The most celebrated of [interpreters of the play Penthesilea] was Hans Neuenfels, whose Penthesilea at the Schiller-Theater in Berlin in 1981 was both a multimedia extravaganza and a sociohistorical exegesis. The men were variously costumed as Prussians, Greeks, and naked savages. Achilles was a jovial, compliant, middle-aged beau. The women skipped about by candle-light in flouncy white gowns, wielding dainty bows and arrows, reminding one reviewer of the ‘obscene chastity’ of Nazi kitsch. A hysterical Penthesilea burst from this pallid sorority like a hyena, crawled around on all fours before charging off to demolish Achilles, then came back lugging three bloody suitcases presumably filled with his remains. During the breaks, while the sets were changed, a silent film of the love-that-might-have-been was projected onto a screen, complete with a wedding feast blessed by the Amazon High Priestess.

Joel Agee, Forward, Penthesilea (xxvi–xxvii)

The title of Helke Sander’s controversial three-and-a-half-hour documentary film BeFreier und Befreite: Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder (“Liberators Take Liberties: War, Rapes, Children”) itself never stops speaking and on multiple registers, filling the silence, articulating the unspoken, with a multimodal exposition of what has taken place and what it takes to reclaim, in perpetuity, that place.¹ Sander’s book version, with the same title, is

¹ The title is filled with puns. Levin writes: “The word ‘Befreier’ designates a liberator (or liberators), but the film’s title spells “Befreier” with a
in German—and edited—with Barbara Johr. In my discussions, I will refer to the film, however, which displays the multiple radicals of presentation that I am most concerned with, and will, when available, cite the discussions by way of the book. Because the film at this writing is still not easily available except through the Goethe Institute or through an out-of-print DVD (PAL version), I will provide a more full account of the film than would be usually expected.

Both the film and book (1992) deal with the mass rapes perpetrated by the Allied forces in Berlin as well as other occupied towns and villages in Germany between March and May of 1945. The forces included mostly Russian soldiers but also United States, British, and French soldiers. Sander speaks extensively with women raped and with their children born of rape. She also speaks with Russian men and women who fought in the Battle of Berlin. For some viewers, the film, however, is not solely documentary in style. For some, Sander becomes overly performative and theatrical in her presentations of discussions in scenes. Consequently, the film has many critics. I am limiting my discussion of the reception of this film (Facts, Statistics, Testimony), however, to those critics participating in the special issue “Berlin 1945: War and Rape” of the journal October 72 (Spring 1995), which includes an introduction to the film and its issues, criticisms of the film (resistance to it), Sander’s response (counter-resistance), and a poly-

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capital “f,” thus drawing attention to the word ‘Freier’ contained within it. In antiquated German, ‘Freier’ designates a suitor (or suitors), one who would seek the hand of a maiden; in modern German it designates a john or johns (in the sense of a prostitute’s customer). … [H]ere then, sexual relations and sexual exploitation are manifestly inscribed within liberation. … [T]he title can be understood to mean ‘Liberators and Liberated,’ ‘Liberators and Wooed,’ ‘Wooers and Liberated,’ ‘Johns and Liberated,’ ‘Johns and Wooed,’ and so on. The film sets out to explore the terrain opened up by these rather disparate meanings” (65).
logue of critics (meditations). We will get to the critics in due time.

First, I will take up the issue of whether or not the event had been discussed publicly before Sander’s film. (This issue arises about mid-way through the film. It at times appears to be the main claim, or the one that appears to be most crucial, in the discussions!) Thereafter, I want to suggest with “lists,” which in the opening of the film become an extended montage, the kind and amount of research that Sander gives to the discovery process. I will relate a few of the anecdotal accounts—rerearranging each out of the order of the film in a rhetoric of oscillation—and will examine the “facts” as Sander gathers and infers from statistics, for example, the numbers of German women raped. But it is not just German women raped, any more than it was not just Jews who died in the camps. We must respect and acknowledge the many threads that go into the making of this event of mass rape, murder, and genocide. Sander respects and acknowledges the threads through a thinking discourse. She is concerned with what is

2 There is nothing objective in Sander’s list or sequencing of interlocutors. Montage in film, or juxtaposition, is highly rhetorical and suggestive of meaning. (For Sander’s use of montage, see Levin 71.) And yet, anything “objective” would still be highly rhetorical and suggestive!

3 My purpose in rearranging-remixing-repurposing the sequences in an oscillation, that is, of the very facts of the film itself, is to achieve a different rhetorical affect in print as well as to encourage the reader to view the film itself for maximum comparison. Additionally, I place the word facts in quotations to emphasize the danger of taking facts as in themselves true. Like many, I take facts—the “hard facts” (see the book BeFreier 11)—as discursive constructions owing to the rules and regimens of verifiability. A fact is true or false and provable as such through these rules. In reference to Sander’s pursuit of facts, Grossmann finds Sander “naïve” and Dr. Richling as equally naïve at the blackboard explaining the facts to Sander. Grossmann sees this scene as “border[ing] on parody” (44). On reporting facts and experiences as truthful, Grossmann cites Joan Scott, “The Evidence of Experience.” Cf. Nancy and Kiarostami, The Evidence of Film.
called thinking? in regard to rape,4 which, as I read critical responses to her work, misfires more often than not. But it is this inevitable misfiring that makes for a community of discussants for this film. On this event.

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4 For Sander, thinking, as she would engage, is open and complex. Her book *The Three Women K* is one of the most remarkable discourses on thinking about human relations in terms of being a German female in post–WW II Germany and a patriarchal world, being with men and women.
Sander’s Liberators take Liberties

The Rape of Nanking should be remembered not only for the number of people slaughtered but for the cruel manner in which many met their deaths. Chinese men were used for bayonet practice and in decapitation contests. An estimated 20,000–80,000 Chinese women were raped. Many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breasts, nail them alive to walls. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, and sons their mothers, as other family members watched. Not only did live burials, castration, the carving of organs, and the roasting of people become routine, but more diabolical tortures were practiced, such as hanging people by their tongues on iron hooks or burying people to their waists and watching them get torn apart by German shepherds. So sickening was the spectacle that even the Nazis in the city were horrified, one proclaiming the massacre to be the work of “bestial machinery.” Yet the Rape of Nanking remains an obscure incident.

Iris Chang, The Rape of Nanking (6)

Research (Facts, Statistics, Testimony): We begin with a statement of fact—according to a discursive construction—that the event of mass rape in Berlin, 1945, was kept a Chaste Rape (cf. Kleist, “Marquise of O”). While some historians write of the mass rapes in Berlin in books, Sander claims the public did not discuss the rapes before BeFreier und Befreite. There had been, however, in the Seventies private discussions between mothers and their children born of rape. In the second reel of the film German women talk about not having discussed the event. Sander prompts them: “With whom did you talk about it later?”


6 The film is in German, with sections in Russian. I am taking initially the translations from the subtitles, which are notoriously imprecise. Then,
responses: “With no one.” Sander: “Nobody wanted to listen?” Response: “Nobody could listen. . . . You couldn’t say anything against the Red Army.” Sander: “And public opinion?” Response: “No, public opinion didn’t exist in that sense. One could not express one’s thoughts.” Sander: “Had it anything to do with the fact that the liberators from Hitler fascism [sic] couldn’t be rapists at the same time?” Response: “In the Nazi period we already had to climb down a peg. We just had to shut up. And later it was just the same.” Response: “First one dictator and then . . . the next one. Always with the word ‘psst.’ That was our word in Germany.” But the event manifested itself in sublimated ways. Sander tells of “the favorite game of a friend of [hers] who . . . together with male and female cousins, was ‘playing at rape.’ The girls would run screaming into the woods nearby or roll down the embankments while the boys ran after them, finally catching and throwing themselves on top of them” (“Remembering” 22).

In responding in print to these anecdotes, some critics, however, challenge Sander on being the first to bring the event to the attention of the world. Sander, however, claims the film first brought the issue to the public sphere. In the above exchange, the women say, “public opinion didn’t exist.” (It is difficult for me to begin without interruptions discussing Sander’s discourse of facts, as she constructs

when in doubt about the translation, consulted a Germanist for advice. Since there are two languages being spoken, there are translations within translations, which often are not rendered in direct speech but in indirect speech, e.g., by the translator to Sander herself who apparently does not know Russian. (When the translator translates by way of indirect discourse, I state this fact.) Additionally part of the problem is that the exchange between Sander and her interlocutors is often simultaneous speech, that is, speech over speech. I have called on colleagues who translate German to English to help me through especially difficult, noisy sections of the film and with comparing German in the film with German in the book version. But the additional problem, across cultures, is that viewers need to be cautious also in reading the body language.
them, for there is much contestation about her film and book as there was about Susan Brownmiller’s *Against Our Will.*) More important, however, than *Who was on first?* is that *the event* of mass rape not remain Chaste! The children playing the game of rape become, so to speak, the fathers of the man-Russian soldiers who raped their mothers. (The child is the father of the rapist!) And yet, the stories remain Chaste. Remembering can be forgetting. In fact, Sander’s full title for the translated version of the first chapter of *BeFreier und Befreite* is “Remembering/Forgetting.” *Remembering* can be read as *mourning* so as to forget. But remembering/forgetting can be a *self-exoneration* that some critics find at work in this documentary. The title of the film “liberators take liberties” echoes as a charge and counter-charge among the critics who would presume, in this instance, special status (*stasis*) for one group over another.

In this introductory chapter of the book *BeFreier und Befreite*—included in the journal *October*—Sander relates a story that she says was “the catalyst” for researching *the event.* 7 Sander writes of an old woman, Frau G., who lived in the same building in Berlin and who accused her and others of publishing communist papers and holding meetings. Confronting the woman, Sander discovered that Frau G. “had been raped by Russians and that all the other women living in this building in 1945 had the same experience” (“Remembering” 15). At the heart of this anecdote is revenge (15). The larger narrative of this anecdote, however, raises a question of whether or not the rapes of German women by Russians were a payback for all the rapes committed by the German army in the east against Russian

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7 Liebman and Michelson write that for Sander the event was a “‘Zeiteignis,’ an event whose enormity makes it almost unique in history….We know of no rapes of comparable scale in all of recorded history” (“After the Fall” 12). Sander says that the rape of Nanking is comparable.
women. Though this possibility is plausible, Sander does not accept it so easily as the case or the only case. We will return to this issue as we examine other anecdotal evidence, in search of an appropriately inclusive representative anecdote (see Burke, Grammar). That search must include, as Sander insists, various forces at work on a community’s discussions in the public sphere. The community (as inoperative as it can become) would have to take into consideration nascent forces at work. As a case in point, Sander explains that the mothers telling their stories to their children coincided with the growth of new women’s movements in the late sixties and the seventies, during which “women in large numbers were . . . informed [by the women’s movement] of the silence surrounding violence against women; although their mothers had encountered it on a far greater scale, [the young women] had still kept it a secret. . . . Since then, discussion has not ceased. This context was important for my work on this film” (15–16).

Sander in 1987–88 formulated her questions for research. She wanted to move from anecdotes such as the one by Frau G., to “real information for the film” (17); wanted to know what the phrase “many rapes” might mean; wanted to know if the rapes were the result of a “general collapse following the victory over Germany” or whether “rumors of massive numbers of rapes [had been] merely . . . whipped up for propaganda purposes” or were owing “to the common brutality of war” (17); and “wanted to clarify some of the consequences for the women affected” (22).

8 See Brownmiller’s discussion of revenge rapes during WWII (Against 48–78).

9 I emphasize “context,” for it becomes an issue raised by Sander’s later critics. During the Eighties and Nineties there were, as Liebman and Michelson remind us, the “historical scandals and media spectacles provoked” by “Bitburg,’ ‘Historikerstreit,’ the ‘Jenninger Affair’” (“After” 6–8). See Liebman and Michelson’s references to these events that establish a context for the reception of Sander’s film. Cf. Lyotard, Differend (3).
Finally, she says: “The results of our research made it clear that we were dealing with a singular event, comparable, perhaps, to the entry of the Japanese into the Chinese city of Nanking in 1937” (17). While documenting and representing her findings, Sander compares the mass rapes to contemporary mass rapes reported in 1992. She moves from a reductive to a wider scope. She begins the film with this comparison: “This is a film about rape in wartime. Because I know the circumstances in Berlin best, the film will treat what happened here. Everyone knew about them, though no one spoke of them, just as in Kuwait and in Yugoslavia today” (BeFreier 108).

I will proceed with the opening interviews and anecdotes that critics comment on as well as ignore. After the opening scene of rape in wartime, Sander turns to “Mrs. Prof. Dr. Ballowilz” in the archives and asks about data that would indicate children born of rape. There are rows of thick files on metal library shelves. There is much archive fever (Derrida) in the scene. Ballowilz begins opening file after file for the camera to record the singular events that become the singular event of mass rape. Sander asks Ballowilz about children born in 1946. Children “fathered by rapists,” again, are the index. Ballowilz answers: “The reports state details about the parents and the identity of the father is recorded. In 1946 3.7% of the fathers were Russian, 1.2% American, 0.7% British and 0.4% French, and in many of the cases it was added that they were rape cases.” In the data there is a distinction

10 See Chang; also, for a film about Nanking, see Lu’s film City of Life and Death.

11 For rape during the wars in Yugoslavia, see Catherine MacKinnon, “Turning Rape.”

12 The version of the film that I studied from the Goethe Institute was printed in two cassettes, or reels. I refer to the scenes as being in one or the other, or attempt to locate them in the book version.
made among women who were raped, or raped repeatedly, or engaged in consensual sex with the enemy for favors or survival,\textsuperscript{13} or who had a venereal disease. Ballowilz reads from individual files: “Father Russian, rape. Russian, rape. American. Russian father. Unknown American. Russian, raped repeatedly. English, gonorrhea. In the year 1945 the number of Russian fathers was even somewhat higher,” Ballowilz continues, “so we can assume that some of the women were refugees, who were raped while on their way to Berlin” (\textit{BeFreier} 108–09). Sander asks Ballowilz: “Could you agree that we could take these figures as a prognosis applicable to the total births in Berlin at that particular time?” Ballowilz answers: “With some reservation, these figures are based on the total of children born and admitted here in those years. More or less they may be taken as representative for Berlin” (109).

In the second reel of the film, Sander dramatically introduces a mathematician—Barbara Johr, her co-author—with music in the background. Sander asks: “How many [births owing to rape] were there? Barbara Johr, our arithmetician, reaches the following results,” which Sander and Johr include in the book version as a list:

1. Official statistics for the period between September 1945 and August 1946 show a total of 23,124 births (both live and stillborn). Of these, approximately 5% were “Russian children”: 1,156 children.

\textsuperscript{13} The possibility of “consensual” sex in the event is ridiculous. Any women who did engage in the exchange of sexual favors for whatever they needed to survive were branded as collaborators. The film in the second reel shows photos of French women being paraded or marched through the streets who had their heads shaved and clothes marked with the Nazi swastika. There are scenes in the second reel of the war brides, women with children by—I can only infer—Americans. A whole ship of them is shown arriving in the United States.
2. Some 10% of the pregnant women had abortions, of which 90% were successful. Therefore, ten times as many women had actually been impregnated: 11,560.

3. About 20% of the raped women became pregnant. Therefore among those of childbearing age, five times as many were raped: 57,800.

4. In 1945, 600,000 women of childbearing age (18 to 45 years) lived in Berlin. 57,800 of them were raped. That represents 9.5% of this age group.

5. In 1945, 800,000 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 and women over 45 lived in Berlin. If one assumes that 9.5% of those in this age group were raped, that would mean that 73,300 of those younger and older women were affected. (If a 4.75% figure is used, then the number is 36,650.)

6. Conclusions: Of the 1.4 million women and girls in Berlin, between 94,450 and 131,100—and average of more than 110,000—were raped between early summer and fall of 1945. (“Remembering” 21; BeFreier 54)

While the music continues, the film cuts from Johr’s statistical figures to two women walking in a forest. Sander tells the woman, “I only know of one case where a woman after having been raped demanded to be recognized as a war casualty. You were the first to work on these rapes. What can you tell us?” (The shift from one scene to the next is exceptionally strategic, moving from numbers of women

14 In the film, when the statistics are given, Johr refers to Dr. Reichling who is supportive of the numbers and inferences drawn from them. (Reichling appears with Sander toward the middle of the second reel.)
in mass rape, pregnancy, and death to the one brave woman who demanded to be recognized as a casualty of war and, by implication, to receive all the benefits that men in the war have been receiving.) The other woman: “It’s very significant that so far you have only found this one case. For contrary to the men, whose imprisonment and wounds have been socially accepted and who receive an allowance this is not the case for women. Moreover, men can do something about their traumas that has been organized for them by society. . . . Women don’t have that possibility. I also see the problem that for women this desire to hush up the whole thing and pretend it didn’t happen was welcome in as much as in this way it was easier to get on with relatives and men.” Then in a voice over, we are told: “Many committed suicide. About 4,000 in April alone, although there is no division between men and women.” The irony here among ironies is that there is a division between men and women categorically in terms of who can be a casualty of war, but none in terms of having committed suicide as the result of the trauma of war.

The most telling scene in a long sequence of scenes on categorical exclusion is of a woman who had been raped by a Russian soldier. When she tells a “former [German] officer Dreiba” of being raped, he in turn tells her: “If that had happened to my wife, I would shoot her.” In recollecting she says: “I wanted to live, not be killed.”

Cf. Wolf’s “third alternative”: To kill or To Die. No, To Live! (Casan德拉 106–07). (Per my discussion in note 3, stating that I have rearranged-remixed-repurposed the sequences for a rhetorical affect, see the test-drive question in the Excursus. This is the last prompt for using the Excursus.)
You can’t count the dead. There’s absolutely no sense in it. Mathematics stops there. Woman or man, it’s the individual that is destroyed. That’s why it makes sense to take a personal interest in at least one individual man or woman. Many may experience death simultaneously but it’s always each person’s own individual terror… It made no sense whatsoever to the dead to speculate about what was ghastlier, to be drawn and quartered by the Church, to be tortured first and then burnt at the stake, to be gassed by the Nazis, or to be shot by the Stalinists while doing forced labour. People who refuse to acknowledge that this kind of horror must start somewhere, that it has to be tried out on a small scale before it can be carried out on a large scale, only confirm Eichmann’s thesis that a thousand corpses are statistics. They only see the past in terms of statistics.


Further Testimony (German and Russian): After Sander opens the first reel with an archivist reading accounts of births resulting from rapes, she turns exclusively to oral testimony: There is a shot of a long conference table, with empty green chairs lined on both sides, creating a vanishing point of two women. One is Sander, who says: “Mrs. Hoffmann, I’d like to see an official body dealing with this [event], to find out the personal and political effects of these rapes, and especially how many women were affected.” She asks the first questions of the film:

Sander: In April and May ’45 it was much worse you said. What did you go through?

Hoffmann (*begins*): Well, I witnessed the Red Army’s march into Königsberg, and also the way soldiers and officers behaved there. There was mass raping, they queued up.
Sander: You mean every day?

Hoffmann: Yes, at first every day, we were not safe anywhere. There wasn’t anybody to protect us. Anyone protecting us would have been killed himself. And then they got the people out of their houses… me, my mother, other women and girls. Well, and then they threw themselves on us, you know.

Sander: What did you mean by queuing?

Hoffmann: Well, one would grab another chap’s belt and say: Hurray up, I want to have her too. There were sometimes 5 or 6 of them standing in line, so there wasn’t any privacy… you just get numb. Somehow you let it engulf you.

Sander: How long did this go on?

Hoffmann: It lasted for about 2 weeks with varying intensity.

(BeFreier 109–10)

After this exchange, Sander turns to Mrs. Ursula Ludwig. The scene begins with feet going down steps that lead to a cellar. Many German women hid in cellars. The scene, which is a reenactment, is dark, except for the flashlight that leads us down to and through the cellar. Finally, as if the flashlight is searching for someone, the beam finds a woman clutching jars of preserved food. Once we see her, there is a quick cut to military film of Russians launching rockets from a truck into what we might infer is Berlin. The editing brings to mind stock cuts that substitute for actual scenes of sexual acts (figuration for actuality, but
in a *shadow narrative*). While the rockets are launched, there is a voice over:

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16 Reising and Skoller write of shadows—narrative shadows—as interrupting the flow of the narrative toward progress, as if the unconscious of the film *thwarts* the melodramatic consciousness of living happily thereafter. The shadow narratives, as Reising (12–13; 16, 17, 333–34) and Skoller (39–42) specifically suggest, are driven by political unconscious forces against the ideology of melodrama itself. Moreover, the shadow narratives are driven to complicate the storyline, so to speak by *forelining*, *backlining*, and *sidelining* traditional linear progression. I am suggesting here, therefore, in my further discussions of shadow narratives that this phenomenon of shadows interrupting an expected linear movement can occur not only within a single film but across films themselves. In addition to the work put forth by Reising and Skoller, I have also been influenced by Jean-Luc Nancy (*Inoperative* 23; cf. *Evidence of Film*) and by Jacques Rancière, in his expansion of Jean Epstein’s declaration “Cinema is true. A story is a lie.” Specifically, Rancière’s discussion, while it does not refer to shadows, but to the camera itself casting its own shadow, nonetheless, addresses the *fable of linear progress*. Rancière writes: “Life is not about stories, about actions oriented towards an end, but about situations open in every direction. Life has nothing to do with dramatic progression, but is instead a long and continuous movement made up of an infinity of micro-movements. This truth about life has finally found an art capable of doing it justice [i.e., the camera and cinema], an art in which the intelligence that creates the reversals of fortune and the dramatic conflicts is subject to another intelligence, the intelligence of the machine that wants nothing, that does not construct any stories, but simply records the infinity of movements that give rise to drama a hundred times more intense than all dramatic reversals of fortune . . . Cinematographic automatism settles the quarrel between art and technique by changing the very status of the ‘real.’ It does not reproduce things as they offer themselves to the gaze. It records them as the human eye cannot see them, as they come into being, in a state of waves and vibrations, before they can be qualified as intelligible objects, people, or events due to their descriptive and narrative properties. This is why the art of moving images can overthrow the old Aristotelian hierarchy that privileged *muthos*—the coherence of the plot—and devalued *opsis*—the spectacle’s sensible effect,” etc. (*Film Fables* 1–2; cf. Nancy and Kiarostami, *Evidence*).

While I find Nancy and Rancière’s takes on potential and impotent shadows and spectacles for the most part promising, I must in my writing-thinking here also turn to Lyotard’s understanding of “the nihilism of
I was in the cellar on a sort of camp bed to get a bit of shut-eye and I had blackened my face. But suddenly three Russian soldiers came in. By the look of them they were Mongolians. They had their firearms and yelled: ‘Woman out.’... [T]hey pushed me into a room somewhere upstairs... They threw me down on the sofa and raped me, all three of them. They took me downstairs again and brought me to a cellar of a house further down the street. There an officer appeared, quite a young chap.

He was very polite, spoke good German. [He asked] if I would like to go with him to the adjoining room. It was a sort of potato cellar and he apologized that he too had to rape me. Nothing I could do. Fair enough. And it happened very quickly. Now it was all over, so I said: But I can’t go home now. It’s night and I will be shot in the street... Then he ordered one of his

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convened, conventional movements” in cinema that he would oppositionally rethink with “pyrotechnics.” It is not just a matter of the machine, the camera, or of “looks” or “spectators” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure”) but even more so of a matter with the experimental paralogic of the cut that allows for “a writing of movements: thus, extreme immobilization and excessive mobilization” (“Acinema” 177). I take Lyotard, as Philip Rosen takes him, as “starkly [posing] a critical question for any oppositional cinema—its relation to totality and pleasure” (Narrative 284–85; cf. Martin Jay, 543–86). But the question that remains is just how does someone critique sexual violence without trafficking in it! In other words, how do shadow narrative not themselves traffic in what they purport to disclose? Perhaps, critique has failed us again and again and enough!

There is more, always some more: See on YouTube and elsewhere sequences from the television show LEXX, His Divine Shadow Narrative, which is all about the last insect, after the insect wars! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apjMFCm4mbo>. And let us not forget John Cassavetes’s Shadows (1959), which further complicates this discussion and which we will take up yet another day. Cf. footnote 17, on the film and the filmic and thereafter as I bring Deleuze, rightfully so, into this discussion.
soldiers to take me home and I accepted gratefully. He took me to my front door. (BeFreier 110–12)

In the next scene an unnamed woman, reading from her diary, tells of the joy of being liberated from fascism. She invites a Russian soldier to rejoice with her. He takes her by the arm and says, “Come woman, come.” (This expression is reported by many of the German women.) But as the soldier commands her, she hears other women crying for help. She escapes by running to her mother, who says: “So it’s true after all. We must show them our Jewish identity cards,” which the two women hid in the goat pen. “They will understand.” However, the woman says, “They understood nothing. They couldn’t even read the identity cards” (BeFreier 111–12).

A fourth testimony is given of a woman (Hildegard Knef) who dressed like a boy and “hired herself out as a guard.” Eventually discovered to be a female, she becomes a prisoner of the Russians and is questioned by the NKWD (or NKVD, People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, which becomes the KGB). She is asked why she is dressed in men’s clothing and responds, “I didn’t want to be raped.” Then they hit her and repeat the question. Each time she is told: “German pigs rape, Russian heroes don’t” (BeFreier 112–13).

Sander thereafter speaks with Valentina Fjodorowna, who served in a women-only regiment. On May 13th she was in Berlin and put her signature on the column of the Reichstag. Sander asks Fjodorowna if she had heard at that time that many women were raped. Fjodorowna shrugs her shoulders and replies: “I can’t say anything about such cases.” The translator paraphrases: “It is hard for Mrs. Fjodorowna to understand all of this. She believes it is not a matter of love if violence is used. Personally she has not seen such acts of violence.” Sander: “She doesn’t
know either? Did she never discuss it with anyone? Neither with women or with men?” Fjodorowna: “No, never.” Then there is a turn in Fjodorowna’s responses: “Maybe one should know more about it and maybe one should know about it much earlier. Now it’s too late.” Sander: “Why do women not hear about it when other women are violated?” The translator paraphrases: “Mrs. Fjodorowna would keep silent and not say anything.” Sander: “Why?” The translator reports: “She would keep silent. It might make her unhappy for the rest of her life but she wouldn’t talk about it.” Fjodorowna: “It can’t be undone. What happened, happened. Everybody bears his own cross” (*BeFreier* 114–16). Privately. Silently. End of discussion.

Next is Claudia Gregoriewna, a sharpshooter during the war, who, the translator paraphrases saying, “Gregoriewna thinks that if women had known that Russian men raped German women the relationship between women and men would naturally change. It was war, but even in war a man must control himself. What happened, happened: it can’t be undone” (*BeFreier* 116–17).

Finally, a Russian man, Fjodor Swerew (or Feodor Sverev). The translator paraphrases: “He believes that to Western women this rape problem is something different. It wasn’t much of a disgrace to them, being deflowered. They don’t see that as something terrible. The relationship between men and women has changed since then.” Sander: “Since violence is always used by man against woman and never the reverse, I ask what purpose does he see in male power being expressed sexually against women?” Swerew: “It can’t be explained in that biologically men are more sexual than women. [There is a long pause while Sander objects.] We can point to examples in the animal world. There, males are always more active than females. Although occasionally females are sexually stronger.” Sander: “This has been scientifically refuted. In
fact women are more potent than men.” Swerew: “If you speak of sexuality only. But when you talk of the origins of the beginning, men play the bigger part.” The translator paraphrases: “Mr. Swerew believes that even a woman with a strong sexuality tries to keep up with the appearance that a man is more active than she. He says he can’t say that cases [of Russian soldiers raping German women] was widespread. When a soldier saw a woman who could have been his mother, he would not do her any harm. But when a man saw a young woman, he may have had the urge to rape her” (BeFreier 117–18).

A Russian soldier with his wife sitting next to him, Gleb and Anna Dubrowo. Sander interviews only the man (aka, Fjodorowilsch), but the camera shot is on Anna as much if not more than on Gleb. Anna is stone faced throughout the brief interview. In addition, there is a camera shot of German women and men observing the interview on four monitors. The translator paraphrases: “Fjodorowilsch says that soldiers who raped German women did so because of sexual need [the camera pans to Anna] certainly not for revenge [then to the audience of German women and men]. It would be dishonest if he would say that acts of violence against German women didn’t take place. He can understand young men who spent a long time in the field but they were men after all. [Then there is a shot of a photograph of Russian soldiers saluting to the camera while standing next to a framed picture of Stalin]” (BeFreier 118–19). Sander is editorializing with these juxtapositions of receptions.

The intensity of these interviews with Russians grows as they pass sequentially from women to a man and then to a man and woman. The intensity only continues to grow as Sander next moves to a man, Ivan Stasewitsch, who was just a “young man” in the war and yet fought. The scene is his artist studio. (I am going to quote this interview at
length, for it illustrates best Sander’s techniques of inter-
viewing and it brings to the surface a number of common-
place stories of what took place.)

Sander: I have a photo here of you as a young man.
You went to the front when you were fourteen, and in
this photo that shows the train coming from Berlin,
you were sixteen. So you were a child when you went
to war and you were a man when you returned [the
two pictures along with others are shown].

The Translator (paraphrasing): He says he was not a man
when the war ended but still a boy. He knew that the
Red Army was warned against intimate relations
with German women, whereas, as he expresses it,
there were patriotic German women who infected the
Russians with venereal diseases. The German women
considered it their duty. He says that the German
women were not raped, but did it because of their
own needs. Several times he witnessed such situ-
tions when he came to German houses with other
soldiers. He stayed at the door with a gun. He believes
that they were intimate with the German women.

Sander: Did you discuss this afterwards with the men?

Slasewitsch: They didn’t tell me anything but dis-
cussed it among themselves.

Sander: I simply think that a young man like you
were then, that is, curious as well, and also part of
the victorious army, would really know more about it
and besides you are an artist and probably noticed a
lot more than the other people.
The Translator (paraphrasing): He only knows of that one time when he was standing guard. The soldiers were punished for ignoring the orders and so the soldiers tried to be secretive about it.

The Translator (reading from an earlier transcript): Iwan Stasewitsch said earlier that the soldiers had looked for such relationships on purpose and entered into them in order not to have to go to the front and to stay alive. They went into the hospital for medical treatment and so survived the war.

Sander: Did I get that right? That Russian soldiers slept with German women for that purpose to get infected so that they wouldn’t be sent to the eastern front to the war and could survive? That sexual intercourse was a sort of sabotage?

Slasewitsch: Of course, it was a sort of sabotage. [There is a look of disbelief on Sander’s face.] But the German women also did it out of patriotism and they sought out the Russian soldiers themselves. One German woman put 15 Red Army men out of action.

Sander: So they told the soldiers there are so many women here, they want to infect you and one woman can knock out 15 Red Army men.

Slasewitsch: If she did it out of patriotism she couldn’t say she was raped.

Sander: I think that a woman who’s sick... after all it hurts. To my mind it’s not a good way to conquer the enemy.
Slasewitsch: This information was read out to the soldiers by political clerks, regularly. That’s how they warned the men. *(BeFreier 119–21)*

The child at war, before and after, is the father of the rapists.

There is a quick cut to a U.S. Army film prepared for servicemen, telling them to “get to the nearest venereal prophylaxis station for a treatment.” *(There is a voice over while a man holds his penis during treatment: “This is my rifle, this is my gun; one is for killing, one is for fun.”) In the film there are instructions for the complete use of prophylactics. Women, in mug shots, are blamed in every way for venereal disease *(BeFreier 122)*.

Sander returns to Fjodor, the former Russian Officer.

Sander: You told us that in many German houses you visited you saw photos of atrocities committed by Germans in Russia. Can you describe that in detail?

Swerew, voice over: As an officer I regularly went into houses of Germans and I saw many photo albums with photos that had been taken in Russia in earlier days. What struck me in these photos was that indiscriminately whoever was photographed, officer or soldier, they had themselves taken as Roman legionaries, barbarian murderers. *[A photo is shown of a German man with a pistol being aimed at a nude dead woman on her back. Then pictures of men hanging and of a German soldier cutting off the head of a man with a buzz saw.]*

Sander, voice over: How often did you see that? *[More pictures.]*
Swerew: Very often. I stayed in several parts of Ger-
many. In Pommern, Prussia, and I saw such photos
everywhere.

Sander: Is that 10 times, 20 times, 50 times?

Swerew: More than a 100 times. [Film footage of a
Russian soldier taking such photographs out of a dead
German soldier’s pocket.]

Sander: You must have guessed that these photos and
the appeals from Ilja Ehrenburg had something to do
with the atrocities that were committed by the Rus-
sian troops. [Film footage of Russian soldiers looking
through photographs of atrocities.]

Translator (paraphrasing): He says that many Russians
had an envelope in their pockets and [on occasion] these envelopes showed [one] picture [of] a small
Russian child exhorting its father who is at the front.
“Daddy, kill a German.” When our undisciplined
Soviet soldiers were caught, they showed these enve-
lopes and maxims and tried to justify themselves
with them. “If you do not kill the German, he will
kill you.” “If you let the German live, the German
will hang a Russian and rape a Russian woman.”
( _BeFreier_ 123–25)

The issue is one of propaganda and revenge and whether
or not the Soviet Army attempted to stop soldiers from
reprisals against the Germans. Dubrowo testifies that
Ilja Ehrenburg17 stopped writing propaganda when the

17 The Russian officer Fjodor Swerew tells Sander that Ilya Ehrenburg wrote articles for the newspaper, “which were to arouse feelings of hatred
Russians invaded Germany (BeFreier 125); testifies that every attempt was made to punish Russian soldiers who raped (for revenge or not) or who even took a German woman into his quarters (125). A German man, Herr Schneck, testifies that this is the case (125–26). Mrs. Von Werner speaks of calm and order where she lived, which was close to the command post. She testifies that German soldiers were shot when caught raping (126). A German man, Herr Eisermann, recalls: “After two, three weeks Marshall Schukow issued very severe orders and whoever was caught or reported, they only had to utter a threat, would be executed with a machine gun and that was done in a bunker on the corner of the Karlstreet. We heard the machine gun day and night” (BeFreier 126).

The testimony continues, but I will stop with the man who says, dramatically with his body rhythmically moving, his hands gesturing wildly, and his head and eyes thrust up to the ceiling: “How I laughed when the Germans told this story in hospital: A chap named Fritz, a German, hid his girl in the cellar and he didn’t let her out so no one would do any harm. After a month she escaped and she rode her bicycle to her neighbor. That’s where we caught her and of course the entire male choir raped her. I shrieked. The whole sick bay roared with laughter and I, Juri Alexejwitsch Dodelew, who sit here before you also laughed. So much for the theme of hatred. Hatred was the result of this story. Didn’t the Germans rape our women? Of course, they did, we read it in the papers…. So an eye for an eye. If they did it, so will we do the same” (BeFreier 128–29; emphasis mine).

The interviews in the first reel begin with two
women at the end of a long table. The women were at the distance in the vanishing point. As Sander moves from one interlocutor to another, from German to German woman at first and then from Russian to Russian combatant, both women and men, all the interlocutors figuratively but materially fill the empty seats at that table. These interlocutors—German and Russian, Russian and German—become alike in the very distance of the vanishing point. The tableau forms a community. A public investigation.
The cinema does not just present images, it surrounds them with a world. This is why, very early on, it looked for bigger and bigger circuits which would unite an actual image with recollection images, dream-images and world-images.

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2* (68)

When there are photos of these events, the women are usually dead. In these photos they are violated once more as proof of the bestiality of whatever adversary there was. We see Russian women raped by Germans. German women raped by Russians. Russian women, German women. Russian women, German, Russian and so on.

Helke Sander, *BeFreier und Befreite* (a voice over, while photos are shown, reel one)

The Master Narrative (A Pre-meditation): I ended the previous section (further testimony) with a vanishing point and opened this one (master narrative) with a summarizing statement and an orienting quotation—all of which can be read as my underwriting the film in its entirety as a master narrative of women as victims and men as rapists. I could bolster this view by pointing to the opening statement of the film, which includes the rapes in “Kuwait and Yogoslavia,” and the closing statement of the film, which includes a scene from Kleist’s *Penthesilea* with passages that call for women to wage war against men until women are free as they were in the primal times. I could call this a framing device that contextualizes and informs all the scenes of testimony, all the editing-montage, all the music and drama and special lenses used into one transhistorical, master narrative. My sense, however, is that Sander is not given to making this possible master narrative into one that is to stand. She experiments with possibilities in everything she does, in film or fiction. She sets images in motion that incipiently invite viewers (readers) to add or
subtract (but by extra-ordinary means to link, through a variety of conductive circuits) from them in unpredictable ways. I am suggesting that to follow the various catastrophes put out by her film is to follow them until being hit by a singular image, a moment, among movement-image but more so time-image (every 24 frames per second) and finding oneself being taken from the interval (narration as cause and effect) into the interstices (the gap, void), at the limits, the total exhaustion, of reason.\textsuperscript{18}

As much as Sander’s title, BeFreier und Befreite, with its orthographic changes and puns, suggests multiple readings of an event, I would then invite us to read the film across the many registers that the film ex-hibits. In every frame the film impresses me with its inscribing by exscribing. (Or with its in-hibiting by ex-hibiting. Not only do the critics resist and Sander counter-resist, but the text-film itself also resists.) But in a few extra-ordinarily peculiar frames, the exscriptions ex-hibit—as Deleuze refers to, by way of Beckett—a beginning of a “third language,” one that is singular and finds itself at a threshold, in

\textsuperscript{18} See Deleuze, \textit{Cinema 2} 179–80; Bogue, \textit{Deleuze} 170–77. Conley in “The Film Event” makes a distinction between “interval” and “interstice.” Kundera, in his novel \textit{Immortality}, criticizes Aristotle’s refusal to accept the “episode” (which is without apparent cause and effect) and Kundera’s revalorization of it, which I am attempting to accomplish as well in terms of Sander’s film. The interstice and the episode are the excluded middles. What this discussion of mine should lead to is that in the film (or any expression of human production) there is a community, communion (founded on brutality and inhumanity) but in the filmic there is \textit{(es gibt)} incipiently a communitarianism as espoused by Barthes, Deleuze, Nancy, Blanchot, Agamben, Ronell, and Waters. Respectively, there is both the film and the filmic, the latter becoming the sight of a new politics of the future as Barthes says in “Third Meaning” (62–63). For additional discussions of a single frame in a film, see Adair, \textit{Flickers}; Sherman, \textit{Complete Untitled Film Stills and Film Stills}; Ray, \textit{Avant-Garde}; Krauss, \textit{Sherman}; Krauss, with Bois, “Destiny of the Informe” 235–52. Cf. Shaviro’s discussion of Warhol’s “film portraits” in \textit{Cinematic} (210–12).
any-space-whatever. Hence, though Sander might begin and end with a classic framing device, Sander cannot maintain it as the force of singularities begin to disperse the unifying structure until it is always already on the verge of falling into a thirdness (see Deleuze, *Cinema I* 102–22, 197–15; *Cinema 2* 1–24). Or on the verge of dispersing out of this thirdness. Put more simply, the various interstices (gaps, voids) turn outside inside, threatening any thinking of what the documentary film purports to report. But this threatening of involution, as Deleuze might say, is a threat of novelty, “something new,” something coming out of 1 and 2 in the form of a third (*Cinema 2* 180).

The film becomes, strangely, a creation—perhaps a decreation—a potentiality—perhaps an impotentiality—of a third space of singularities. The very subject matter of a singular event (mass rape, *Zeitereignis*) makes a film of singularities, which form no classic set, but become dispersed. Become incompossibilities. Perhaps it is intended, perhaps not; it does not matter. Once the film reaches a thirdness, it has a pure im/potentiality of its own, driving it to become any-space-whatever. The place might be Berlin turned into a desert of the real, but it might also

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19 In this section on a third language, I am guided by Conley’s discussion in “The Film Event” and by Deleuze’s “L’épuisé”; trans., “The Exhausted.” The film event is the filmic. (For the phrase “any-space-whatever,” see Deleuze, *Cinema I* 102–22.) I am purposefully drawing implications between, on the one hand, Pascal Augé’s or Marc Augé’s *Non-Places* (there is confusion about who Augé is; the former, Pascal, was possibly a student in Deleuze’s class!) and, on the other, Deleuze’s varied notion of “any-space-whatever” and Agamben’s “whatever being” and space (*Coming*). Both spaces and beings are thirds. Cf. Barthes, in *Roland Barthes on “a third language”* (68–69, 84, 118, 132, 138, 142).

20 For Lyotard the petit narrative can be a singular event. But I wish to avoid the newer currency of the petit narrative as simply a smaller, more local rendition of a grand narrative. My third term emphasizes a singular event.
be Kuwait, Yugoslavia, or in any neighborhood (Sade, our neighbor) near us. It is any-space-wherever but any-space-whatever. Actual and virtual. It is not just in basements or cellars, in living rooms and bedrooms, in prison cells and showers, but also in streets with rapists lined up, queuing up, waiting their turn. At least that is how I have come to read and experience BeFreier und Befreite through repetitive viewings. How I have come not to interpret the film, but to follow it as an unfolding, increasing, experiment at the limits. Moving toward the filmic, or a third sense. (The issue here as throughout is mediality.) As an experiment, this moving, or movement-imaging, toward the filmic, however, is being conducted not by human beings, but by disfigures, or deformatives, of post-humanity.21

More specifically, however, it is not the film, but a film still among stills in the film that becomes a experimental “conversation” in a third language that invites me and perhaps “us” to attempt to rethink the thinking of rape in terms of the bloc that is formed between the wasp and the orchid. (I am fully aware that this suggestion is jarRinggg. Noisy.) This conversation of contestations is going on in between what the interlocutors are saying in a film still.

21 The notion of a post-humanity is in terms of cinema, but I speak broadly in terms of a post-Humanism, with human beings as no longer the measure of all things. In the Deleuze’s discussions of the shift from the movement-image to the time-image, there is a collapsing into “indiscernibility which will endow the camera with a rich array of functions, and entail a new conception of the frame and reframings” (Cinema 2, 23). But these logical connections, though used—this is the difference between classical and modern cinema—are not always used “logically” but paralogically, conductively (213–14). As I say, I am thinking through mediality. (This is an ambiguous statement.) For me, as Kittler in Discourse Networks argues, the media undetermine, determine, or over-determine subjectivity itself, i.e., a subject that means what “it” says, and says what “it” means. I am at the moment less concerned with hermeneutics (information and its interpretation) and more with a post-hermeneutics (misfiring-information, noise, third senses). And how it can shape a post(e)-pedagogy (see Ulmer, Applied).
(I am fully aware that the instability of the wasp and orchid, this assemblage, given the possible analogy with rapist and victim, misfires and can lead to some rather ridiculous discussions if used to deflect the notion of a conversation—which is a word, rather, an assemblage, itself that leads to the eighteenth-century double entendre of sexual intercourse. Beings not only must live with their unconscious but also with the dictionary’s.)

(As an exemplary event, I see a single frame, among others, in—but taken out of—the film—a still—of a Russian soldier grabbing and pulling up the front wheel of a bicycle being held onto at the handlebars—or wings—by a German woman. What is between them, in this tug-of-war, is the bicycle, which in its spatially redistributed form begins to look like a unicycle falling in order to ascend. There is something “machinic” about it, functioning immanently and imminently. The soldier and the woman stare eye-to-eye. What is the soldier saying to the woman? Come, woman, come? The woman saying to the soldier? Become, soldier, become? What are those Germans in the background seeing and saying? And What is the bicycle itself seeing and saying? It is a haunting image. The single frame requires, as Deleuze would say, “a point of view of variation” [Fold 19–20]. But as Deleuze explains, “the point of view is not what varies with the subject, at least in the first instance; it is, to the contrary, the condition in which an eventual subject apprehends a variation (metamorphosis).” Deleuze continues: “For Leibniz, for Nietzsche, for

22 I intend “machinic” as Deleuze discusses it (Anti-Oedipus 283–96; Thousand Plateaus 88–91). The bicycle in the image is becoming a unicycle, something molar becoming molecular, deterritorialized. It is a man-bicycle-woman refolding and becoming a “machinic assemblage” (Thousand 88). Becoming molecular, or an assemblage, however, often leads back, in a double articulation, to a reterritorialization. And yet, this molecular-deterritorialization-becoming is the rebeginning-impotentiality of something new and vital. (See Johnston, “Machinic”)
William and Henry James, and for Whitehead as well,” point of view “is not a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition [i.e., mediality] in which the truth of a variation appears to the [“superject”]. This is the very idea of Baroque perspective” [20].

23 Again, I think in terms of post-hermeneutics (see Kittler, Discourse Networks). Cf. Deleuze’s discussion of Francis Bacon’s paintings, in which he speaks of Bacon’s painting (aesthetic) hysteria and how the eye is not a “fixed organ” but “indeterminate” bringing about full presence (Francis Bacon 45); and Deleuze’s discussion of a Bergsonian view of matter and brain being one, “a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor center of reference [for seeing] would be assignable” (Cinema 1 57–58) or the point of view of “the eye of matter” or “in things” (81). Deleuze takes “superject” from Whitehead. As Deleuze argues, both objects and subjects are undergoing a change, metamorphosis, into thirds figures. And yet, again, these thirds or threes are not a dialetical synthesis. (See Bois, “Dialectic” in Formless 67–73; cf. Vitanza, “Threes.”) In my discussion of Deleuze’s “point of view on variation” I am indebted to Johnston’s “Machinic Vision” and to Conley’s article “Conspiracy Crisis.”
accordance or correspondence to variation, but variation in discordance to subject from object or in accordance to superject.

I am not referring to any film still, or frame, printed in an article [see October 72 ([Spring 1995] 42) or a book [BeFreier 147]; rather, I am referring to a peculiar frame in the film itself, while the camera pans over the photographs and hovers over the bicycle, between the two: Russian soldier and German woman [toward the end of reel one]. But understand that the image that I am using in this book (Image 1) is the actual photograph that was trimmed down to fit the scene.

When 2 does not become 1 [I refuse to read the image in terms of the myth of immanence, a movement from bicycle to unicycle], but when 1 + 1 becomes 3, or 2 becomes 3 [in terms of imminence, pure impotentiality, a bloc of becoming tricycle].

But there are other exemplary frames that move while staying still pointless at the limit in BeFreier und Befreite, and they are, e.g., shown as photographs in the film while there is a testimonial voice over. I am referring to the photographs of German combatants as Roman legionaries, standing over their prey or cutting the heads off their prey. Irrational, yet rational photographic (crop) cuts. Placed in the film. For a collusion-collision. At the limit. These are the photographs that the Russian combatants pick up from the dead and place in their pockets; these are the photographs that Russian combatants find in the homes of German men and women, find as trophies becoming trophies in any-space-whatever. These are the photographs turn film stills that tear open the film, and freeze the frames. These are the photographs turn film stills that fall from the film, in motion, and lie on the floor, still, at the limits, before the screen. These are the photographs turn film stills that are irrational cuts (irrational-points,
cut-points) that are in and yet are not in the film, but in between, and that Roland Barthes would invite us to see as the singular image experienced as the “punctum” \([\textit{Camera Lucida} 27]\). Or rather, now as the “filmic” \(\text{“Third Meaning” 64–65}\). \(^{24}\) These films stills resist the diegetic horizon of the film and the court records and the archives and begin to display, reveal, the core of excess that lies in the interstices. . . . End of parenthesis!

But I am also aware that the instability of the image of the wasp and of the orchid would manifest itself, in terms of Sander’s film, in such questions as Who is the wasp? and Who the orchid? (If a reader-viewer approaches the film \textit{as} a conversation, it is often difficult to tell the difference between victim and perpetrator. They do become in significant [and yet apparently insignificant] instances imminently reversible. Any-instants-whatever. Which is disconcerting. Theirs is, as Deleuze might say, a “false continuity” \([\textit{Cinema 2} 179]\). Which is Obscene. Scandalous. And yet, it all may be even more disconcerting. A false continuity would only prefigure, as Deleuze says, a modernist cinema \(179\), in which it is no longer an issue of the traditional logic or politics “of the association or attraction of images” \(179\), but an issue of a proper paralogically politics that “will be productive of a third or of something new” \(180\).) . . . I cannot forget that men are raping men in wars waged yesterday and \textit{now}. Yes, these men, raped, are being “feminized,” turned into a “woman,” undergoing a reversal. Male-on-male rape has seldom been discussed in

\(^{24}\) The inclusion of the photographs into the film and the potential impact that they have, turning the film into the filmic, reminds me of Marker’s film \textit{La Jetée}, which is, of course, virtually all photographs in film (cinema), except for the scene of the woman’s eyes animated. This film, then, would be the purest form of filmic films, which for the sake of discernibility to uncover indiscernibility, Marker has to include the eyes (of all human things in cinema) moving. The eyes are preceded and followed by and are surrounded by the world gone filmic.
the public sphere. It deserves the status of a singular event. But this, too, is a false continuity. Perhaps male-on-male rape is not as worse as a woman’s fate. Who suffers more? But Who could say? What third party? To determine so, Would we, like the pagan gods, have to engage in a forgetful act of decreating a new Tiresias? with its own consequences? I do not think so, except as an anthropological experiment of sorts, for we are being dis/engaged, becoming other than human, becoming post-human, becoming thirds! (cf. Agamben, *Remnants* 54–55, 82–83). The image of wasp and orchid becomes some other. Something new. Dreadfully, something arrives that exceeds thinking (juridico-political).

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25 One counter-argument is that men on both sides are raping. That men get raped is beside the point, for it is men in war who rape men, not women who rape men. Chesler has made this very counter-argument: “Yes, fascist/nationalist Croat and Moslem male soldiers raped women too, with as much ferocity, although on a smaller scale. Some people say: ‘You see, both sides did it.’ No, ‘both sides’ did not do it. Only men raped women, women did not rape men; only men, not women, did the killing.” I will return to this counter-argument, for it has grave implications in another register when discussing Sander’s film. The point is not that male-male rape is worse than male-female rape; the point is that it leads to an endless cycle of revenge that never ends and only escalates to mass rape as a permanent way of dying. Dworkin writes: “Nothing in Madrid or Oslo or in the Rose Garden of the White House will repair a male-on-male military rape. Nor will raped men join with raped women of any description—wife, mother, sister, Jew, feminist. The revenge rape of male Israeli soldiers in captivity is part of the fear, part of the hate that drives the Israeli fear of annihilation. Rape takes everything away” (*Scapegoat* 58).
The question that I kept on asking myself while watching this film was, what is actually being worked through here? Well, there are various kinds of resistances being worked through.

Round Table, Eric Santner, “Further Thoughts” (110)

Resistance: The above is an interruption with interruptions. One caesura after another. But it will spill over, as an enjambment does—which is against gridlock in thinking—into this section on resistance, that is, on criticisms of Sander and her film. From here on, I will give expositions of the relevant major criticisms and then report Sander’s counter-criticisms. All in terms of a sophistic dissoi-logoi. After which we will move on to meditations, or what I would also call conversations. These make up a polylogue of commentators about the film and its reception. (The exchange is remarkable, for it is possible to see in it an attempt to deal with the complexity of the film with its many registers and to see in it various rebeginnings of a new zone of betweens. Interstices. Which recapitulate my prior experiences viewing this film.) Again, all of these texts are in the special issue “Berlin 1945: War and Rape” of the journal October.

The criticisms offered by Gertrud Koch, Atina Grossmann, and David J. Levin at no time attempt to set aside the fact of the mass rapes. Rather, these critics point to implications that are not seen or realized, they argue, in the documentary film itself, implications that contribute to the Chaste thinking that informs the film. (There are those readers, however, who would see only the side of the one over the other and, hence, avoid a point of view of variation.)26 The criticisms build on Koch’s concerns about

26 The most pathetic reading is Rosenzweig’s “Some Very Personal Thoughts.” Rosenzweig deals only in an expressionist form of ad feminem.
two main themes in the film that drive the film and appear to move “in two directions”: Those of “primal fertility” (or vitalism) and of “the ‘genocide of love’” (29). The themes are articulated by two people Sander interviews. The former, Koch says, is put forth by Fjodor Swerew (Feodor Sverev), who speaks of the sexual urges—the desire to procreate—of the Russian combatants who raped. The latter is put forth by Frau Reshevskaia, who speaks of a strange coupling of genocide and love.

Koch finds the theme of primal fertility displayed widely in scope throughout the dialogue on the gathering of statistics and not only in the reflections on quantity (i.e., the precise numbers of women raped) but also on the subsequent quality of life, or lack thereof, for these women and their children born of rape. The primal fertility argument, used to explain rape as a phenomenon, is that the biological urge for procreation is so great that men un/just do what men do. Boys will be boys! Koch points to Fjodor Swerew, who “advocates the customary stereotypical legitimizing thesis for rape as the sexual urges.” Swerew explains: “It is so, I suppose: The man can be killed [in war] every moment. And he wants to make a new life. For him it was all the same: Russian girls, Polish, Checkish [sic]. This is, perhaps, a philosophical aspect about man and woman in that Man is man and he wants to give a new life, I suppose, so it happens” (BeFreier 136; qtd. by

She fails to see that Koch, indeed, takes part—I will use Rosenzweig’s own words—in “a new debate about the delayed social consequences and political effects of these mass rapes” (80). All involved need not ingratiate themselves, as Rosenzweig does, with Sander at the exclusion of any possible critique that would lead to a “conversation.” Rosenzweig does, however, fill out the spectrum of a point of view of variation. But not until the “Round Table” does the conversation open up with Andreas Huyssen’s going “out on a limb” (106), saying that Sander places herself in between two discourses. For other promising readings, published elsewhere, see Gesa Zinn; Sheila Johnson.
Koch 31. In English in the film and book). This is a rather
telling explanation in the film; it does once again show
the reader-viewer the kinds of clichéd rationalizations
that are brought to bear on the event. Fear of death causes
men in war to rape in dis/order to reproduce quantities
of themselves. Along with this rationalization are other
rationalized arguments equally based on a discourse of
biology, Koch points out, that smacks of “a curious jargon,
as if [“principal witnesses”] were still working for the
anti-Bolshevik propaganda department or the Institute for
Racial and Biological Hygiene” (30). This arguments based
on biology attempts to explain *Why men should not shun
women who have been raped as possible, future quality
“breeders.”* Men rape women and then men shun (i.e., rape
once again) these women. One witness, Dr. Lutz, Koch
explains, “mounts her argument as a defense of women
against the masculine notion that, as a consequence of
rape, the woman as the ‘vessel for the child’ undergoes
irreparable harm and for that reason must be cast out.
In fact, however, she does not abandon the argument’s
orientation toward racial hygiene” (30). Dr. Lutz argues:
“It went so far, for example, that during my student years
it was said that when a dog was incorrectly mated it was
ruined forever as a breeder. Of course, that is ridiculous.
The first pups, naturally, are nothing. But the dog, when
newly impregnated by the right partner, is fine once again.
And this is naturally the same for human beings. This is
a thing which plays itself out and is done with, and when
newly inseminated can be vouched for again” (*BeFreier* 176;
qtd. by Koch 30). Lutz is responding to the German men
who would do away with their wives or daughters, because
raped. First, rape; then, murder. (Recall the woman who
is told by a former German officer that if she had been his
wife, he would have shot her.) But Lutz is saying a great
deal more in her pedagogy and not-so-hidden curricu-
lum. Lutz is, by analogy with dog breeding, saying that the children resulting from rape “are nothing” (many of these children, now adults, are interviewed in the film) and that the raped women as breeders, when “impregnated by the right partner,” perhaps non-Russian?, but definitely German, are “fine again” and “can be vouched for again.” Now, it is first, rape; then, proper vouchers. It is rape all the way down! Again, caught in the middle are the children who survived, now adults, and in the film recall openly their fantasies about their pedigree. One believed his father was an American only to be disappointed that he was Russian, while another was proud that her father was not an American but a Russian. At all levels breeding (out) is the topic! Sander herself writes: “It is one of the ironies of history that a war waged for racial purity laid the groundwork for interbreeding on a gigantic scale, and that contemporary Europe in fact appears different than it did fifty years ago” (“Remembering/Forgetting” 20; BeFreier 14).

What Koch makes explicit is the constant zigzagging in the film—from background to foreground—from the rape and victimage of women to “a hidden [Chaste] vitalistic celebration of men’s procreative capabilities” (31–32). Or from genocide (gynocide) to procreation (in terms of quantity and quality). There is never a moment when this Gestalt is not at work, unworking. In viewing the film, we should ask, Why is it that these two forces—perhaps better labeled as thanatos and eros—are imminently reversible in as much as they are more categorically similar than different? They are not opposites, though we have been acculturated to see them as opposites.27 Perhaps it has much to do with the implied proper name Eros, which we will return to in the section on pagan meditations.

27 I allude to Freud’s Beyond the Pleasure Principle (SE: XVIII), but also to Bataille’s The Tears of Eros.
Opposite to, or complementing, the theme of rape and procreation is, Koch says, “the metaphor of the ‘genocide of love’” (32). Frau Reshevskaya speaks in Russian and Warwara Petrowa translates into German: “Sie verurteilten deutsche Frauen zu diesen Leiden, die sie über sich ergehen lassen mussten. Trotzdem glaube ich nicht, dass es sexuelle Aspekte des Krieges waren. Es war ein sexueller Genozid, ein Genozid der Liebe” (BeFreier 137; emphasis mine). Koch explains: “Frau Reshevskaya, who coins this poetic metaphor, means that Russian soldiers raped German women out of revenge for German acts of cruelty and not for sexual reasons” (32). Koch argues that because Sander does not “pursue the manner in which the metaphor is to be understood,” the metaphor begins to take on a “dynamic” of its own and to signify “that the massive rapes annihilated the women as ‘people of lovers,’ thereby strengthening the impression that German women as a whole took no part in the political events of the Nazi period and that they would have been able to survive unhurt if, at the war’s end, they had not become the innocent victims of a horrible conqueror” (32). Koch is very pointed in her accusations of a metaphoric cover up and so I want to call on her own words still further. Shecontinues: “The metaphor of a ‘genocide of love’ takes over the film as a whole to become an interpretive hypothesis. This phrase is used in such an approving way that it cannot—or is not meant to—allow reflection upon the claim that the Nazi system did not shape women’s subjectivity. In May 1945, although they could not or did not want to reflect on their own role in stabilizing the system, German women may have had to ask themselves how ‘worthy of love’ the soldiers returning from the front were” (32). There are two things that Koch is pointing to that bear emphasis: Namely, that these German women, as victims with their own stories of being raped, are exonerating themselves from
their participation in the Nazi system (hiding that fact, making it Chaste), and that these German women are fooling themselves into thinking that their husbands—”lovers” returning from the front were both capable and “worthy of love.” Fooling themselves into thinking that they were not at all like the Russian men who had raped them. What comes out in the interviews with the children of rape is that, in fact, in many cases their mothers for the most part were incapable of loving or caring, and they themselves were incapable. The legacy of rape informs life while incapacitating it. Hence, another way of seeing the genocide of love (cf. Oates, Rape: A Love Story).

Koch’s pointing to the “dynamic” of the metaphor itself, with its noisy clamoring, is courageous, for Koch leaves herself—she is aware—open to a charge of blaming the victims, that somehow or other, the German women deserved being raped—which is a charge that would but again exonerate, to a degree, the former perpetrators of fascism and the latter victims of revenge rapes. Those Russians who spoke openly of the rapes characterized them as “an eye for an eye.” Once the dynamic of give-and-take on rape begins, it is impossible to control the spillover effects. But Koch is not saying that the German women deserved what they got, though Both Koch and Sander find themselves obsessively having to repeat this point. Koch is saying rather that the German women’s stories also function as alibis in their testimonies, their biographies, that help make Chaste their role in Nazi Germany, and that the metaphor of “The Genocide of Love” in the film with its implications could and did also help make Chaste what Sander was attempting to open up.28

For Koch, the cover up continues in terms of the master narrative that she and others see as informing the film:

28 Koch is most forthright on these issues (see “Blood” 36).
“Through the narrative’s concentration on the rapes at the end of the war the film conceals the speakers’ divergent positions. The women’s sex assumes transhistorical importance, whether the woman be a Jewess living in hiding or a German interviewed by the Nazi Wochenschau; all women now seem to be in the same boat. In biographical research one calls such stories that structure meaning ‘master narratives’—and in a certain sense the film itself offers such a master narrative: of women as the central victims of a masculine war in which they participated altogether passively” (35; cf. Grossmann 47–48; Levin 72–73). Master (or grand) narratives, provisional or otherwise, cover up and make Chaste. But there is always something in their inscription that is an exscription, something “filmic” (Barthes) that deterritorializes them into their opposite or into something that resists being narrated, or resists interpretation or indictment and brings on, with its failure, experiments in What is called Thinking?29

Koch’s last concern is a brief examination of the closing scene of the film, which has Hildegard Knef reading from Heinrich von Kleist’s Penthesilea: “Vexoris,/the Ethiopian king, appeared” and, after slaughtering the women’s men, “took our love/from us by force—they dragged the women from/their husbands’ graves to their disgusting beds” (39; qtd. from Martin Greenberg’s translation with slight modifications, 226–27. Cf. Agee trans., 92–93). The concluding quote of the film, a few lines following those above, is

And then they held a council
where it was decreed as follows: Women
capable of acting so heroically

29 I am not only talking in terms of the critics’ resistance of Sander’s film and not only of Sander’s counter-resistance of her critics, but also of a third resistances to be found in this exchange as well as others and in the film itself.
needs must be unfettered as the wind
that blows across the open steppes and shall submit
to men no longer….

(39; cf. Agee trans., 93–94. BeFreier 213.)

If Sander and Knef had kept on reading in this closing
scene through to the end of the play, the film’s ending
would be rather tragically solemn. As anyone knows who
has read or seen the play, nothing goes right for Penthe-
silea after she slays Achilles. Which should remind us of
Christa Wolf’s “third alternative” of living and not killing
and dying (Cassandra 106–07, 118–19). In both Kleist and
Wolf, Penthesilea kills or attempts to kill and dies.30 There
really is no difference among the accounts in Homer or in
Kleist or Wolf, except for the narrative fact that Achilles
is killed in Kleist before Penthesilea turns on herself. It is
a horrifying end with no promise of a rebeginning. Unless
we are to view Kleist’s version as a pedagogical play of the
failure of too much pride and spirit, as Prothoë announces
in the closing lines. It is Artemis, not just the god Mars,
who, as has been surmised in the play itself, that pushes
Penthesilea to Thanatos.31 Ginette Paris reminds us that

30 Deleuze (Essays Critical 79) offers a rather different reading of Penthe-
silea’s actions in the context of a discussion of Bartleby. Deleuze writes:
“Choosing is the Promethean sin par excellence. This was the case with
Kleist’s Penthesilea, an Ahab-woman who, like her indiscernible double
Achilles, had chosen her enemy, in defiance of the law of the Amazons for-
bidding the preference of one enemy over another. The priestess and the
Amazons consider this a betrayal that madness sanctions in a cannibal
identification.” Along these same lines of flight, Deleuze again speaks of
Penthesilea’s “demonic element” that “leads her into a dog-becoming.”
After all, it is her dogs, her dog-becoming, that tears Achilles into shreds
and pieces of meat to be cannibalized (Dialogues 42; cf. Thousand 268).

31 Agee writes: “Penthesilea’s frenzy and subsequent exhausted trance
betrays all the symbolic signs of possession by her nation’s goddess,
Artemis. The murder of Achilles is a sacrifice that consummates, before
the eyes of all the Amazons, the raison d’état on which their nation is
Artemis “has a liking for bloody holocausts. It is not only animal sacrifice that is attributed to Artemis. In the most distant times of Greek religious history, she was associated with the practice of human sacrifice” (120). But let that not matter, for Sander and Koch toss that event and other possibilities aside for whatever feminine-militant symbolic value they might get out of Kleist’s play. Koch reads the unfortunate use of the passages as another means of deflecting, forgetting, the overall context of prewar Germany and the rise of the fascists. She says of Sander’s use of the passages and the analog that Sander establishes with them in the film:

In the beginning there was a paradisiacal primal state. Then the Scythian people were brutally attacked; all the men, both old and young, were killed, and the women raped. As a result, the women organized an armed struggle against the invaders and established their own state. This narrative, a myth from antiquity reinvented by Kleist, can be read in an entirely different way. As the narrative end to a historical documentary, the respective comparison lies close at hand: Everything was peaceful, even the sexes lived in harmony [in Germany], until external enemies [such as the Allies] forced their way in. In fact, that is the very account produced by repression in the 1950s which had already come into existence at the time of the liberation, that is, by the end of the war. The ‘golden’ prehistory of the Nazi system

founded. That nation is neither a feminist heaven nor a culturally inferior, degenerate society, as some would have it, but, for all its revolutionary uniqueness, a state, and as such, just like the Greek state, and just like Kleist’s Prussia or France, an embodiment of the unnatural, alienated, impersonal existence, opposed to freedom and ignorant of love” (xxviii). Agee is following Wichmann’s analysis in *Henrich von Kleist* (Stuttgart, 1988): 127–40.
which led to the Second World War is excluded from the narrative. (40).

For Koch, the inclusion of *Penthesilea* can also be read precisely for the spin its story puts on the mutual submission to procreative desires. To reproduce their state, the Amazons send out

‘brides of Mars’ to
‘burst into the forest where
there men are camped and blow the ripest ones,
who fall, like seeds, when tops of trees are wildly
pitching to and fro, back home to our fields.’
[Cf. Agee, trans., 97]

And for his part, Achilles wants to have a child with Penthesilea:

‘You’ll mother me the new god of our Earth!’
(40; cf. Agee trans., 103)

Here again, according to Koch, Sander obsessively links “rape and procreation,” which Koch has tried “to designate as [being expressed in the film in] an ambivalence between vitalistic procreative and aggressive fantasies” (40). Or possibly through Eros and Thanatos. Koch asks rhetorically, “[D]oes the film not embrace the repressive and self-exon-erating scenarios of German history from which it wanted to free itself through the mythic exorcism of a feminist-es-sentialist master narrative characterized by repression and self-exoneration?” She continues asking rhetorically: “And, in order better to understand the obsessions of the harmless Dr. Lutz, should we not read the film itself as a document linked to major aspects of women’s socialization history under the Nazis?” (40).
But what other kinds of resistances are ostensibly being worked through? A crucial one for Sander is the resistance to acknowledging the special status of violence against women even in the context of a war so clearly dominated, on the German side, by racial anxieties and racial genocide.

Round Table, Eric Santner, “Further Thoughts” (110)

Counter-Resistance: Sander’s responds to her critics in an uncomplicated, straight-forward manner. She argues, “my topic was . . . What really happened at the time? Did massive numbers of rapes occur, or was the belief that they did based on rumors?” (81). She responds at length against two of the five major accusations: Namely, that she “ripped the history of the rapes out of the context of the history of Nazism” and that she “used feminist commonplaces, for example, that all men are rapists instead of embarking on an analysis of the historical circumstances” (81–82). She says that she began with the assumption that the mass rapes were “representative acts of revenge for the cruelties committed by Germans in the lands they occupied” (82). This is important, for if proved true, then, the context for the rapes would be primarily the history of Nazism. She says that she no longer believes in the revenge thesis, for combatants other than the Red Army also raped German women. Moreover, it was not just German women who were raped, but also “Jewish women in hiding and female forced laborers, nuns, and little girls” (82). Sander says, “the question about context . . . always implies the view that rapes of Nazi women would in some way be justified. The idea that they might also affect ‘innocents’ is then removed by a proverb: they reaped what they sowed” (82). She says categorically, while “some women were also Nazis . . . in general they did not carry out the German atrocities.
(Female concentration camp guards are the known exceptions)” (82). Hence, for Sander, the context shifts from the history of Nazism to the history of men (of a variety of nations) raping women (of a variety of nations as well as classes and ages). 32

Still examining context, but taking up the issue of vitalism and procreation as cause of rape, she stresses that White Russian men set aside the notion of the rapes being tied to revenge. “They introduced other grounds: fear of death (e.g., women were connected to ‘life’ and ‘peace,’ although both were only to be had through this brutal act)” (82). Sander continues: “‘Sexual desire’ was another reason often named. The men made no distinction between German or Polish women. . . . The men express themselves in terms that often sound strange to Western European

32 I find this particular argument about context and its relation to German women exonerating themselves from German-Nazi history not compelling at all. Sander is trying to confuse degree of rapes (numbers) with kinds of rapes (precisely who was doing the raping). Her own film testifies to the massive numbers of Russian combatants raping the massive number of German women. That other combatants “raped”—both German and other women—is factually verifiable. That there were different notions of what constituted rape by the various members of the Allies is in passing a subject of discussion in the film, but a subject that is not developed between Sander and her critics. (If “we” agree with Catherine MacKinnon on coercion and consent, then the discussion in the film about what constitutes rape is specious. [See Toward 171–83,]) The argument, however, that Sander in part wants to make is that of “mass rape,” a Zeitereignis. It has two contexts in terms of scope and reduction. There is the general context of military and civil rape the world over; and there is the specific context of military rape in Berlin in 1945. But the numbers are not at all there in terms of the Allies as a whole, i.e., men as a whole, to set aside the context of the history of Nazism and the history of revenge. That, however, anyone in any context—just one person, no matter whom—is raped is obviously not acceptable. Sander makes this clear in her story “Telephone Conversation” in Three Women K 126–27. The game of numbers is double-edged as Sander understands. The context and issue between Sander and her critics, however, is strictly not about numbers but is more political in terms of how this story of the mass rapes is going to be told and in terms of whom it will accuse and will exonerate.
and North American ears. In my opinion, this is because no women’s movement existed in the old Soviet Union, and hardly any knowledge of psychoanalysis or behavior roles; a discourse on sex was unavailable. Thus they compare, with a complete naivete, male sexual potency with that of animals” (82). In her defense, she says that she did not respond to such loaded statements or “did not go into them more exhaustively because I presupposed an understanding of the context on the part of the film’s spectators” (82–83). While any rhetor (Sander or others) can assume that an audience will be able to supply multiple contexts and to fill in the missing part of enthymemes, no rhetor can do so with the topic of rape. The plea for special status of violence against women, as Sander suggests, can misfire. Even among women of different races and classes. While it is understandable that Sander wants the viewer to see the problems as “multifaceted” (84), there are those who would politically focus on a single facet, aspect, at the expense of others. It is important to keep as many of the facets in presence. And yet, even the thickest description of special interests can misfire. (Rape undoes everything in terms of a rhetorical hermeneutics and a material rhetoric.)

Still under the general rubric of context but taking up the issue of a “genocide of love,” Sander stresses in response: “On the basis of this phrase, Gertrud Koch makes the absurd accusation that by not commenting on this phrase I stylize the Germans into ‘people of lovers’” (83). In her defense, Sander writes:

women report very drily about what they experienced at the time. They do not even cry…(which is part of the problem). . . . That I did not correct but instead let stand certain remarks made by my interviewees plays a prominent role in the list of accusations. I did not agree with the content of all that was said to me…. I
wanted to portray an event and in so doing to refer to the multifaceted problems involved [to let it unfold processually]. In order to do so, I had to know what was thought, what images were constructed. I did not have to emphasize to those better informed that many of the arguments presented are ‘dubious.’ I refer to the fact that German soldiers also raped, not massively, though there were always gang rapes. Many people seem to have difficulty accepting the fact that compared to the known crimes and the Holocaust the Germans relatively seldom committed the crime of rape (as if this in any way lessened their guilt!). In this instance, ‘seldom’ means acknowledging that the term ‘mass rape’ acquired a new quantitative dimension following the events in Germany after the war.

If German women did not constitute the majority of those raped one might be able to speak more rationally about the difference between the concepts of ‘pogram’ and ‘Holocaust.’ A pogram is something horrible, but it is limited. The Holocaust was planned extermination. After the events in Berlin, mass rape is not an occurrence that may be said to have happened only to a few hundred women. Today, mass rape is to be understood as an occurrence involving several hundred thousand women simultaneously. The Germans were not involved in this sort of crime. It is not all as simple as many would like to think.

The film’s contribution lies in its outlining of the extent of the rapes. The ‘obsessiveness’ with numbers of which I have been accused in New York is correct. It is, however, false to say that I used these figures, these raped ‘millions,’ to distract attention from the issue of German guilt. Although I can understand the
distrust on the part of relatives of Holocaust survivors, it is not justified. (84)

Taking on the complete list of charges against her, Sander states: “The rapes were hushed up, and this silence, which had consequences, extended to the social discourse about the events. It was my astonishment at this silence that motivated me. . . . [W]hy had there been no public discussion of this? Why must this mean to those struggling bitterly to learn to remember the consequences of the Hitler regime they had established but who were not permitted any memory of other events?” (84–85). About the master narrative of all men are potential rapists, Sander writes: “At no time do I say, ‘Every man is a potential rapist’” (85). About the Nazi Wochenschau material (newsreels), Sander says that surely everyone knows that all the footage is propaganda on both sides. (Sander’s critics may be expecting too little from the commonplace. Sander may be expecting too much from the varied audiences with their varied predispositions and common ignorance of the Wochenschau.) About Sander’s claim of breaking the taboo, Sanders affirms there were many books on the Russians raping German women, but the discussions were “considered Cold War literature” and “the Left ignored the book[s].” She continues: “When the rapes stopped, they were an open secret” (86). About the title with its play on words, Sander writes: “There are many different kinds of interpretations of the war’s ending among different sorts of Germans” (87).

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33 It is difficult for me to take Sander’s statement as naïve. I can only assume that she is being strategically rhetorical when she makes statements such as this one.
A film works with images and sounds. Images relate to sounds and vice versa. I do not work with footnotes. For me it is important and wonderful to watch a woman who after the first rapes—and in front of a line of waiting men—looked at the Red Army soldier asleep on her breast and realized that she had developed maternal feelings toward him. She sees that he is still a child, ‘a homesick, war weary child.’ I am amazed at the woman who is now looking for her father among the millions of old Soviet men. I try to comprehend how it is that a woman whose mother was raped by two French men can imagine her father as a Hollywood hero. I try to comprehend what it means for a young Jewish girl who, having hidden for two years waiting for the liberation, then had to hide again.

Helke Sander, “A Response to My Critics” (87–88)

Meditations: We have rehearsed the discussions of critics (resistance) and counter-critic (counter-resistance). We now turn to meditations not on, but within, a passage or two, yet three, that become a zone of in between, in the transcript of the Round Table, published in the journal October. The meditations form a strange assemblage, a “conversation … an outline of a becoming” (Deleuze, Dialogues 1–35; Ronell, Dictations ix-xix). At a singular moment of a break in criticisms against Sander, and at a rupture in rhythm, these meditations slip out of being in binary machines: question-answer, masculine-feminine, German-Russian, right-left (cf. Deleuze 2). The critics in a tug of war rebegin, through an interruption, to identify, or I should say misidentify, with Sander. The zigzagging motion (emotion, commotion) of accusations and counter-accusations, the disjunctivitis, eventually replaces them all in the zone of between. The two sides of resistance—the critics (formerly wasps) and Sander (formerly orchid), or Santner (formerly wasp) and Sander (formerly orchid)—both in the Round Table, provide the exemplar
of being *in between*. The critics form a Sander image, but there is a critic-becoming of Sander, a Sander-becoming of the critics, a Santner becoming a Sander, a double capture since *what* each becomes changes no less than *that which* becomes.\(^{34}\)

After about sixteen pages of the Round Table discussion, there is this opportune moment (*kairotic* break) when Andreas Huyssen interrupts the flow, and says: “I’m going out on a limb, but I would say that consciousness of the complexity of the victim and perpetrator roles and of how the two categories can mesh and slide is underdeveloped in German discourse. It’s always either/or. Whether it’s about German soldiers on the eastern front, about women, or anything else, the discussion gets stuck in the muck of victim versus perpetrators. There are historical reasons for that almost traumatic inability to differentiate further” (“Round” 106). And so then, we might anticipate that the *task of thinking* is to discover how to get unstuck, not so much, however, by learning how to differentiate between two, but by resituating the discussion somewhere in the heretofore excluded middle voice or in between. Not in the excluded element of the binary (not a negative deconstruction). But in a third position (to an affirmative deconstruction outside at the threshold of the binary, in a meshwork). Let us keep in mind the metaphors of Huyssen’s statement of “limb,” “mesh,” and “slide.” Let us anticipate the task of thinking within a *meshwork*.\(^{35}\)

As the discussion moves out on a limb, Eric Santner ventures out on a very different limb. We have two limbs—

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\(^{34}\) I am following and performing a slot-and-substitution formula with Deleuze’s prose in *Dialogues* (2).

\(^{35}\) I take the term “meshwork” from De Landa (“Meshworks”), which, as he says, is another term for what Deleuze and Guttari refer to as “smooth space,” the opposite of “striated space” (see *Thousand* 353, 369–73, 474–500).
Huyssen and Santner’s—in search of a middle third that has nothing to do with arborescence at all. Santner says: Disjunctive thinking “is very stark in Sander’s short story “A Telephone Conversation with a Friend” In The Three Women K] which Annette [Michelson] mentioned. At some level, the opposition is reduced to a competition for funding. Whose memory-work is going to be funded—memory-work about the Holocaust, or memory-work about women’s past and suffering?” (106). So the issue becomes one of an obsessive struggle over canonization and, so to speak, immortality. But there is a difference between what Huyssen and Santner are saying. Santner continues: “Moreover, the competition is accentuated because the narrator [of the short story] makes the larger claim that women’s suffering is ultimately the product of Jewish monotheism. Sander’s story suggests that behind the gesture of universalization may lie a sinister historicization, one which dates the advent of sexual violence with Jewish monotheism! For five thousand years the suffering has been going on. That is connected, I think, to the way the melodrama of breaking taboos gets overplayed in this film through [Sander’s] self-dramatization as the one who is breaking the silence, discovering the statistics, and so on. The question arises, who constrained the discourse?” (106).

Again, there is an interesting, though not so unique, turn in Santner’s exposition (of an argument). There is in Santner’s thinking a representing of the Jews as prior perpetrators to their own victimage—they are caught in the Holocaust in their own origination of “sexual violence with Jewish monotheism.” In other words, Santner is saying that the Judaic tradition set the trap and its own people got caught in it! But as Santner sees Sander’s view in the short story and the film, so are women—German women—caught in this same universalization and historicization of “sexual violence.” The German female in
the story, Ms. K, points to “The destructive will in the Five Books of Moses” (“Telephone Conversation” 119). We should not forget, however, that Sander in the film universalizes the suffering of both German and Jewish women, especially the Jewish mother and daughter who come out of hiding during the so-called Liberation of Berlin, only to have to return in hiding. But again Santner would probably say—has said that Sander says—in response that this universalization itself has a “sinister historicization” behind it. Once again, Santner says that Sander is pointing at the Jews. All of Santner’s interpretation is coming from his reading of the story and he is careful to point out that he is not interpreting the film by way of the story. But in Santner’s interpretation Sander is less concerned with men against women and more concerned with Jews against women and vice versa. My sense, however, is that Sander situates herself critically and then thoughtfully in between each of these two groups in the story and perhaps in the film. (We will have to see.)

36 It is not only a matter of scope-reduction, but of avoiding oppositions. In Sander’s story, the female refuses to support her male friend’s suggestion to help seek funding for a project of an “orthodox Jew” (“Telephone” 118); for such support would only take money away from German women. Santner insists that the theme and motive behind the story is competition for resources. But there is more. When the female character says that she could not place special interest in the project of the “orthodox Jew,” her male friend immediately terminates the discussion by angrily saying, “women’s” [there is a long pause] “pet issues” didn’t interest him any more.” Sanders then writes: “She got the impression that he had only just managed to stop himself from saying ‘women’s shit’ or ‘women’s crap’” (120–21). She says, “Twenty years of women’s liberation had now made it possible for a colleague to ask her, as a colleague, to do them a favour. But she still had no right to expect anyone to contend with her right to hold differing views. Indeed, [she] was not even sure that what she felt really did boil down to a differing view at all. That was precisely what she would have liked to work out with him” (121–22). The story is about reception, about a remembering and understanding that are restricted to one view.
In attempting to answer the question of “who constrained the discourse?” Santner continues:

And I think—less in the film and more in the story—there is a sense that what has imposed these taboos [constraining discourse] has been the competition with the Jews and the task of bearing witness to Jewish suffering. This connects Sander’s project to [Hans Jürgen] Syberberg, who has been very explicit about this competition. He believes that an obsession with Jewish suffering has been at the expense of attention paid to German suffering, and that now the time has come for this to end. He appeals to Germans to let go of the PC-ness that has always forced them to think about Jewish victims and never their own. I like to say that in German, ‘PC’ stands for ‘proper coping’ with the past. [Syberberg] wants Germany to bracket out these ideological pressures, go through the ruins, and remember their own suffering. It seems Syberberg ultimately wants to blame the Jews for making this impossible for the Germans. Such ideas really came to the fore in the mid-eighties with Bitburg and the Historians’ Debate. I would agree with Andreas that the left won that debate, but after a latency period, the fall of the Wall restarted it. It sounds to me like Sander is taking a very Syberbergian position in claiming that it’s time now to focus just on us. (“Round” 106)

Interesting enough, however, Huyssen jumps back into the conversation away from Santner’s limb, to his own, and says: “I would want to defend [Sander] against the charge of complicity with Syberberg” (107).

Quickly, after returning to the question of numbers of victims, the conversation turns to Silvia Kolbowski, who
says with others that Sander does not appear to identify with either the right or the left. Kolbowski says: “There’s a way in which you might say she has tried to situate herself in between these two discourses [emphasis mine]. Or rather, she tries to occupy another ground” (107; Kolbowski’s emphasis). A few pages later, Santner is saying, “there are times in the film when it seems as if [Sander] imagines that she is offering a kind of neutral space for remembering.” (111; emphasis mine). Similarly he says that Sander is “offer[ing] a new kind of space for the memory work” (111; emphasis mine). But in the closing section, there is agreement that Sander’s film is “militant and yet occupies a middle ground” (112). The militancy is determined in this evolving and revolving interpretation by the closing presentation of the lines from Penthesilea. But the neutral space, the middle ground, the in-between is indeterminate in this involving experimentation by reopening the question concerning Liberators Take Liberties. At the end of the binary-machine there are compossible rebeginnings. In what Virginia Woolf calls “an unsubstantial territory” (Waves 185). At least in respect for thinking. Reading. Writing. Filming Rape. I am not saying that Sander is becoming Woolf. Rather, I am saying that “we” can also experimentally read Sander as becoming middle, as working in the same post-critical a-positionality as Deleuze is. (Which is what I am alluding to in the film still of the Russian soldier and the German woman in their tug of war for the bicycle that is becoming a unicycle.) Some of those meditating on her film, in relation to her having opened a neutral space or a new kind of space, have begun rethinking what has been already thought about Liberators Take Liberties in dis/order to find something vital and new.
Pagan Meditations (Eros)

There is no event, no phenomenon, word or thought which does not have a multiple sense. A thing is sometimes this, sometimes that, sometimes something more complicated—depending on the forces (the gods) which take possession of it.

Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (4)

I want to return to the question of Eros. In the film *BeFreier und Befreite*, as determined by various critics’ resistance to it, there are in particular two themes that receive the most critical attention: That of genocide and procreation (Thanatos-Eros) and that of the “genocide of love” (a metaphor meant to be taken as rape for revenge). I cannot not take up the question of Eros again and for reasons that will become additionally more purposive as we proceed. As Michelangelo Antonioni says, and we will focus on eventually, we are sick with Eros, for Eros is sick.

There is something perpetually problematic in Freud’s Eros-Thanatos pairing or forces of life/death instincts (*SE*, XVIII: 7–64; XXI: 118–24; 132–33, 137–41), just as there is something equally problematic in Sander’s film in the love-genocide pairing. (The two pairs are rather analogous in their relation to war, rape, and children. And the drive to be [the living] dead.) Jean-Pierre Vernant tells us: “Thanatos and Eros, Death and Desire are neighbors” (“Feminine Figures” 97). But there is something perpetually problematic not only about the pairing but also about Eros himself. In taking up the question of Eros, I am going to leave aside Freud and Vernant and turn to another force within psychology-anthropology, Ginette Paris, who examines the question of Eros in terms of an ecology of polytheism, which is an ecology of human personalities that may be in or out of balance. Like others, she views gods figuratively, yet culturally, as driving forces. Paris
writes that we socially make ourselves known by the forces that pull and shape us. She says, “Greek polytheism was not, as Judeo-Christianism [sic] is, a religion of after-death; it is not a ‘religion’ at all, but stands closer to an ecology of the living” (3).

For Freud, the myths (Oedipus, Eros) name his reasoned-rationalized meditations on instinctual drives. For Paris, “A myth is a support for meditation upon one’s relationship with oneself, others, nature, and the sacred. In contrast to a meditation [that] seeks to find a void, a ‘pagan’ meditation allows all images, all possibilities to arise, all the fabulous personages who inhabit us, until . . . we perceive the web of their relations” (4). The meditations of the Round Table—Huysen, Santner, Kolbowski—are the works of these “pagani” waging experiments in the pagus, that is, in the border or in between zone, where genres of discourse are in conflict over the meshwork of their linkages (cf. Lyotard, Differend 151). Paris engages in similar meshworks. On our way to Eros and his replacement in the pairing Eros-Death, I will summarize Paris’s several possible meshworks. The first is Aphrodite-Ares. Eros, when linked with Thanatos, leads to irrepressible death. But when Aphrodite, instead of Eros, is linked with Ares, according to Paris, there is a lessening of aggression. Paris explains that this relationship can best be understood in terms of Pax Romana (80). This may illustrate the relationship, but then it is not ideal by any means. Paris argues, however, as “Christians, it is difficult for us to conceive of this essential bond between Aphrodite and Ares: Greek wisdom, unlike Christian, implied that the one [peace, water, hyper-femininity] did not come without the other [war, fire, hyper-masculinity]. The Christian utopia is so attractive that we cannot admit without anxiety that one cannot have Aphrodite without Ares, peace without combat, pleasure without suffering” (80).
In terms of cause-effect, Paris argues, “the suppression of the aggressive pole in the Christian myth, represented by the myth of Ares, occurred at the same time as the suppression of the Aphrodisiacal-sexual pole. . . . [T]he repression of rage and anger (Ares) drives out also the pleasure, tenderness, and laughter of Aphrodite” (81). Paris argues that rape and aggression “appears to be a symptom, not of the return of Ares, but of his negation. Repression of the physical expression of aggressive energies leads to a disordered explosion of violence. Ares is not Aphrodite’s rapist but her lover. Neither with women nor with the elderly does Ares want to fight, but with real adversaries. Delinquent violence . . . strikes for the sake of striking; [the delinquent] rapes a woman because he does not know what love is. This violence is a revolt against a world in which the physical, aggressive energy has no outlet, a world which has been deserted as much by Ares as by Aphrodite” (81). Negation (repression) is the source of violence. But according to Paris, it is not a repression of either Ares or of Aphrodite, but both. Their life-enhancing powers exist between them. Paris goes to the next ratio of gods, this one between Aphrodite and Adonis. She writes: “Passing from Ares to Adonis is a bit like passing from the virility of the cowboy to that of a gracious and emotional Valentino” who lacks the psychological maturity necessary and, therefore, is “ephemeral” (87–88). “The Adonis-type of man survives as long as he is ‘protected’ by stronger women, but in a male competitive world he is too vulnerable” (89).

Finally we get to Eros. Paris asks: “[W]hy speak of Eros when Aphrodite [the mother] is concerned? Why have we

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37 I argue this point in *Negation*. What Paris says of psychology, Bataille says of economics. Energy must be wasted. If it is repressed in a *restricted* economy, it will be explosive, leading to wars. If it is expressed as waste without return, grossly or artfully, in a *general* economy, it possibly can be *lived with*. (See Bataille, *Accursed*.)
masculinized the divine figure of Love? ... Shall we relate [Freud’s] preference ... to his declaration that the ‘libido is male’? And if the libido is male in a psychology dominated by the myth of Eros, would the inverse reasoning be correct? That is, ... would sexual energy become feminine again” (90–91). Paris says that while Aphrodite “represented the universal principle of sexual attraction, the young Eros seemed to ‘specialize’ in ... love relationships between males” (92–93). Paris continues: “[T]he [canonized] darling of the philosophers, represented ... the love which unites the pederast and the pre-adolescent boy.... The platonic philosophers seemed to equate ... bodily love, heterosexual love, the preference of Aphrodite to Eros, and being of low birth, and ... homosexual love, lived within the head and heart rather than through the body, and being of a higher level of consciousness.... This tendency prepared the way for the anti-Aphrodisiacal monotheism of the Christian theologians as much as for a Freudian psychology” (93). The ecology of mind-body is upset. In subordinating Aphrodite and women, Paris argues, the philosophical tradition favored a homosocial space. 38 Paris says, “a similar disequilibrium may be found in an exclusively feminine world” (95). We are left with the question Is there any way out of these binary machines?

38 Paris’s argument—though difficult to determine—is not necessarily against the practice of homosexuality (gay or lesbian), but contingently so, if it subordinates a woman or women. The same would be the case in the practice of heterosexuality, turning women into the subordinate sex.
**Aphrodite, The Shadow Narrative I**

“Youth preoccupied with women and resolved to fight”: politics as juvenile delinquency. Ortega [y] Gasset is thinking, as Freud did also, of a connection between fraternal organization and exogamy, conceived as form of “marriage by capture.” The band of brothers feel the incest taboo and the lure of strange women; and adopt military organization (gang organization) for purposes of rape. Politics as gang bang. The game is juvenile, or, as Freud would say, infantile; and deadly serious; it is the game of Eros and Thanatos; of sex and war.

Norman O. Brown, *Love’s Body* (15)

Ginette Paris allows us heuristically to see the value of Aphrodite in ratios with male gods. But Paris’s own advocacy for Aphrodite makes her blind to the implications in an account that she gives of Aphrodite’s role in the Trojan War. We are left with ever-returning questions and images: Is to negate the negative that Eros represents and thereby to affirm Aphrodite to create a shadow narrative? Is to favor Aphrodite over Eros or any other god to establish the conditions for a shadow narrative? Son and Mother? Imminently reversible with the outcome the same? Perhaps every mythical, master narrative has a shadow narrative. And a shadow of a shadow. Presenting, yet absenting, sexual violence. A shadow narrative can be a double articulation of a dark side and a *mise en abyme*.

Christopher Frayling, speaking of rape in cinema, relates: “The camera tended to tilt at the last moment toward a symbolic icon (such as a shining white reproduction of Canova’s *Eros and Psyche* in the 1932 *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), or the celluloid image tended discreetly to dissolve seconds before the ghastly act was committed—in the case of James Whale’s *Frankenstein*, this created the impression that the little girl had been raped—and the audience had
to be satisfied with distorted shadows on the opposite wall and the retribution of people like us” (174–75; Frayling’s emphasis). Shadows and Caves? And yet, lamenting the loss of light that would cast a shadow, lamenting the loss of a shadow itself, Jean Baudrillard writes: “Our only shadow is the one projected onto the wall opposite by atomic radiation. These stencilled silhouettes produced by the Hiroshima bomb. The atomic shadow, the only one left to us: not the sun’s shadow, nor even the shadows of Plato’s cave, but the shadow of the absent, irradiated body, the delineation of the subject’s annihilation, of the disappearance of the original” [Illusion 105; cf. Deleuze, Difference 268].

On one page Ginette Paris can be discussing the loss of balance in Aphrodite’s relation to Ares and how this can contribute to rape in societies (81), and four pages later, Paris can be talking about Aphrodite and Paris (of Troy) and implicitly the rape of Helen, and have no sense of the implications of what she is saying. Her whole discussion of this rape is caught up gloriously in terms of fight in love and courage among lovers.

In a section titled “Men, War, and Women”—which for me recalls Sander’s subtitle of “War, Rape, and Children”—Ginette Paris discusses the Aphrodite-Ares ratio and its relation to how Aphrodite comes to be “at the origin of the Trojan War” (85): The god Eris (who signifies discord and strife) was not invited to the wedding of god Thetis to the mortal Peleus. Eris responds to the insult by casting the “apple of discord” before those present at the wedding. On the apple is written “For the Fairest.” The apple with its message has its effect on three gods: Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Zeus intervenes and, as usual, he asks a mortal,

39 (Ginette) Paris and Paris (of Troy)! Here is another possible confusion in names between author and character.
in this case, Paris, to resolve the discord. Hera offers power; Athena, glory in battle; and Aphrodite, Helen of Sparta. Paris favors the latter.

Having related the narrative, Ginette Paris says: “The bond between Aphrodite and Ares, among its many significations, expresses the belief, deeply rooted amongst the Greeks that, [sic] men fight for women and that the origin of war is fundamentally a rivalry for them. The most illustrious example is obviously the Iliad. This belief was so strong among Greeks that even Herodotus . . . felt obliged to explain that ‘perhaps’ there was a rivalry for women in the origins of the Trojan War” (85–86. See Herodotus, Histories 1.1–4). What is missing in Ginette Paris’s discussion, however, is some realization that Aphrodite contributes to a rape narrative as the originating event. If we are to substitute, as she is suggesting, Aphrodite for Eros, for the reasons she gives, then, what would we gain that would be life-furthering? Either god, male or female, son or mother, takes us to death.

Paris made it clear earlier that rape is caused by the negation of Ares (81). Moreover, she argued that there needed to be a balance between Ares and Aphrodite. Hence, there would be the non-suppressed aggressive energies of Ares but there would have to be a necessary equilibrium (homeostasis) between binaries of Ares and Aphrodite to keep these energies in check. But for some reason or other, Paris begins to discuss love as “fight,” as combat, and that love requires courage in the fight (84). So then, it is both Ares and Aphrodite that must contain

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40 I discuss the rape of Helen and her defense by Gorgias in Negation 235–306. Helen, abducted, or captured for marriage (stolen for the property that is hers) fits into the kinds of “rape” listed by Brownmiller (see the list in the index, Against 465; about Helen, see 33). I discuss Sylvia Likens and the number of ways that she was “raped” according to Brownmiller’s list in Sexual Violence.
each other in an equilibrium. But Aphrodite expresses her love of fighting also through mortals. Paris writes: “Even if [Aphrodite] does not fight her own battles, she quickly involves the men around her in combat” (85). (Perhaps she is caught in repression-compulsion, and needs this extra-mythological outlet.) Ginette Paris warned us: When speaking of Ares, or male immortals, she says, “a similar disequilibrium may be found in an exclusively feminine [hyper-feminine] world” (95). But the encounter with Paris (of Troy) is toward the other; it is a fostering of sexual violence in mortals. Paris makes it clear that Aphrodite “never fights directly” but through mortals such as Paris and that she is “at the origin of the Trojan War” (85; cf. Meagher 26–31), in that she intervenes by having Paris abduct (rape) Helen and thereby contributing to the mass bloodshed and undoing of so many. These interventions have nothing to do with containment or equilibrium (homeostasis) but everything to do with killing or dying and not living. There is something so dark in Ginette Paris’s rendering of Aphrodite as a fighter for love. This god (recall Heidegger’s “Only a god can help us now”) is not the one who can help human beings! There is much less hope being offered by way of Aphrodite and much more through Norman O. Brown in Life Against Death. But that is another story that I leave to my readers, as I now turn to what happens when in the feminine world equilibrium (in the binary) is lost to a hyper-feminine (sexual) violence that becomes as cold as an Apollonian war can and is the norm in today’s battles.

41 Brown gives a compelling account of the problems with Eros in both Life Against Death and in Love’s Body. See Brown’s Apocalypse, especially the last chapter.

42 Ginette Paris speaks of Apollonian war (81). She mentions events in WWI as well as alludes to WWII, specifically the French and the German soldiers (86–87).
Few people know that there were about a million . . . women-soldiers in the Red Army. I now drive to Minsk and ask them if they ever approached a man and told him: Man, come?!

Helke Sander, *BeFreier* (114)

In Sander’s film *BeFreier und Befreite*, the Russian soldiers would call to women by saying, “Come Women, Come!” This was the infamous call to be raped. In Virginie Despentes’s novel *Baise-Moi* and in the film version with Coralie Trinh Thi, there is a similar, though reversed, command. The phrase *Baise-Moi*, to the uninitiated, might literally mean *Kiss-Me*; to others the expression would mean *Fuck-Me*. In the United States version of the novel and film, the title is rendered as *Rape-Me*. What keeps the work from being successful as a simple, yet complex, reversal—everything is imminently reversible—of sexual violence perpetrated by men, now perpetrated against them by two women, is that it is totally indiscriminate violence against anyone and for no apparent reasons. If the aesthetic of the film, however, is offered as being outside the realm of judgment (Kant), but offered in the realm of an experiment (Deleuze), the film remains unclear as to what it is or what it is searching for in its hot and cold mixture of Arian and Apollonian acts of violence. Even the two characters, Nadine and Manu, are not clear as to who they are in their works and why they are performing them.43)

43 The film is itself searching for What women might do in a rape culture, but the film even undercuts such a process of thinking. Le Cain has speculated on the metafictional characters in the film, thinking about their own motives and directing their own actions. Despentes, in writing the novel, is more explicit in the omniscient point of view, suggesting the women are fated. For the metaphor of the spider and web, fate, see 155, 238. The novel ends: “Those things that had to happen. You think you can escape them” (244). Cf. Noé’s *Irréversible*.
As the violence builds, there are two possibilities: Either the two women are more male than male, hyper-male. Or they are hyper-feminine. In their hyper-subjectivities, they are perhaps neo-Amazons. They are perhaps, the voice that says, “I’m Andrea, which means manhood. . . . My nom de guerre is Andrea One; I am reliably told there are many more; girls named courage who are ready to kill” (Dworkin, Mercy 333). They are perhaps women known as Les Guérillères (Wittig).

If the film’s purpose is to portray an attempt at rethinking, reinventing, experimenting, through autopoesis, what the new female must be to survive masculine violence or what women must do to teach men that they must stop being violent, then, as this monomanical point of view unfolds, this purpose un/just destroys itself along with the two women and a long line of apparent innocents. The two characters choose only to will nothingness. In as much as the film is about the call to come (a call to a community of avenging angels), it never realizes the possibilities of becoming. It stays in the register of mimesis, imitating male violence against women. (In this sense, Despentes’s and Coralie Trinh Thi’s film realizes, beyond Margie Strosser’s wildest dreams, a revenge narrative against men as well as women and children.) Baise-Moi—both as film and novel—is un/just all shadow narrative (this time, all undifferentiated sexual violence). One built on an Aphrodite-Thanatos principle. In the context of this discussion, Baise-Moi can be seen as a shadow narrative of Sander’s ending to BeFreier und Befreite, which attempts to negate male sexual violence and to affirm a call to arms. First, the call; then a shadowy-mirrored crime spree.

The first twenty or so minutes of the film attempts to lay the groundwork for why there is violence toward men. The character Manu is raped by a gang of men, and Nadine, who is a prostitute, is perpetually put upon by her Johns.
Some how or other by chance Manu and Nadine meet each other and begin to talk and speak of going on the road together. (The film obviously invites a comparison with *Thelma and Louise.*) But as the narrative unfolds on the road, there is nothing but gratuitous violence against any and everyone, women as well as men. In the novel, a child as well as adults. There is a scene that originates at an ATM machine, with a woman withdrawing money, and then a cut to her down the street up against a wall being robbed and shot by Nadine in the neck and head. (The gun is touching her head. We do not see Nadine. The blood splatters up on the brick wall.) It is all very coldly done, without any hesitancy. Later when Nadine with Manu reflects on the killing, she recalls feeling bad for a short while, but feels nothing now. There is a scene with an architect in his house, where the two women go to seduce him into opening his safe, to rob him of diamonds. It only proves to be another strange scene—less developed in the film, more fully developed in the novel—in which the architect builds while the women, “Avenging Angels” (*Baise-Moi* 221), see themselves as being called “to teach you [the architect] what losing means” (220). It is a resentful scene with those who have lost in life, taking on those who have succeeded in life. In the novel, the man is colored in less radiant-saintly terms, since he has DeSade on his bookshelves and a porn film (225, 228). They shoot him in the head and then urinate on his face. There is scene after scene of such killings. Most memorable and commented on by critics of the film is a scene toward the end in a sex club in which both women kill everyone methodically and save a special “killing” for a man who Manu penetrates with her hand gun and shoots in the anus.  

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44 See Reynaud, who writes about the killing of the child in the shop scene and the killing of the man in the sex club.
Perhaps it is traded for another scene that is not in the film, in which Nadine shoots a little boy and his grandmother and then two shop girls (153–60)! The film, while starting as a revenge film, turns into something else. From kiss me, no; to fuck me, no; to rape me, no; to kill me. It is a film issuing a kiss of death against life. Killing sex, killing life, the life-force itself.

(A Closing, yet reopening parenthesis: Penthesilea’s acts of violence in Kleist’s play are against Achilles—not every man—but against her double—and so, then finally against herself as well. When critics find fault with Penthesilea’s actions, they often say that she took on the job of killing Achilles herself, instead of allowing for justice through her group, her state-community of Amazons.45 Nothing could stop Penthesilea from killing herself. I cannot repeat this enough: When the slave girl in Christa Wolf’s Cassandra calls to Penthesilea, “Come join us” [118], leave the killing and dying to others who would will nothing for themselves, Penthesilea refuses—she has lost all equilibrium—and is killed by Achilles and mutilated. She ignores the third alternative of Come Live with us. She ignores the call toward community. But not to stand in contradiction to becoming, as in becoming with Achilles in Kleist, Penthesilea in Wolf’s rendering refuses to become an assemblage in community.

And yet again, of course there is the community of the raped and dead, whom we memorialize. At the end of Baise-Moi, Manu is shot apparently by a man who is protecting himself from her attempt to hold him up. Nadine

45 See Deleuze, Essays Critical 79; Thousand 244. However, cf. Agee xxvii. I am not losing sight of the possibility that in Kleist’s play Achilles becomes woman while Penthesilea becomes dog (see Thousand 268). However, in Christa Wolf’s Cassandra the death of Penthesilea is not a becoming with Achilles, but a refusal to become community, when the slave girl calls her to form an assemblage, a new community of minor(atarian) people.
hears the exchange of gunfire, leaves the car and runs into the building and kills the man and takes Manu to the edge of the lake, covers and pours gasoline over her, and memorializes by cremating her. Nadine attempts to end her own life, but is caught and arrested. To face death by the state. This time Thelma is dead, but Louise is captured. There are other endings: I cannot stop thinking of the memorialization in the conclusion of Andrea Dworkin’s *Mercy*: “[T]hen you will remember rape; these are the elements of memory, constant, true, and perpetual pain; and otherwise you will forget—we are a legion of zombies—because it burns out a piece of your brain” (321–23; Dworkin’s emphasis). I cannot stop thinking of the memorialization in the conclusion of Monique Wittig’s *Les Guérillères*:

Moved by a common impulse, we all stood to seek gropingly the even flow, the exultant unity of the Internationale. And aged grizzled woman soldier sobbed like a child. . . . The great song filled the hall, burst through the doors and windows and rose to the calm sky. The war is over, the war is over, said a young working woman next to me. Her face shone. And when it was finished and we remained there in a kind of embarrassed silence, a woman at the end of the hall cried, Comrades, let us remember the women who died for liberty. And then we intoned the Funeral march, a slow, melancholy and yet triumphant air. (144)

So now the women can work through their grief and melancholy by initiating a mourning narrative. Being called—either in a pragmatic or ontological vocation—becomes an important issue in these works. Violence, trauma, melancholy, then, apparently mourning.
Hiroshima Mon Amour, The Mourning Narrative

Antiquity never ceased to lament the horrors of the Trojan war, as we never cease to lament the day of Hiroshima; if we want to make history, let us forget that once and for all, though everything comes from there. The ancient history comes from the end of Troy, as our new history comes from the end of Hiroshima; let us not forget it.

Michel Serres, Rome: The Book of Foundations (40)

The postwar generations have . . . inherited not guilt so much as the denial of guilt, not losses so much as lost opportunities to mourn losses. But perhaps more important . . . postwar generations have inherited the psychic structures that impeded mourning in the generations of their parents and grandparents. Foremost among such structures is a thinking in rigid binary oppositions, which form the sociopsychological basis of all searches for scapegoats.

Eric Santner, Stranded Objects (34; qtd. by Levin, “Taking Liberties” 77)

There can be a problem with thinking with the heuristic metaphor of the gods. There is no better relation in replacing Eros with a female god (goddess). What remains is a turning from one God and from multiple gods-in-ratios to a radical multiplicity. What remains is a radical ind differentiation, a becoming woman, which is not grounded in a metaphysic of mimesis, nor in a provisional essentialism or a master narrative with a shadow narrative; rather it is a becoming in between. Deleuze and Guattari write: “A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation [ratio] of the two; it is the in-between” (Thousand 293; cf. Levi, Cinema 138–60). They say: “When Virginia Woolf was questioned about a specifically women’s writing, she was appalled at the idea of writing ‘as a woman.’ Rather, writing should produce a becoming-woman as atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an
entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming” (*Thousand 276*).  

But there can also be a problem with the Freudian mourning narrative. This section is about the mourning narrative in *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, but it also concerns an experimental narrative without a narrative. Virtually, it concerns the implication of a bloc of two narratives—both mourning (without rigid binaries) and experimenting (forming a becoming). I will get to this film with its experiments eventually. What is important now is that I return to the Question of *Eros* in relation to *Thanatos* as reworked and un/worked by way of Deleuze in his discussions of cinema (in *Cinema 1* and *2*) and finally in “A Life” (*Pure Immanence*). Afterwards, we will see two bodies in bed embracing libidinally two lives (2 X “a life”), asemiotically (acinematically) across two narratives that are not narratives, while having been super-imposed over two more bodies in the holocaust of Hiroshima embracing two deaths. One can see these, asemiotically, as linked in an assemblage of in betweens (cf. Oates, *Rape: A Love Story*).

**Eros (redux):** There is the theme of vitalism in Deleuze (*What is Philosophy?* 213–18). Deleuze attempts to rethink the whole problematic of subjects of desire under negation, who suffer from “weary thought, incapable of maintaining [themselves] on the plane of immanence” (214).  

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46 As Spivak says, the word “woman” misfires (“Feminism” 217). The word “woman” is both an essentialist category and a concept-metaphor. (Cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand 275–76*.)

47 See Freud, “Mourning and Melancholy” in *SE*, XIV: 237–58. For the Germans not being able to mourn the war, see Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, especially Ch. 1, section 9, “Is There Another Way to Mourn?” and also Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects*. Cf. Rickels; Forter. Perhaps the most ingenious ways of mourning, though still founded on an economy of sacrifice, are found in Ulmer’s “Abject Monumentality” and Mauer’s “Proposal.”
For Deleuze, what drives the world is a vital force (power [\textit{dynamis}], immanence [imminence], potentiality [impotentiality])\textsuperscript{48}, specifically, libido, or Eros.\textsuperscript{49} But “there are interferences” that inform the whole of the plane of cerebral thinking. Deleuze explains: “This is because each distinct discipline is . . . in relation with a negative.” But “if [all negatives, or categorical imperatives] are still distinct in relation to the cerebral plane, they are no longer distinct in relation to the chaos into which the brain plunges. In this submersion it seems that there is extracted from chaos the \textit{shadow of the ‘people to come’} [emphasis mine]: mass-people, world-people, brain-people, chaos-people” (\textit{What is Philosophy?} 218). But the shadow can be a renegating shadow not unlike the shadow that follows closely, but grows weary eventually, behind Zarathustra. The shadow says to Zarathustra that it is tired and it wants to go home to rest. It is tired, for it has chased after Zarathustra, who has an unquenchable desire to light out for the de/territorializations. Instead, the shadow has a negative, restless desire to be secure. Zarathustra tells his shadow: “To those who are as restless as you, even a jail will at last seem bliss. . . . Beware lest a narrow faith imprison you in the end... For whatever is narrow and solid seduces and tempts you now” (Nietzsche 387). Zarathustra tells his shadow to return to the cave—the Platonic site of shadows—for Zarathustra says, “even now a shadow seems to lie over me.

\textsuperscript{48} See, e.g., Rajchman’s \textit{Constructions} and \textit{Deleuze Connection}; Daniel Smith, “Introduction” to Deleuze’s \textit{Essays Critical} xi–liii. For cinema’s influence on philosophy, according to Deleuze, see Flaxman, ed. \textit{Brain is the Screen}.

\textsuperscript{49} For Deleuze and Guattari, vitalism can mean many different things, which would require a book of its own. See Butler, \textit{Subjects of Desire}, who starts with Aristotle’s statement that all men desire (have an appetite) to know. This vocabulary of drives and libido, though used by Deleuze and Guattari, can be rather problematic, for they do have alternate vocabularies, as Guattari makes obvious (see \textit{Chaosmosis} 126).
I want to run alone so that it may become bright around me again” (387). Zarathustra would like to learn to live finally!

Deleuze would agree with Ginette Paris that Eros has lost its way in this world. In *Cinema 2*, he writes: “If we are sick with Eros, Antonioni said, it is because Eros is himself sick; and he is sick not just because he is old and worn out [weary] in his content, but because he is caught in the pure form of a time which is torn between an already determined past and a dead-end future. For Antonioni, there is no other sickness than the chronic. Chronos is sickness itself” (24). What is wanted, as suggested, is a “people to come.” In his discussions of post-WW II films, Deleuze sees Directors after the Holocaust attempting to rethink Eros as well as Chronos, not in terms of following a substitute god such as Aphrodite, but in terms of an immanent (imminent) Libido in its relation to a life and images in cinema moving from Chronos to Aion (cinema time in irrational cuts), moving from definite space to any-space-whatever, from black and white—shadows—to pure colors (a chaos) absorbing faces and characters (see *Cinema 1* 117–22; *II* 166–68). Deleuze is thinking at the thresholds, or in the interstices of the binary of Eros/Thanatos or Aphrodite/Thanatos and of the unary of (master) narration; he is thinking the outside as a third term.51

50 Antonioni, speaking of his characters’ preoccupation with sex, says: “But this preoccupation with the erotic would not become obsessive if Eros were healthy, that is, if it were kept within human proportions. But Eros is sick; man is uneasy, something is bothering him. And whenever something bothers him, man reacts, but he reacts badly, only on erotic impulse, and he is unhappy. The tragedy in *L’Avventura* stems directly from an erotic impulse of this type—unhappy, miserable, futile” (qtd. in Chatman, *Antonioni* 56; emphasis mine; qtd. from Antonioni, “A Talk With” 51). Other films with this theme are *Night, Eclipse, and Red Desert.*

51 Cf. Canning 342–43. While Deleuze acknowledges the traditional vocabulary of binary terms, he constructs an outside vocabulary of third
Eros is a bond(age). A link, holding all things together. Deleuze sees these Directors, experimenting by forming, inventing, creating new filmic concepts such as “indiscernibility” between subject and object in bondage (Cinema 2 23). Peter Canning describes the old Eros of “bond(age)” as that of “the name of the Father” (343). Canning’s description of the event: “A new order of time [aion, or aeon, a child playing with dice] begins when the signifier of the father, theoretically foreclosed by science but remaining as transcendental category, structure of understanding, is removed by an act of Deleuzian-Spinozist philosophy, and the real ‘absence of link’ emerges in and for itself without representation, an opening in time, becoming outside, future, launching a process of another nature, and calling for creation of a new kind of love, an immanent libido without ego or object or subject. For it was finally the transcendental-erotic subject-form that chained the ego to its object in love and hate, that chained the social images and movements to one another in delusional consensus, and that thirsted for salvation and transcendence to another world beyond the world” (343). The world to come. What we can see in BeFreier und Befreite is a reportage of the old, sick Eros and a thinking about how to reach the new; what we do see in Baise-Moi is the old Eros of sexual bondage and violence run amuck. What the new Directors create is a new Eros of indiscernible passages between images and the transition from one sensation to another. The new Directors are makers of new concepts, new sensations with their affects and percepts, which are new experiments in terms [immanence that is imminence, sensation that is not a subjective state, affect that is not feelings, percept that is not perception, and between that is a preposition cum proposition that produces yet takes no object. For sensation and its two types, affect and percept, see Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy? 163–99; Rajchman, Deleuze Connections 134–35; Massumi, Parables.
linkages. I have been abstract enough. Let us cut to a few exemplars.

Exemplars of “A Life”: Earlier we spoke of Deleuze’s exemplar of the wasp becoming of the orchid and the orchid becoming of the wasp (Dialogues 2–3). Deleuze in “A Life” speaks of another experimental linkage, or of immanence (immanence) or becoming, this one in literature. I am going to quote his description at length:

What is immanence? A life . . . No one has described what a life is better than Charles Dickens [in Our Mutual Friend] . . . . A disreputable man, a rogue, held in contempt by everyone, is found as he lies dying. Suddenly, those taking care of him manifest an eagerness, respect, even love, for his slightest sign of life. Everybody bustles about to save him, to the point where, in his deepest coma, this wicked man himself senses something soft and sweet penetrating him. But to the degree that he comes back to life, his saviors turn colder, and he becomes once again mean and crude. Between his life and his death [Eros and Thanatos], there is a moment that is only that of a life playing with death. The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life. . . . It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil. . . .

But we shouldn’t enclose life in the single moment when individual life confronts universal death. A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in
subjects and objects. This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be one to another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn’t just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness. (28–29; emphasis mine)

Somewhere in between the man and those helping him lies a pure affect of indiscernibility, that is, of desubjectivation, a singularization. A becoming of each other. As Flaubert becomes “Madame Bovary, c’est moi”; et cetera. All assemblages. All blocks of becoming. As Deleuze says: “We are not in the world, we become with the world” (What is Philosophy? 169). Everything participates with everything else. We live in a participatory radical of multiverses. It is a passion (an intensity) according to G.H. A realization and actualization of this virtuality will be experienced by the coming community of people on the new earth (see What is Philosophy? 201–218; cf. Agamben, Coming).

The mourning narrative that best rethinks becoming experimentally is this time in cinema, Hiroshima Mon Amour. Marguerite Duras’s “synopsis” is very precise about how movement-image is replaced by time-image (from chronos to aion). (Movement-image requires an emphasis on cause and effect, whereas time-image emphasizes sense-effect, sensation, a third sens. Directions. Redirections.) She rehearses the situation of the lovers with

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52 See Daniel Smith’s “Introduction” to Essays Critical for additional exemplars; and Deleuze’s Dialogues 36–76.

53 See Lispector’s Passion, in which the character becomes roach and becomes, thereby, indifferentiated into “a vastness” (96–97). For a full discussion, see my Negation (228–29).

54 See Caruth’s discussion of Hiroshima Mon Amour in Unclaimed Experience.
two coextensive places, two incompossible worlds, two monads, Hiroshima and Nevers (France). The French woman with no name has finished all but one last scene of a film of peace in Hiroshima. The Japanese man with no name is an “engineer or architect” (8).\(^5\) They are married to others. Their meeting is by “chance” (8). Duras prepares a time-image of aion through which to introduce the almost-anonymous characters. Duras writes: “In the beginning of the film . . . we see mutilated bodies—the heads, the hips—moving—in the throes of love or death [Eros or Thanatos]—and covered successively with the ashes, the dew, of atomic death—and the sweat of love fulfilled” (8). Then the bodies of the French woman and Japanese man emerge from and become superimposed over the bodies in death. We have a double capture of death and love, love and death. (Eros is sick.) And yet, incipient life emerges. The woman says, “she has seen everything in Hiroshima.” She is referring to the photographs and displays at the Hiroshima Memorial. But the man rejects “the deceitful pictures” (8), saying, “You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing” (15). The woman, insists: “I saw everything. Everything” (15; Duras’s emphasis). In the synopsis, Duras explains: “[T]heir initial exchange is allegorical. In short, an operatic exchange. . . . All one can do is talk about the impossibility of talking about Hiroshima” (9). This affair, this one night, Duras says, “takes place in the one city of the world where it is hardest to imagine it: Hiroshima. . . . Between two people as dissimilar geographically, philosophically, historically, economically, racially, etc. as it is possible to be. Hiroshima will be the common ground (perhaps the only one in the world?) where the universal factors of eroticism, love, and unhappiness will appear in

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\(^5\) The man-as-architect is in Antonioni’s L’Avventura. Sandro, who is preoccupied with sex (suffers from eros sickness), cannot design for life. He is at odds with his calling in life, and consequently with living.
an implacable light” (10; emphasis mine). What we know is only the impossibility of knowing Hiroshima. The French woman remains a tourist, making a film about peace for virtual tourists. She tells the Japanese man: “Like you, I too have tried with all my might not to forget. Like you, I forgot. Like you, I wanted to have an inconsolable memory, a memory of shadows and stone. (The shot of a shadow, ‘photographed’ on stone, of someone killed at Hiroshima.)” (23; Duras’s emphasis). What we eventually realize about Hiroshima, as a memorial, is that it is a new sens of grounding (abgrund). The Japanese man is right in saying that she knows nothing. When nothing becomes everything, “sense,” as Deleuze claims, becomes “extra-being” (Logic 31). A “third estate” (32; Deleuze’s emphasis).

The whole first section of film is inundated with tourists visiting the memorial. But there is more to the film, for out of this impossibility of mourning the loss of the object, the woman and the man invent a life. Verging on incompossibilities. In doing so, the woman and the man leave behind public mourning and enter an exchange of a story that allows for a becoming. Duras makes clear that they are in love and that this is not yet another exemplar of a sickness of Eros. Moreover, because they are in love, the woman can tell her story of Nevers (11). Of loss. But theirs is not a private mourning. Again, there is neither public nor private mourning. This film is a double capture of the failure of mourning and the alternative of sensation, unmourning, and antimemory.

The woman tells her story of Nevers (10). She has never told this story to anyone. Duras’s sketch: In 1944, the

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56 This is the impossible moment. At this point in this chapter. With perhaps a most important assignment about an assignation. Therefore, I am passing it on to you, the readers: Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, can be found in the Excursus, under chapter 2. Beginning with Bataille’s “Concerning the Accounts.”
townspeople shaved her head and her parents placed her in their cellar, where she was to stay for however long it would take.\footnote{Recall earlier other doubly articulated “sheets of past”: The loves that also occurred during Liberation in March through May of 1945 in Berlin. Sander in BeFreier reminds us that there were German women who fell in love with the enemy (Russians or U.S., British, French allies)—which was read as collaboration—only to lose their love.} Waiting. Until a singular moment of Liberation when there is the conjunction of the killing of her lover and the bombing of Hiroshima (12). A Life. In the woman’s telling of this story, Nevers becomes, in Deleuze’s vocabulary, a percept. Daniel Smith explains: “What the percept makes visible are the invisible forces [in shadows] that populate the universe, that affect us and make us become: characters pass into the [shadows of the virtual] landscape and themselves become part of the compound of sensations” (“Introduction,” Deleuze xxxiv). Characters become part of the circuitry of what Deleuze calls “the crystal-image, or crystalline description,” a joining of the actual and virtual images (Cinema 2 68–69). “These percepts,” Smith reminds us, “are what Woolf called ‘moments of the world,’ and what Deleuze terms ‘haecceities’” (xxxiv) or what Deleuze himself refers to as “sheets of past” (Cinema 2 98–125). The two geographical locations and events in time (aion) form, again as Smith suggests, “assemblages of nonsubjectified affects and percepts that enter into virtual conjunction” (xxxiv). Creating a Life. It is worth repeating: As Deleuze says, “We are not in the world,” for when the neuronic circuitry shifts, “we become with the world” (What is Philosophy? 169).

Deleuze, in Cinema 2, sees Duras and Resnais thinking in terms of “sheets of past” which are incommensurable and which are by allusion incompossible worlds. As Deleuze says about Resnais, “Everything depends on which sheet you are in” (120; cf. 129–31). Deleuze explains:
There are two characters [in *Hiroshima Mon Amour*] but each has his or her own memory which is foreign to the other. There is no longer anything at all in common. It is like two incommensurable regions of past, Hiroshima and Nevers. And while the Japanese refuses the woman entry into his own region . . . the woman draws the Japanese into hers . . . . Is this not a way for each of them to forget his or her own memory, and make a memory for two, *as if memory was now becoming world*, detaching itself from their persons? [. . .] Throughout Resnais’ work we plunge into a memory which overflows the conditions of psychology, memory for two, memory for several, memory-world, memory-ages of the world. But the question as a whole remains: what are the sheets of past regions of several memories, creation of a memory-world, or demonstration of the ages of the world? (117–19; emphasis mine)

It is at this point that Deleuze takes up the paramethod of topological stretchings, which is not unlike casuistic stretchings, as a means of answering his question. In many ways, or *wayves*, the topological stretchings are comparable to Woolf’s expression in *Mrs. Dalloway* of passing through London, “slic[ing] like a knife through everything” (11). It is remarkable what a single slice through a sheet of potential cartographical spatial and temporal paper can do, along with a half-twist of stretching, re(mis)configuring a map of the city or of the world from two sides (Hiroshima-Nevers) into one side (see Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 119). Finally, Deleuze writes: “Resnais has always said that what interested him was the brain, the brain as world, as memory, as ‘memory of the world.’ It is in the most concrete way that Resnais . . . creates a cinema which has only one single character, Thought” (122).
Sensation (or “Bicycle-less neo-realism”): Deleuze begins *Cinema 2* discussing the creators of concepts in cinema “rediscover[ing] the power of the fixed shot” (22). Antonioni begins to think of doing “without a bicycle—De Sica’s bicycle, naturally” (23). The reference is to the film *The Bicycle Thief*. Deleuze writes: “Bicycle-less neo-real-ism replaces the last quest involving movement (the trip) with a specific weight of time operating inside characters and excavating them from within (the chronicle)” (23; cf. 17). Antonioni says, “Now that we have today eliminated the problem of the bicycle . . . it is important to see what there is in the spirit and heart of this man whose bicycle has been stolen, how he has adapted, what has stayed with him out of all his past experiences of the war, the post-war and everything that has happened in our country” (qtd. by Deleuze 284–85, n. 40). The bicycle will no longer move in space as a movement-image (*Cinema 1*) but in aion as a time-image (*Cinema 2*), by way of various intensities. Sensations. Redirections. This rider of the bicycle, now without a bicycle that may remain but a memory as in a photograph, a still frame, will be made into a multiplicity—less a subject and more a multiplicity. (Recall the German woman in a tug of war over her bicycle with the Russian soldier.) John Rajchman explains that a multiplicity, made from a pragmatics of sens, is outside the binary of public and private. Multiplicity is a third sensation.58 “The problem of ‘making multiplicities’ or ‘constructing multiplicities’ is . . . a problem of life—of ‘a life,’ . . . an indefinite life” (83). Singularities. “Singular occurrences.” “Something ineffable” (85). A third sens. Of moments that compose a life (cf. Duras 68). A redirected one.

In part 2 of the *Hiroshima Mon Amour* film script, 

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58 I respectively refer to Rajchman’s *Deleuze Connections* 80, and to Barthes’s “Third meaning [Sens].”
Duras describes the scene as such: “(A swarm of bicycles passes in the street, the noise growing louder, then fading)” (29; Duras’s emphasis; cf. 34–35).\(^5^9\) Later in the midst of the woman’s relating the story of Nevers, she tells the Japanese man: “[M]y mother tells me I have to . . . leave for Paris, on a bicycle, at night. . . . When I reach Paris two days later the name of Hiroshima is in all the newspapers. My hair is now a decent length. I’m in the street with the people” (67). In these images of the bicycle, there is mobility, flight, as there is in the dialogue of leaving the man and returning home. She is leaving, as she left her German lover in Nevers, the Japanese man. We can actually see her on the bicycle or in the plane physically leaving. But we can hear her also affirmatively forgetting. Leaving in itself. It is not just a physical leaving of Nevers (on a bicycle) and then Hiroshima (in a plane), but a series of moments with peculiar affirmations that make for multiplicities. Or blocs (“swarms”) of bicycles in first a movement-image and then a time-image. She is taking leave, taking, forgetting, yet re-momenting, place. It is not memento, but momenting. She and the Japanese man are forgetting each other (68, 73, 83). Forgiving. Re-forging, Everything and nothing. Becoming world-people. They are dis/engaging by way of antimemory. As Deleuze and Guattari chime: “Memory, I hate you” (What is Philosophy? 168; cf. Thousand 294–95). She leaves rigid binaries (subject-object) for the extra-be-ing of outside multiplicities. A vastness. Coextensive lives. There is this repeated refrain of affirmative forgetting and then the making of multiplicities, becomings, a bloc of percepts and affects. Both have dis/engaged by way of not just mourning but of unmourning. Both have returned from the dead (cf. Flaxman 42). Both now share a life in a

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\(^5^9\) The bicycles are motor propelled. The woman’s bicycle in Nevers, to Paris, is human propelled.
becoming world. Filled with moments. They are done with mourning and any incipient melancholy.

Unmourning: John Rajchman, commenting on memory, memorials, and mourning-melancholy, writes: “Affect in Spinoza becomes the sensation of what favors or prevents, augments or diminishes, the powers of life of which we are capable each with one another; and it is in something of this same ‘ethical’ sense that Deleuze proposes to extract clinical categories (like ‘hysteria’ or ‘perversion’ or ‘schizophrenia’) from their legal and psychiatric contexts and make them a matter of experimentation in moves of life in art and philosophy, or as categories of a philosophico-aesthetic ‘clinic.’ . . . Freud tried to understand ‘melancholy’ (and its relation with the arts) in terms of the work of mourning concerning loss or absence. But Deleuze thinks there is a ‘unmourning’ that requires more work, but promises more joy. Considered in philosophico-aesthetic terms, melancholy might then be said to be the sensation of an unhappy idealization, and the real antidote to it is to be found not in rememorization and identification, but in active forgetting and affirmative experimentation with what is yet to come” (The Deleuze Connections 132–33).

Antimemory: Deleuze and Guattari, in A Thousand Plateaus, write: “Becoming is an antimemory. Doubtless, there exists a molecular memory, but as a factor of integration into a majoritarian or molar system. Memories always have a reterritorialization function. On the other hand, a vector of deterritorialization is in no way indeterminate; it is directly plugged into the molecular levels, and the more deterritorialized it is, the stronger is the contact: it is deterritorialization that makes the aggregate of the molecular components ‘hold together.’ From this point of view, one may contrast a childhood block, or a becoming-child, with the childhood memory: ‘a’ molecular child is produced . . . ‘a’ child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity or a block of
becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both off—as opposed to the child we once were, whom we remember or phantasize, the molar child whose future is the adult. ‘This will be childhood, but it must not be my childhood,’ writes Virginia Woolf. (Orlando already does not operate by memories, but by blocks, blocks of ages, block of epochs, blocks of the kingdoms of nature, blocks of sexes, forming so many becomings between things, or so many lines of deterritorialization.) Wherever we used the word ‘memories,’ we were saying becoming” (294; Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis; cf. Bergson, Creative Evolution 312–13; de Certeau, Practice 108).