny. . . . Long before I read Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus I was composing the music to it, in the key of sassafras. . . . This vomit of learned truck was stewing in my guts the whole week long, waiting for it to come Sunday to be set to music. . . . I would get my inspiration, which was to destroy all the existent forms of harmony and create my own cacophony. . . . One Sunday. . . . I composed one of the love-
liest scherzos imaginable—to a louse. . . . Sunday came like

28 I use a slot and substitution approach in regards Deleuze’s sentence in Dialogues.
a thaw, the birds driven so crazy by the sudden heat that they flew in and out of the window, immune to the music. One of the German relatives had just arrived from Hamburg, or Bremen... She used to pat me on the head and tell me I would be another Mozart. I hated Mozart, and I hate him still and so to get even with her I would play badly, play all the sour notes I knew... One of the reasons why I never got anywhere with the bloody music is that it was always mixed up with sex... Lola was my first piano teacher. Lola Niessen...” (Tropic 248–50)....

Hal, there is something very anarchistic in Henry Fool’s thoughts and actions.

HAL HARTLEY: Yes, as I say, “he symbolizes anarchy and he brings the blood into our interactions with each other” (“Responding” xiv). Recall what Henry says to Father Hawkes and Simon.

HENRY FOOL: “Listen, father, as I was about to tell my friend Simon here, I am, without doubt, the biggest sinner within a hundred miles of this parish. But still, I’ve gotta stay up late at night to outdo the unending parades of mundane little atrocities I see committed everyday right out in the open spaces of this loud and sunlit culture we call home” (HF 48).

Henry says, “outdo.” This is so ambiguous here. Henry reminds me of Professor Avenarius, a character in Kundera’s Immortality. Avenarius is an anarchist of sorts, but it is too simple to call him such, just as it is to call Henry an anarchist. What Avenarius does is to play a game, a sort of childish game of introducing prankish, chance interventions into people’s lives. Marx speaks of no longer interpreting the
world but changing it. Avenarius sets out to do just this! But he does primarily one thing. At night while jogging, he travels through the streets of Paris on foot with a hidden knife in a sheath in his long coat and, spontaneously, selects an automobile and stabs at its tires. Flattening them (245). The act is best thought of, according to Avenarius, as totally irrational episodes, being introduced into the world.29 The Narrative of the world. Avenarius says, “I dreamed of writing a big book: The Theory of Chance” (225).

In a metafictional manner during a pause in story-time, Avenarius discusses a character in the novel with Kundera, arguing over whether the character is symbolic (heuristic) or something else such as chance (touché, aleatory). Avenarius explains to Kundera “how to perform a perfect subversive act, effective and yet safe from discovery by the police” (245). What motivates Avenarius is that he believes he is fighting Diabolum. He has no faith in Marx or others in their attempts to fight evil or as Henry Fool says, “mundane little atrocities.” Banal atrocities. For Avenarius it is his subversive acts that change the world.30

HAL HARTLEY: So Avenarius would rather rely on chance

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29 Kundera discusses Aristotle’s rejection of episodes in the Poetics. Kundera’s aim is to rehabilitate the concept and figure of episode, which informs Immortality (305). Episodics.

30 The paradigm that informs the narrative fluxes of Immortality is that of Heraclitus’s child playing a game. Throwing the dice. Or playing on or running into the street. In the fluxes of Kundera’s Immortality a child for some unknown reason sits in the middle of the road, causing cars to crash and people to die. The child is not hurt. Cf. Robert Altman’s Short Cuts: Begin with “Logos” and “Opening Credits” and then jump to “Casey’s Accident.” Thereafter. Stop. Return to “Logos.” View until the end. My neighbor.
than some socially-dialectically engineered way of attacking Diabololum.

Yes, apparently. ... Well, one night while Avenarius is out for a jog and a tire slashing, he is mistaken by a woman as someone who is charging toward her with a knife in hand. She tells the police: “He threatened me with a knife! He wanted to rape me!” (263). Before being taken away by the police, a man who is a lawyer walks up and gives Avenarius his business card. The man is Paul, a major, connected character in the story. After handing the card, Paul returns to his car to see that the tires have been cut (264).

In the closing pages of Immortality, Kundera and Avenarius talk about Paul, who gets Avenarius acquitted. What we know going into this episode by way of the unfolding narrative is that Avenarius was the lover of Paul’s wife. (The coincidences thicken.) Avenarius explains to Kundera that he does not tell Paul that he is innocent of attempted rape.

AVENARIUS: “[N]o man will suspect someone known to rape women at knifepoint to be the lover of his wife. Those two images don’t go together.”

MILAN KUNDERA: “Wait a minute,” I said. “He really thinks that you wanted to rape women?”

AVENARIUS: “I told you about that.”

MILAN KUNDERA: “I thought you were joking.”

AVENARIUS: “Surely I wouldn’t reveal my secret!” And he added, “Anyway, even if I had told him the truth he wouldn’t have believed me. And even if he had believed me,
he would have immediately lost interest in my case. I was valuable to him only as a rapist.”

MILAN KUNDERA: I was strangely moved. “You were ready to go to jail as a rapist, in order not to betray the game. . . .” And at that moment I understood him at last. If we cannot accept the importance of the world, which considers itself important, if in the midst of that world our laughter finds no echo, we have but one choice: to take the world as a whole and make it the object of our game; to turn it into a toy. Avenarius is playing a game, and for him the game is the only thing of importance in a world without importance. But he knows that his game will not make anyone laugh. . . . I said, “You play with the world like a melancholy child who has no little brother.”

AVENARIUS: I smiled like a melancholy child. Then I said, “I don’t have a little brother, but I have you” (344). Avenarius-Kundera, Kundera-Avenarius. The metacharacter is the father of the author. And vice versa

Kundera and Avenarius part never to see each other again. Kundera writes: “Avenarius was going to the basement, where he had parked his Mercedes” (345).
Mat Hinlin: Do you believe in God?
Babs (Divine): I am God.

John Waters, *Pink Flamingo* in *Trash Trio* 84–85

Only a [Divine] can still save us.

Martin Heidegger, “*Der Spiegel Interview*”
(57; emphasis mine)


To discuss *Multiple Maniacs*, we need to begin again with Jean-Luc Nancy’s “Divine Places” in *The Inoperative Community*. Jean-Luc thinks of God, or gods, not as being, but as place (114). The onto-theological question What is God? leads but to a deflected transcendence in the name of immanence. This obsessive desire for an object called God/gods that would be the subject, this thinking of the object relation to subject, is what thwarts community. Such thinking is insidious and invidious. In dealing even with the possibilities of God as place, Jean-Luc sees that he must be forever suspicious of falling back into “a discourse *de Deo*, of whatever sort” (114). Hence, he chooses “to fragment [his] argument” (114). And eventually to singularize it.

But it is important to note that this place is not the traditional *topos* of philosophical-ethical or rhetorical-political thinking. Rather, it is a place in relation to, adjacent to, any traditional *topos*. It is what Jean-
Luc refers to as “the tying of the (k)not” (*Sense* 111–12). It is the other place—that is not traditionally other—of contestation and tests. It is another place of third figures.

In asking the question, “What does ‘my God’ mean?,” Jean-Luc reflects on the nature of the question and sees it as “interpellative: you, here, now, are entering into a singular relationship with me. This does not ensure the relationship, nor in any way provide the measure of it. But it proclaims it, and gives it its chance” (*Inoperative* 117).

Jean-Luc turns to a pertinent discussion by Jean-Marie Pontevia on “the cult of the Virgin.” Pontevia sees this “major event” (i.e., the advent of the cult) as “the last example in the West of the birth of a divinity” (*Inoperative* 114; qtd from *La peinture* 69). Jean-Luc chooses to read “last example” as saying “that a divine birth is always possible, and that it is therefore still possible. But at the same time it means that such a birth bears no relation to a ‘return,’ a restoration, or a reinvention of the divine—quite the opposite…. The divinity born in the figure of the Virgin was in no way the return or the reincarnation

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31 Acts of contestation and testing, both of which reopen and keep open (guard) a question, avoid reactionary processes of thought (see Derrida, *Of Spirit* 7–13; Foucault, *Language* 36). Testing is an act of reading that I take from Ronell (*Test Drive*). Both Foucault and Bataille point to Blanchot as the thinker of contestation. (See Bataille, *Inner Experience* 10–12, and 101–57.)

32 Nancy is aware of the missing third possibility: “Perhaps neither affirmation nor negation may be substituted for the question. It could be a question of another disposition, one that has no logical name” (*Experience* 165). Cf. Foucault’s “nonpositive affirmation” (*Language* 36).
of a former divinity. It was the divinity of a new age: of a new age of painting and of woman, as well as of the age in which God himself would vanish into the Concept. It was a divine sign opposed to God” (114–15; emphasis mine. Cf. Kristeva, Tales of Love).

JEAN-LUC NANCY: Yes, I guess the important thing here—for I am beginning to see the indirection you are going in—is that this god that is coming, this new Divine place, among places, is a third figure (not to be confused with the trinity of spirit).

GIORGIO AGAMBEN: Ah, yes. This will be the coming community?

AVITAL RONELL: The community without a community? One that keeps coming, never arriving. Always deferred.

Yes, if there is something like a topos, it is différance, not the old philosophical-rhetorical topos of difference. To cut to the chase and to risk being chastised, I would venture that this new Divine place is something that gets replayed by John Waters in the old forms as a parody but more so as a series of pastiches—so as if to critique the myth of immanence itself—but then, this new Divine place is also something entirely new.33 As John Waters tells us: “Being Catholic always makes you more theatrical” (Shock Value 65). Yes, I remember High Mass! And the Stations of the Cross! But what Waters is talking about and enacting in his Divine films, similarly to Jean-Luc’s take, is a

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33 For a discussion of parody and pastiche, begin with Jameson, “Post-modernism” and Hutcheon, Poetics.
theatricality (a theater model of a third place) without foundations, without substantiality.  

But, I must insist, this theatrical moment—and all that there is here, in this space—is a series of moments—is of the chorus. Expropriating the stage. The traditional academic actors (agents), after all, have left the stage. Call this moment the parabasis (see de Man, Blindness 187–228). It’s an interruption of self-consciousness, a series of moments, kairotic moments, best called finitude. Para-acts of finitude. It is us! In this non-traditional polylogue. Here. Now.

So our thoughts about a Divine place. First, there is the God, then the cult of the Virgin—both an expression of immanence and infinity. But then there is what is new in terms of Divine (places)—an exposition of imminence and finitude, a radically infinite finitude. So as I see Water’s film, there’s a movement towards a third that is not a 1, 2, and then 3, etc.

JEAN-LUC NANCY: This third Divine “is precisely what manifests itself and is recognizable outside of all knowledge

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34 About theater, Nancy writes: “One would thus demand a politics without dénouement—which perhaps also implies a politics without theatrical model, or a theater that would be neither tragic nor comic nor a dramatization of foundation—a politics of the incessant tying up of singularities with each other, over each other, and through each other, without any end other than the enchainment of (k)nods, without any structure other than their interconnection or interdependence, and without any possibility of calling any single (k)not or the totality of (k)nods self-sufficient (for there would be ‘totality’ only in the enchainment itself). Such a politics consists, first of all, in testifying that there is singularity only where a singularity ties itself up with other singularities, but that there is no tie except where the tie is taken up again, recast, and retied without end, nowhere purely tied or untied. Nowhere founded and nowhere destined, always older than the law and the younger than sense” (Sense 111–12).
about its ‘being.’ God does not propose himself as a new type of being—or of absence of being—for us to know. He proposes himself, that is all” (Inoperative 115–16).

His proposal is a singular one. Not One, but a singular one that is not part of a set of numbers. There is no knowledge of such a singularity, for it establishes a relationship only momentarily. With ex-position comes ex-scription.

JEAN-LUC NANCY: Yes, for to know (under the terms of identity, non-contradiction, and excluded middle); for to expect a permanence would only take us back to the myth of immanence and a “theologicopolitics,” which is the source of a “sacrificial politics” (Sense 89; cf. 91–92, 105–06). God proposes himself, and yet there is no “he” or “she.” Rather, there is the nothing . . . that remains of gods” (Inoperative 116). After the death of God. But this nothing is not negative. Nor is it something positive. Rather again, it is what “remains”—call it the remainders—for which there is no proper-improper vocabulary in the language of reason. Or call it singular. Or call it crumbs. God has crumbled. Or still, call it, as I offer a list in The Sense of the World, the “fallen pieces, waste, wreckage, jagged bits, remains, inner organs of slaughtered beasts, shreds, filth, and excrement, on which contemporary art—trash art—gorges itself” (132). All that has been ex-scribed.

Yes, we are referring perhaps to the excluded middle here—all that has no proper name for itself, other than a traveling freak show, a “Cavalcade of Perversion” (Multiple Maniacs). Therefore, we are referring—deferring—to what remains as third Divine places. We can casuistically twist and stretch the language in such a mannerism, as Michel Foucault has, and refer
to this third Divine as a “nonpositive affirmation” (*Language* 36).

In terms of sex, it is a third, neutral figure of sex. Which gets us to Divine in *Multiple Maniacs* as well as *Pink Flamingoes* and *Pink Flamingoes Forever*—all, as you might say, are “trash” art, “shock” art (*Sense*, 132, 133). Divine, after awe, in *Pink Flamingos*, eats dog (god) faeces. Making Peace.

We can perhaps say now that Divine is a transgression in the form of a wicked parody of Christianity. But we can also say—more so—that Divine is a wicked pastiche of Christianity. Of a God caught up in being on its way to becoming. In a space. And yet, Divine is something new in opposition to both God and the cult of the Virgin. Divine is constantly interrupting and con/testing. On her wayves with others, becoming, devolving, into yet something else. For example, in the intended sequel to *Pink Flamingos*, Divine says:

**DIVINE:** There is only one man in my life—my husband, Crackers II, who you may remember is also my son.

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35 For the literalists, Waters says: “Underneath all this cockeyed glamour lives a serious actor [Harris Glenn Milstead] who wants nothing more than to work every day. . . . Divine is certainly no transvestite. He says he sometimes dreads getting in drag but realizes these flamboyant outfits are his ‘work clothes.’ The only time he goes through the drag ordeal is for a play, movie, or personal appearance. Thank God, he is also not a female impersonator—I can hardly imagine him making people suffer through Judy Garland or Carol Channing imitations. Divine is simply an actor who usually is cast as a woman. He seems comfortable living his ‘interpretation of a man’ and says he is quite satisfied with his natural ‘plumbing’” (*Shock* 145; cf. Mueller, “Divine” in *Ask* 220–22).
UPI (*appalled*): You’re talking about incest?

DIVINE: I cannot begin to describe to you the genealogical miracle of producing a grandchild in my own little oven.

UPI: Is the kid retarded?

DIVINE: Another bourgeois myth handed down by generations of charlatans in the American Medical Association. My child is living proof of a new strain of heterosexuality.

(*Flamingoe Forever*, in *Trash Trio* 189)

ὴ Divine, as you might say, Jean-Luc, “does not behave like a sign. Perhaps [“her”] nature is that of a [Divine] Wink, of a gesture that invites or calls” (*Inoperative* 119; cf. *Dis-Enclosure* 104–20). That calls us not home but to thinking. To uncanny thinking. Recall, Barthes’ use of the *twink*, or twinkling, as of a star. A flash of considerations in an instant (*Neutral* xxi, xxiii, xxv, 10, 30, 47; cf. Nancy, *Sense* 42–45).

JOHN WATERS: I just can’t believe, Victor, what you are saying about Divine!

Ἦ John, I am not interpreting; I’m, as Deleuze says, experimenting. I’m calling on Divine in mixed ways. My wayves.

Ἦ Heidegger intuited that only Divine (spaces) could still save us. But Divine (spaces) remains veiled from the beginning. “In fact, the history of Western thought begins, not by thinking what is most thought-provoking,” Heidegger says, “but by letting
it remain forgotten. Western thought thus begins with an omission, perhaps even a failure. So it seems, as long as we regard oblivion only as a deficiency, something negative. . . . The beginning of Western thought is not the same as its origin. The beginning is, rather, the veil that conceals the origin—indeed an unavoidable veil” (What is Called Thinking 152). In other words, all has been kept Chaste. It is not a matter of our raising the veil to chastise. It is rather a matter of what still remains unthought. Heidegger amusingly gives us this exemplar: “The sentence ‘The triangle is laughing’ cannot be said. It can be said, of course, in the sense that it can be pronounced as a mere string of words. But it can not be said really, in terms of what it says. The things that are evoked by ‘triangle’ and ‘laughing’ introduce something contradictory into their relation. . . . To be possible, the proposition must from the start avoid self-contradiction. This is why the law, that contradiction must be avoided, is considered a basic tenet of the proposition. Only because thinking is defined as [logos], as an utterance, can the statement about contradiction perform its role as a law of thought” (155). But you see, John, the triangle of « God—Cult of Virgin—Divine (places) » here is laughing. And not only the triangle is laughing, but also the reader. It is a laughing matter. Even if a laughter in dis/belief. But this is a laughter, perverse as it is, that will shatter the law of what has gone for thinking, just as the generosity of thinking has shattered love (see Nancy, Inoperative 82–109; cf. Davis, Breaking). All triangles are not necessarily Euclidean; many have attributes, in other compossible geometric worlds, of varying degrees in relation to angles such as hyperbolic and elliptical geometries. These geometric worlds are imminent.
JOHN WATERS: So you are saying that at the basis of thinking is rape, but there is a way around this basis and that is parabasis, interruptions, to non-traditional other spaces.

Yes, actually and figuratively. . . . So let’s begin again: John, you have written about Jean-Luc Godard’s *Hail Mary*. You have disclosed the divinity of rape itself not only in your own films, but also in Godard’s.

JOHN WATERS: Yes, I remember, Victor. I said, “Although the cinematography [in *Hail Mary*] is incredible, the acting first-rate and the script guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone with a sense of humor who was raised a Catholic, it is also very confusing. . . . The film is reverent in its own ironic way. . . . As an ex-Catholic, *Hail Mary* actually made me think fondly of religion for the first time in decades. Who knows what effect Hail Mary will have on my own spirituality? Of all people, I never thought Godard might tempt me back to the Church. Now, at least, I have a new respect for the outrageousness and originality of the concept Immaculate Conception. Maybe I won’t be as angry as I used to be when I hear childhood Catholic trauma stories, such as the one a friend named Mary (her real name) told me recently; All through the year in grade school the nuns showed the class a mysterious hole in the wall at the end of the hall. One by one, each girl was taken to peer in but forbidden to reveal what they saw. When Mary’s time finally came, she apprehensively approached, stuck her head through, and saw herself reflected in a mirror across from her, framed in a nun’s habit. She finally got to see herself

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36 *Hail Mary* was received in Europe and the U.S. as blasphemous. Waters says: “Pope John Paul II . . . denounced the film and led a special prayer ceremony ‘to repair the outrage inflicted on the Holy Virgin’” (*Crackpot* 134–35).
as a nun. Did the good sister accompanying her whisper in her ear, ‘Hail Mary’? I wonder” (Crackpot 138–39).

Ah, sounds like a second attempt at the mirror stage. In any case, Divine and the Mary of Hail Mary and all the other Marys, in questioning and adding to the Cult of the Virgin, prepare the waYvES for Divine (places). By ways of irony…. I want to turn to the scene we might call Divine rape of Divine by Lobstora. (The double articulation of Divine, as adjective and noun, is awkward, but will become more unclearly clear as we proceed.) I find this whole scene confusing.

JOHN WATERS: Oh, there you go again!

I’m just echoing what you said about Godard!

This scene, toward the end of the film, is supposed to be a projection of the crazed Divine, who is foaming at the mouth after having killed several of the characters. At best, we might argue—given the in-joke of the giant, mechanical lobster—that this is Caca-pitalism appropriating the crazed Divine and, thus, your film, John, like so many, if not all, studio films, is always already appropriated. Which of course it is in/appropriated as canonized filth. Yet something—an excess—still remains. As an escription. And how shall we approach that remainder? Let’s consider the context.

The third, the lobster-Divine rape scene, has other possibilities in terms of the two previous rape scenes.

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37 The scene is captured on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tm2PPPKIX8Y>.
The first rape is perpetrated by two members of Divine’s Cavalcade of Perversion. A male and female drag her into an alley and, while the female holds her down, the male rapes her. (It is in this scene that you searched for the *still frame* of “Divine’s face in the one moment *between* rape and miraculous intervention where he lived up to the spiritual side of his name” [*Director’s Cut* 283; emphasis mine].) The second rape is perpetrated by Mink Stole, the *religious whore* in church, who stalks, sits next to, and gives Divine a “rosary job” during the stations of the cross. Popular episodes from the life of Christ (from the feeding of the multitudes to His crucifixion) are enfolded into scenes of Mink anally raping Divine with the prosthetic crucifix of the rosary. Rosy Crucifixion! You cannot get more perverse than this, John. But at the levels of parody and pastiche you are referring to the sadomasochism embedded in the founding narratives of Catholicism, which are played out analogically in the assemblages not only of the crucifixion but also of the stations-of-the-cross and the Divine-Mink “rosary job.”38 Which gets us to the point of seeing this assemblage of entities forming a single becoming, a single bloc, an a-parallel evolution (or devolution), a double capture, a *conversation* (between the stations of the cross and scenes in *Multiple Maniacs*). Here-with, the single bloc of Chaste CruciFictions: Christ being crucified, celebrated in the stations of the cross/

38 The question of whether Waters is constructing a *parody* or a *pastiche* of the crucifixion is one that I provisionally answer by saying that Waters’s constructions are both a parody and a pastiche and yet something new, which will become unclearly clear eventually. Cf. Francis Bacon’s paintings of the crucifixion and Fynsk’s discussion of them (*Infant* 15). for Serrano’s “Piss Christ,” see Serrano. But keep in mind that the “rosary job” in *Multiple Maniacs* comes from de Sade (see Zoe Gross, 21, n19 on 35).
Divine being “crucified” by Mink, re-celebrated in *Multiple Maniacs*.

Deleuze and Guattari discuss the lobster in *A Thousand Plateaus* and in such *wayves* that it might cast some light or darkness on the third rape in *Multiple Maniacs*. They write: “God is a Lobster, or a double pincer, a double bind” (40). Yet another double articulation! The classic double bind places the female in the position of being both revered and raped (see Haskell; cf. Russell). Divine is both revered and raped repeatedly.

But more on the third rape, with Lobstora “doing” Divine: Deleuze and Guattari are in part talking about “the geology of morals” (39–74). If previously by way of Heidegger we introduced the paralogy of “triangle is laughing,” and how the correct thinking of philosophy could not allow for such an utterance, now we introduce the paralogy of *Lobster (God) is raping Divine (God)*, and how a proper protocol of reading could never allow for such a linkage. But then it is not simply a matter of my idiosyncratic linking; it is a matter, John, of your linking three rapes with the third one by way of not just any lobster but Lobstora, which greatly complicates matters! Lobstora is the sign of CacaPitalism? It is not that

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39 I allude to Lyotard’s notion of *it is necessary to link but not how to link* (in *Differend*), and call on Ulmer’s principles of conduction in making these paralogic linkages (*Heuretics*). Besides the paralogies constructed by Waters, we have in my insertion of Deleuze and Guattari’s statement that *God is a Lobster*, the paralogy of *geology of morals* (echoing Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*). Cf. Bataille, et al., “Crustaceans,” in *Encyclopaedia* 38–40.
I want to interpret this sequence and this strange (attractor) of Lobstora. (John, you are not merely critiquing capitalism, if it can be said that you are “critiquing” anything or anybody!) It is that I want to experiment—or otherwise put, I want to contest in a non-traditional manner and to go on test drives—with these already experimental constructions across different semiotic as well as symbiotic systems.

In a logical and justifiable sense, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, God raping God (A is A, A raptures A) is quite appropriate, as a primordial, self-reflexive, kairotic moment, yet still tautological if not paradoxical. And exuberantly laughable! If you, John, are devout—but of course you are not—you might laugh nervously. Or explode in anger against such a sacrilegious act. But how would you explain, otherwise, this God on God, or Dog on Dog, to someone else? Is it your intention that the scene is to be explained? Or is the scene for affect? At best, about this sacrilegious-blasphemous move in *Multiple Maniacs*, or antics, I can say, John, that you mock what you see to be the sacrificial economy. And you do so without mincing a word or image. You question anyone’s participation in the ritual of the *Stations of the Cross* (cf. Žižek, “Divine Violence” in *Violence* 178–205).

JOHN WATERS: Really?!

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40 The scene of Lobstora’s raping Divine was not Waters’s original intention. He had planned that Divine would be charged with the death of Sharon Tate and others. But when Charles Manson and his group were captured and charged with the crimes, Waters had to rethink the ending. Hence, a giant lobster, Lobstora. (Cf. Cookie Mueller, “Abduction and Rape” in *Ask*, 102–13.)
And yet, John, it is not possible to miss the fact that in having Mink “crucify” Divine, you may be trafficking in a sacrificial economy yourself. As Georges Bataille says, “The crucifixion . . . is a wound by which believers communicate with God” (Guilty 31). But perhaps Multiple Maniacs is not a critique, not a visual utterance of a festering wound that leads but to acts of ressentiment, but an exchange or communication of another kind. Let’s take, from Bataille again, the possibility of two forms of an exchange: First, “communication linking up two beings (laughter of a child to its mothers, tickling),” and second, “communication, through death, with our beyond (essentially in sacrifice)—not with nothingness, still less with a supernatural being, but with an indefinite reality (which I sometimes call the impossible, that is: what can’t be grasped (begreift) in any way, what we can’t reach without dissolving ourselves, what’s slavishly called God)” (139; cf. 140–43).

The former, I will eventually elaborate on; the latter can but lead to pure immanence. Someone is going to be sacrificed. And yet, Bataille further explains that if we do not opt for immanence, “the sacred, God,” we “can remain in an undefined state (in ordinary laughter, infinite laughter, or ecstasy in which the divine form melts like sugar in water)” (Guilty 139).

My experiment, my experience with re-viewings of Multiple Maniacs, is that you, John, are dis/engaging less with a parody of sacrifice and more with pastiche. You are not interested in correcting the scene but in

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41 The manner in which Bataille draws out this distinction applies well to what I am experiencing in my experimental relation with Multiple Maniacs. I would recommend now that the readers study the section on “The Divinity of Laughter” in Guilty. I would rather leave to the readers the task of thinking through the connections.
enjoying the obscene. And at times, vice versa. After all, you want to have your scene and eat it too, but you experienced two rival scents. (I fully understand, for I cannot get out of my mind the story of Gérard de Nerval putting a leash on his lobster and strolling down the gardens of the Palais-Royal in Paris. I can no longer eat lobsters!)

Hence, you are laughing as a child would at the so-called adult view of life-death-heaven/or/hell story of Catholicism, or any Protestantism. You can be read as moving toward a third possibility of contestation. Through laughter, corrupted or otherwise....

MILAN KUNDERA: Ah, let me interrupt and jump in here, for I discuss through Rubens how classical and traditional painters avoid the open mouth in laughter, for they see it as either the sign of evil or of a human being’s inability to think, to reason, or to rule himself. For Rubens, “Faces lost their immobility, mouths became open, only when the painter wished to express evil. Either the evil of pain: the faces of women bent over the body of Jesus; the open mouth of the mother in Poussin’s Slaughter of the Innocents. Or the evil of vice: Holbein’s Adam and Eve. Eve has

42 Here is a slight modification by addition (paralogy) and placement (adjacency): Let us recall Tiresias, becoming the middle term between two sets of copulating snakes, between two sets of being both female and male, and between two gods. As mythical versions have it, s/he was blinded by both Hera and Athena (see Loraux, Experiences 10–11). By Hera, for Tiresias sides with Zeus that men have more pleasure in sex than women; in a completely different version, by Athena, for Tiresias looks upon her body. If we initially think of the Lobstora rape scene in terms of Divine’s being like—or rather becoming—Tiresias, we might come to see “Divine”-the-character caught between two gods (or double pincers) and, hence, mis/appropriately “Divine,” like Tiresias, is both male and female. Having a conversation in between. Deleuze writes: “A thing is sometimes this, sometimes that, sometimes something more complicated—depending on the forces (the gods) which take possession of it” (Nietzsche 4).
a bland face and a half-open mouth revealing teeth that have just bitten into the apple. Alongside, Adam is a man still before sin: he is beautiful, his face is calm, and his mouth is closed. In Correggio’s Allegories of Sin everyone is smiling! In order to express vice, the painter must move the innocent calm of the face, to spread the mouth, to deform the features with a smile. There is only one laughing figure in the picture: a child! But it is not a laugh of happiness, the way children are portrayed in advertisements for diapers or chocolate! The child is laughing because it’s been corrupted! (Immortality 322–23)…

Milan, that is an interruption that builds on what I was about to remind us. Namely, that Bataille writes: “I wouldn’t give up laughing for anything!” (Guilty 54)… There are adults. Who will laugh at anything! But let us not forget the child, which takes us to my final experiment in thinking about Multiple Maniacs (or radical singularities).

First, however, let me continue writing-the-pastiche and let us recall how Bataille complicates for us, as you do John, the question of laughter: “[T]he suddenness of… change (the fall of the adult system—that of grown-ups—into an infantile one) is always found in laughter. Laughter is reducible, in general, to the laugh of recognition in the child—which the following line from Vergil calls to mind: incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.” [“Begin, young child, to recognize your mother by your laughter” also as “by her laughter.”] (Guilty 140; Bataille’s emphasis).

There is also Cixous’s the laugh of the medusa, which can topple phallocratic discourse. For a further discussion of mine on laughter and its limits, see Sexual Violence (178–81).
This exemplar of the child recognizing its place in its own or its mother’s laughter works well for the Cult of the Virgin. With child.

But will it work or play well for the Cavalcade of Perversions, for the lumpenproletariat, that follows not recognition of its place, but Divine (places) where there is laughter and giggling? The lumpen/proletariat, which was, as Marx could have said: “the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass [absolute negation]… la bohème… this scum, offal, refuse of all classes.”44 But which Mr. David, the barker in the very beginning of Multiple Maniacs, does clearly stipulate: The “real actual filth… assorted sluts, fags, dykes, and pimps.”

Suffer the infans. The interruptions, corruptions, eruptions.

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44 Marx says precisely what I quote (see Eighteenth 75). But in alluding to Marx, I change the context and the meaning of his notion of the lumpenproletariat, which I see as third figures. I have my disagreements with Eagleton on how to read the figure, though I agree with Mehlman. I add the slash in lumpen/proletariat to signify my difference with Marx and Eagleton. Eagleton writes: “Jeffrey Mehlman sees the elegant dialectical schemas of Marx’s Eighteenth Brumaire as fissured by an uncouth, irreducible cackle of farce: the farce of Bonaparte himself, the non-representative, Bonaparte pries a crack in that conceptual architecture through which floods a heterogeneous swarm of lumpenproletarians, a flood that threatens to swamp Marx’s own orderly text under the semiotic excess it lends to his language. The upshot, Mehlman comments ‘[is] a Marx more profoundly anarchical than Anarchism ever dreamed’” (in Walter Benjamin 162). See Mehlman, Revolution. I have previously and in greater depth argued for Mehlman’s position and have extended it in Negation (391). Also, see my “Hermeneutics of Abandonment.” Hence, I am arguing that the giggles-laughter that I identify in Amadeus, Henry Fool, and now Multiple Maniacs is the non-canonical excess, a third figure, or Divine (places).
In keeping with this discussion, what is most intriguing, in terms of laughter, in *Multiple Maniacs* is the transitional scene between the first and second rape of Divine. I am referring to the appearance (in[ter]vention) of the *Infant of Prague*, taking Divine by the hand from having been raped by the male and female in the streets to the church of St. Cecilia, where Divine will be anally raped—“crucified” by Mink. How are we to read this! Divine says, “Had God sent him [the infant] as some sort of sign?” She concludes: “I put my future in this little saint’s hands [who said] ‘The more you honor me, the more I will bless you’.” Honor me! Bless you! There are a number of double entendres in these promises.

Should we call on Father Freud to rethink the relation of child to Divine and rape! I doubt it! In any case, whereas initially we have here the *Virgin* as mother, or father, of the son, we now have the *infans* as father, or mother, of Divine (places). And throughout we have John, the Divine! Exiled in Baltimore. Filming his apocalyptic view of the Divine.

If you remember, John, we started this conversation on your film with a reference to Jean-Luc’s “Divine Places” in *The Inoperative Community*. Then, the cult of the virgin, to *Hail Mary*, to the Lobstora-Divine rape scene, and then God as a lobster—all of which converge in Baltimore, Maryland. I want to add now that I spent some time searching through dictionaries of etymologies for the name “Baltimore.” I finally found in the *New York Times*, way back to c. December 17, 1880, the following report of a paper entitled “Celtic Baltimore, its Etymology” that was read by General Charles E. Phelps at a meeting of the Maryland Historical Society, in Baltimore. The
reporter writes: “General [Charles E.] Phelps said ‘Bal’ was Celtic for ‘place.’ Ti-mor means the Supreme Being. Now, add the common Celtic prefix meaning place, and you have Bal-Ti-mor, which, being literally translated, with nothing but the usual inversion to make idiomatic English, reads ‘God-Place.’” Mary Land. Conductively, my case rests. But you knew this as some pop culture level, right? 😊

(To be continued.)
[A] change metaphorically comparable to that which made Euclid’s geometry into that of Riemann. (Valery once confided to a mathematician that he was planning to write—to speak—on ‘a Riemann surface.’) A change such that to speak (to write) is to cease thinking solely with a view to unity, and to make the relations of words an essentially dissymmetrical field governed by discontinuity.

Maurice Blanchot, “Interruption: As on a Riemann surface” in The Infinite Conversation (77).

Cut To Paste: Writing flux aside flux in countless flows on “a Riemann surface”: In this re-opening chapter, I have conversed with the characters and commentators. At times, my approach has been conventional in terms of a montage or collage. Cutting and pasting passages together. Other times, however, I have attempted to write by wayves ~~~ of a relation of a third kind, a third interval, a third relation, as Blanchot says, that “inaugurates a relation that would not be one of subject to subject or of subject to object” (Infinite 69). I am a writer—in dis/respect to my imagined interlocutors—without any horizon. I have no being or presence in my interlocutors’ imaginary lives. Speaking to or with them (Infans in themselves) is like speaking in “a relation of impossibility and strangeness” (71). . . . Infans to infans. . . . Infans should be heard and not seen. . . . This

45 Cutting-and-pasting, as a method without method: See, of course, the unwork of Brion Gysin and W. S. Burroughs along with Paul Miller (Dj Spooky). But there are also the paintings of Simon Hantaï, who cuts, knots, and folds. For a further explanation, see Nancy, Ground (118–25); Hayes, “Body.”
is . . . has been . . . not a dialogue but a polylogue . . . perhaps a cacophony . . . a relation of the third kind. Situated in between. A place that “we” could abandon ourselves to in dis/order to listen and think. The limit.  

46 Flux within flux unworks the limit, as ex-stasis (ecstasies) unworks stasis. John Sallis writes: “Let it be said, then, that Dionysian ecstasy is an exceeding of the limit that would delimit the self, and exceeding in the dual sense of transgression and disruption. Thus is expressed in the logic of the Dionysian the dual nature of the god: reunion and dismemberment as transgression and disruption. The logic of being outside oneself, the logical dynamics of the figure of ecstasy, is such that, as transgression, it cannot but disrupt the very limit by which it would be defined; hence, in turn, there can be transgressive disruption of the limit only if the limit is also redrawn reinstated, as the very limit to be transgressed. The logic of the figure is such as to generate an unending round of transgression, disruption, and reinstatement.

Such is, then, ecstatic logic: a logic of reiterated duality, of the duality of transgression and disruption and of disruption and reinstatement. It is a logic to be written only by way of a certain duality, which has already been in play without my having, up to this point, marked it, a duality of effacement and (re)inscription, a crossing of what is said with an unsaying—in short, a double writing” (Crossings 55; emphasis added).