

## notes

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 In *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), I argued that religion is a quest for complex subjectivity. It is a response to the fundamental questions of human existence: Who are we? What are we? Why are we? When are we? It is a quest, I noted, but one that is unfulfilled and that gives rise to a perpetual rebellion against efforts to deform and dehumanize. The epilogue provides more information concerning the move from religion as a quest for complex subjectivity to religion as a technology.
- 2 Thank you to one of my project reviewers for these: Susan George, *Religion and Technology in the 21st Century: Faith in the E-World* (Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing, 2006); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1964). My goal here is not to provide a discussion of work related to technology and religion, but rather to simply point out examples of how my efforts in this book differ from much of what constitutes the academic discussion of technology and religion. In doing so, I want to provide a sense of how readers might contextualize my theory of religion.
- 3 George, *Religion and Technology*, vi–ix.
- 4 See George, *Religion and Technology*, chapter 1. The distinction holds true in various ways regarding other texts related to religion and technology: Brenda E. Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion: Churches, Cults and Community in the Information Age* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* (New York: Penguin, 1999); Scott Midson, *Cyborg Theology: Humans, Technology*

- and God (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017); Nancey Murphy and Christopher C. Knight, eds., *Human Identity at the Intersection of Science, Technology and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Jeremy Stolow, ed., *Deus in Machina: Religion, Technology, and the Things in Between* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); Sam Han, *Technologies of Religion: Spheres of the Sacred in a Post-Secular Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- 5 George, *Religion and Technology*, ix.
  - 6 George, *Religion and Technology*, chapters 5–9.
  - 7 George, *Religion and Technology*, xi–xii.
  - 8 Regarding this he writes, “Technique certainly began with the machine. It is quite true that all the rest developed out of mechanics; it is quite true also that without the machine the world of technique would not exist. But to explain the situation in this way does not at all legitimize it. It is a mistake to continue with this confusion of terms, the more so because it leads to the idea that, because the machine is at the origin and center of the technical problem, one is dealing with the whole problem when one deals with the machine. . . . Technique has now become almost completely independent of the machine, which has lagged far behind its offspring” (Ellul, *Technological Society*, 3–4).
  - 9 Robert K. Merton, foreword to Ellul, *Technological Society*, vi.
  - 10 Ellul, *Technological Society*, xxvi.
  - 11 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 14–15, 22. Ellul also offers a third division related to economic techniques dealing with labor and the arrangement of related plans (22).
  - 12 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 4–12. I also share with Ellul a reluctance to offer resolutions, to propose a fix to the dilemma to which this book points. On this reluctance, Ellul says, “In this study no solution is put forward to the problems raised. Questions are asked, but not answered. I have indeed deliberately refrained from providing solutions. . . . I do not say that no solutions will be found; I merely aver that in the present social situation there is not even a beginning of a solution, no breach in the system of technical necessity” (xxx). It is in relationship to a similar perspective that I employ the thought of Albert Camus and W. E. B. Du Bois.
  - 13 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 33.
  - 14 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 34.
  - 15 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 34–36.
  - 16 He sees a relationship between scientific investigation—particularly as reflected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and technique, which subordinates the former to the latter.
  - 17 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 48–49.
  - 18 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 49.
  - 19 Ellul, *Technological Society*, 128.
  - 20 See Ellul, *Technological Society*, chapter 5.

- 21 It differs in terms of disciplinary locations for each as well as having little concern for the larger debate regarding the positive or negative connotation of machines and machinery within sociopolitical and economic realms, and finally without playing technology off modalities of humanism as a foil.
- 22 Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49, 18; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995). A detailed discussion of Foucault’s formulation and use of the hermeneutical method of technology is beyond the scope of this book. For information on the development of Foucault’s thinking on technology, see, for example, Michael C. Behrent, “Foucault and Technology,” *History and Technology: An International Journal* 29, no. 1 (2013): 54–104. Behrent notes that as of the 1970s Foucault used technique and technology interchangeably, although, he argues, there remained nuanced distinctions between the two. When I use the two terms, I mean in both cases the method noted above, while recognizing that religion in this function is a basic feature of our social arrangements.
- 23 Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 18.
- 24 Related to this, power dynamics are most explicitly addressed in the final section of the book.
- 25 Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 18.
- 26 Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 19.
- 27 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- 28 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari develop the idea of the assemblage in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). For secondary commentary, see, for instance, Thomas Nail, “What Is an Assemblage,” *Substance* 46, no. 1 (2017): 21–37; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), chapter 2.
- 29 Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 45.
- 30 At most the religion as a technology urges lucidity or awareness of our human condition(s) and our place within such condition(s).
- 31 It is possible that my effort to provide clarification will enhance the understanding of certain dimensions of my argument (e.g., what I do not mean by religion as technology) while confusing others (e.g., the structures and sensibilities serving as a precondition for my theorization of religion—or a full explication of what this theory of religion contains). Questions remain. As a consequence, additional work after this book will require more attention to this dimension of my theory.
- 32 See, for example, Talal Asad’s discussion and critique of transhistorical and universalizing definitions of religion: *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), chapters 1–2. While a full engagement with Asad is beyond

- the scope and purpose of this book, I do want to note that my thinking on religion entails recognition of its constructed nature and its ties to the conceptual category of a certain intellectual geography. Investigation of the implications of these disciplinary (e.g., anthropological) realities is interesting but extends beyond the presentation of religion necessary for this particular project.
- 33 “Genealogies of Religion, Twenty Years On: An Interview with Talal Asad,” *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* blog, <https://bulletin.equinoxpub.com/2015/11/genealogies-of-religion-twenty-years-on-an-interview-with-talal-asad>.
  - 34 It does this in relationship to the body and “thing.” Readers should keep in mind that I am not concerned with defining the human—what constitutes the human; rather, my focus is narrower than that. I am interested in the body. In addition, I am interested in better understanding the “things” used within the context of artistic production and utilized in the work of religion.
  - 35 I am not concerned with the biological “origins” or workings of this technology called religion, but rather in how it has been arranged and deployed and in how it has functioned.
  - 36 I say this in part in conversation with and in response to a depiction of Albert Camus’s categorization of religion over against personal existence and rebellion as suggesting “some positive value” that is not “given.” In outlining *The Rebel*, Herbert Read says it is the “trick played by religion or philosophy” to offer these values as given. See Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), vii. This also points to my disagreement with Danto regarding art as “embodying meaning.”
  - 37 Examples include David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, eds., *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Gordon Lynch, Jolyon Mitchell, and Anna Strhan, eds., *Religion, Media and Culture: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Lofton, *Consuming Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); David Chidester, *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
  - 38 There is some repetition in this introduction regarding the nature and function of religion. However, I believe this is necessary in order to reinforce my movement beyond my earlier thinking and to make clear the way in which religion operates implicitly throughout the book.
  - 39 As will become clear, religion as a technology not only tells us something about the interaction of things, but it can also use art as a way to address or “manage” the openness of things exposed through this interrogation.
  - 40 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 2.

- 41 Braidotti, *Posthuman*, 3.
- 42 Braidotti, *Posthuman*, 37. While I am opposed to Enlightenment notions of humanism for reasons including the manner in which it supported tragic ideologies and practices of racial disregard, I have spent some of my professional life rethinking humanism in the form of an African American humanism that, I believe, short-circuits many of the most significant problems reflected in earlier modalities of European humanisms. See, for example, Pinn, *African American Humanist Principles: Living and Thinking Like the Children of Nimrod* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Pinn, *Humanism: Essays on Race, Religion and Cultural Production* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).
- 43 See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
- 44 This is not to suggest a departure from my ethical realism related to the human presented in my work on humanism. See Pinn, *African American Humanist Principles*; Pinn, *The End of God-Talk: An African American Humanist Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Pinn, *Humanism*.
- 45 I find this definition of humanist thought too tied to an uncritical embrace of Enlightenment optimism. And in this way, it fails to account for disregard and belittlement used to establish the hierarchy of being upon which it draws; instead, it projects metaphysics of the human being that is false as such. I find no need to articulate the value of human life along these lines, and instead I am content to think about the human in relationship to other life forms—the human tied and dependent always on other modalities of life. And in this mutuality is embedded a recognition that agency is not a defining characteristic of the human thing. So we think and experience the human as unique because we approach life forms from our vantage point, but the human is dependent upon the activities and impingements of other life forms.
- Agency is a shared reality of things. Even when human, naming-thing, create or construct this is not without the resistance of those things employed. For example, the heat of the flame not only shapes and melds things as desired but also destroys; the working of wood demands careful effort, or it resists through breakage, and other animal naming-things resist human command. (Keep in mind that refusal to be used or work as intended is a mode of resistance.)
- 46 To talk about the subject along the lines preferred by liberation theologians, for instance, is to cover this confluence with nostalgia for the pretense of bounded agents “liberated” into a transformed world. Certainly this is one way to read the nature of personhood and liberation within the work of figures such as James H. Cone (e.g., *A Black Theology of Liberation* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986]); Dwight N. Hopkins (e.g., *Being Human: Race, Culture, and Religion* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005]); Kelly Brown Douglas (e.g., *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015]).
- 47 Karen Barad raises interesting questions concerning what has been the assumed significance of discourse and language in ways that have downplayed

- the importance of things themselves. See Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo and Susan J. Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 120–54.
- 48 One might think about this in terms of animacy, although my concern here isn’t the function of the human process of naming but rather a way of thinking through the presence of various things without a hierarchical emphasis. Readers interested in thinking through the concept of naming-things in relationship to the linguistic framing of animacy should see, for example, Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), chapter 1. It is particularly intriguing to read Chen in relationship to chapters 7–8 and the epilogue in this volume.
- 49 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, viii.
- 50 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 4.
- 51 Bennett says, concerning her project, “My claims here are motivated by a self-interested or conative concern for human survival and happiness: I want to promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities” (*Vibrant Matter*, x). Bennett, for example, does not assume that such effort ultimately solves the problem, but for her the conceptual shift points to the value of things in such a way as to point out the ways in which we live “in a knotted world of vibrant matter, to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself” (13).
- 52 Paul Rekret argues that new materialism fails to give adequate attention to the sociopolitical contexts in which the separation of mind and matter takes place. While new materialism rejects this distinction through its ontological turn, Rekret argues this failure hampers its ability to maintain its position. See Rekret, “The Head, the Hand, and Matter: New Materialism and the Politics of Knowledge,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 35, no. 7–8 (2018): 49–72.
- 53 I would suggest that injustice is not so logical and the desire to uphold perceived social advantage is often expressed at a group’s own peril. Think, for example, of working-class whites voting for Donald Trump.
- 54 See notes 37 and 41. In addition to texts noted elsewhere in this introduction, for information on new materialism see, for example, Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2012); Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, eds., *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” of the Arts* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013); Vicki Kirby, *What If Culture Was Nature All Along* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2017); Elizabeth Grosz, *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein, eds., *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science, and New Materialisms* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).
- 55 Diana Coole and Samantha Frost frame attention to materiality in this way: “It is now time to subject objectivity and material reality to a similarly radical reappraisal. Our respective researches have prompted our own interests in

changing conception of material causality and the significance of corporeality, both of which we see as crucial for a materialist theory of politics or agency. We now advance the bolder claim that foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century.” Coole and Frost, “Introducing the New Materialism,” in Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 2.

- 56 Camus’s notion of the absurd lends itself to the interplay I have in mind: “the absurd has meaning only in so far as it is not agreed to. . . . A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it.” Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 30, 31.
- 57 Hence, it is that which underlies the psycho-ethical impulse highlighted in my earlier work. The earlier theoretical work allowed ethics to bleed into my theorization—a holdover perhaps from my work as a constructive theologian.
- 58 This turn to Camus provides a useful way to connect this thinking about the nature and meaning of religion to a process of a complex arrangement of “doing”—or ethics, not simply what one “ought” to do but what this doing won’t achieve (i.e., what cannot be done).
- 59 See Pinn, *Terror and Triumph*.
- 60 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
- 61 While some boundaries are meant to safeguard against particular forms of abuse—such as laws against physical violence or sexual assault—they have not functioned fully and consistently in a way that actually safeguards those most vulnerable. This is in part due to the manner in which even these boundaries are tainted by embedded notions of disregard.
- 62 Stelarc, a science-inspired performance artist, provides an intriguing depiction of the body—what he calls “an evolutionary architecture.” He explores modification of the body vis-à-vis technology that forces a rethinking of the nature and meaning of body over against machine as well as requiring an altered theorization of flesh. In this way, he uses IT as a method of fostering alternate conceptions of embodiment, and by extension the nature and meaning of the embodied human. See, for example, “Zombies, Cyborgs and Chimeras: A Talk by Performance Artist, Prof Stelarc,” YouTube video, August 5, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqtiM1hK6IU>.
- 63 The religion as a technology’s interrogation of human experience points out death, but not as an isolated “something” or situation; instead, it is already always attached to the devices of its exploration—the body and objects. The religion as a technology in essence uncovers death in all its multidimensional modalities and representations.
- 64 My focused attention on the material body is not meant to suggest there is only the physical body. My previous work argues against this reductive approach, and at least one chapter in this volume—dealing with Du Bois and the problem soul—at least hints at the affective and constructed realm(s)

- of the body. Yet my argument is that it is the physical, material body that is more rarely centered in the study of religion, and so I work to view the theorization of religion from its vantage point so as to fill a gap rather than based on the assumption that it is only the physical/material that “matters.”
- 65 I would argue that Marcella Althaus-Reid’s indecent theology is an example of a theological text pushing against easy closure and advocating for openness as an erotic quality. See Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 66 In understanding ritualization in this manner, I am referencing the thinking of Ronald Grimes and others in ritual studies. See, for example, Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- 67 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.
- 68 For background information and artistic context on Angelbert Metoyer, see his website: <https://www.angelbertmetoyer.com>.
- 69 Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
- 70 See, for example, W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Suppression of the African-Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (1896); Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899); Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (1935); Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (1920); Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940).
- 71 W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990).
- 72 Works discussed include Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*; Camus, *Rebel*; Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, in *Quicksand and Passing* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005); Richard Wright, *Black Boy (American Hunger): A Record of Childhood and Youth*, 60th anniversary ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005); Richard Wright, “The Man Who Lived Underground,” in *Eight Men: Short Stories*, 3rd ed., by Richard Wright (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008); Orlando Patterson, *The Children of Sisyphus: A Novel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964).
- 73 As the epigraph at the start of the introduction suggests, one could also explore openness through the writings of Alice Walker in addition to Larsen and Wright, for whom connectedness and interplay are dominant motifs. However, something of the absurdist moralism would be lost with Walker. There is in her work a sense of the tragicomic nature of life; however, I read her as still committed to the idea of resolution. This is my read, for example, of *Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer’s Activism* (New York: Random House, 1997), as well as *Living by the Word: Selected Writings, 1973–1987* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988). And whether it is human centered or not (there is something humanistic about much of her writing), I want to tame this appeal to resolution through the absurdist moralist take on the psycho-ethical impulse. In this way, I want to maintain the tragicomic



quality of life as already and always—and without “appeal” to conceptual frameworks of substantive transformation.

## 1. THINGS

- 1 Daniel Miller, introduction to *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 5; Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
- 2 Ian Hodder labels this the “thingness of things.” See Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 32.
- 3 Hodder, *Entangled*, 7.
- 4 The economic and political ramifications of bodiness are even stronger in my more liberation theology–related work in large part because a theologizing of socioeconomic and political circumstances is the *raison d’être* of black liberation theology.
- 5 It is not a pressing concern here, but the formal question of distinction between things and objects is resolved in this project, to the extent it surfaces, by means of two notions: (1) the human is a body-thing in relationship to thing-things. A twofold epistemology of thingliness is thereby constituted through the idea of multidirectional relationship, and much of this is worked out through moralistic awareness and lucidity, as described in this and the next chapter. For brief discussions of subject-object in material studies, see, for example, Michael Rowlands, “A Materialist Approach to Materiality,” in Miller, *Materiality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 72–87; Webb Keane, “Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things,” in Miller, *Materiality*, 182–205; and Christopher Pinney, “Things Happen: Or, From Which Moment Does That Object Come,” in Miller, *Materiality*, 256–72.
- 6 Rowlands, “Materialist Approach to Materiality,” 72–87.
- 7 Hodder, *Entangled*, 7.
- 8 This should not be read as even a passive endorsement of the objectification of African Americans or others as consistent with who they are.
- 9 Peter Schwenger, “Words and the Murder of the Thing,” in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 138.
- 10 John Frow, “A Pebble, a Camera, a Man Who Turns into a Telegraph Pole,” in Brown, *Things*, 355.
- 11 Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 4.
- 12 Hodder, *Entangled*, 49.
- 13 I am not a Heidegger scholar, nor am I a phenomenologist. I make only mention here of Heidegger’s work on things in order to attempt to briefly acknowledge a long-standing tradition of thinking about things. Readers will note (and some undoubtedly will find it problematic) that I give no real

consideration to primary materials related to things authored by philosophers such as Heidegger—although he has provided philosophical commentary on the nature and meaning of things (e.g., in *Being and Time*)—or, in France, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (e.g., in *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Visible and the Invisible*). This is because I am less interested in presenting or refining a theory of things as related to phenomenology of things, and I am more interested in an engagement and practice of things as presented by those who have developed thing theory and applied it to various areas of the humanities and social sciences.

Hence, I find the texts and authors discussed more useful in light of my particular intentions and my concern to think about the nature of religion through a more multidisciplinary approach. For instance, Bjørnar Olsen (*In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects* [Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010], 70n16) remarks that one can think about Heidegger's take on things as being first concerned with the relevance of a thing for humans. My interest in thinking about things in relationship to religion as a technology through art is concerned on one level with this take on things because art involves the placement and manipulation of things. Still, I find attention to Camus and thing theory over against Heidegger useful in that I am also concerned with the question of what else there might be to say or understand about things. In short, my concern is restricted for the most part to things within the context of artistic production as opposed to a sweeping discussion of things in a more general sense, which accounts for my selection of conversation partners.

- 14 Something about this idea and this phrasing might bring to mind Heidegger's *Dasein* ("being there") and "being-in-the-world." However, I make this argument not in light of his phenomenology and existentialism but instead in light of Camus's moralism, which I believe challenges some of the intellectual infrastructure of existentialism—at least as it is presented within the context of France—and in light of how figures such as Sartre read Heidegger. My interrogation of the nature and meaning of religion to the extent it concerns itself with the body-thing in relationship to thing-things framed by circumstances (world) prompts a concern with what this situation means, what it produces, and for that particular set of concerns I find Camus of particular importance.
- 15 On this topic, see, for instance, Olsen, *In Defense of Things*.
- 16 Raymond Malewitz, *The Practice of Misuse: Rugged Consumerism in Contemporary American Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), 2–3. I do not have the same economic and political concerns as Malewitz does in framing his rugged consumerism, but there are insights in this volume regarding materiality and materials that I find useful as I think through my particular concerns with things and religion.
- 17 This is related to what Malewitz notes as "misuse" and, with his economic and political interests (explored primarily through literature and theater),

discusses within the context of what he calls “rugged consumerism.” He gives the example of Apollo 13 astronauts needing to reconfigure and “misuse” equipment in order to develop a system that would reduce carbon dioxide levels. What this gets at is the ability of body-things to manipulate and alter things in order to create new things for use. “For the rugged consumer,” he writes, “the desired outcome of creative misuse is a renaturalized world in which artificial objects become raw materials for postproduction reproduction” (23). This, it appears, highlights the flexible utility and purpose of things that is not my primary concern. What I have in mind might not be considered repurposing because it raises questions concerning the nature of purpose and how it is represented and displayed. I am more interested in the way artistic creation and placement of things raises questions concerning the nature of things and by extension the nature and meaning of body-things. That is to say, I am interested in what the creation/placement of things within art says about things as things over against their physical utility. Such questions become a “tool,” so to speak, of religion as a technology. See Malewitz, *Practice of Misuse*, chapter 1.

- 18 Antony Hudek, ed., “Introduction//Detours of Objects,” in *The Object* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 16–17.
- 19 Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22.
- 20 Hudek, “Introduction//Detours of Objects,” 17.
- 21 Arthur Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), 136.
- 22 My interest here, which of course is not the only approach to the general topic of the theory of religion, is with the naming—naming that moment in which religion as a technology is applied and interplay between types of things is exposed.
- 23 This is not a necessary limitation—as if only the human bodied naming-thing matters—but I find it a useful restriction. I want to acknowledge a more expansive category for naming-things, as one might find in work related to transhumanism, posthuman studies, animal studies, or material studies, while framing this project in terms of openness related to only one of the many types of agential “naming” things. (See my comments on posthumanism and new materialism in the introduction.)
- 24 My goal, as my particular use of thing theorists will make clear, is not the presentation of a thing theory. Instead, thing theory, in conjunction with other theoretical frameworks, affords a range of questions and considerations that help me better frame my own questions and concerns regarding bodies, things, and religion as a technology.
- 25 Frow, “Pebble, a Camera, a Man,” 361.
- 26 This sense of a moralistic sensibility over against an existentialist sensibility marks my turn to Albert Camus in much of my recent work, including this book. This moralist posture toward the world is played out in both his fiction and nonfiction. It certainly informs the books found in the notes for this

- chapter and the next (*The Rebel* in particular). However, I would also like to call attention to the manner in which his journalistic writings speak to this moralistic perspective. For an example of this, see Camus, *Algerian Chronicles* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). In his depictions of human suffering, structural injustice, colonialism, and war, one gets a sense of the moralist's challenge to existentialist notions of agency and freedom, in part through his aggressive turn to absurdity and love.
- 27 Future work might necessitate a turn, for example, to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, as some I have been in conversation with have suggested, by means of which to interrogate the dynamics of that body-encountering world (a body he suggests is not simply an object). However, my first effort is to frame this moment of contact through the earthiness of moralism in that it also contains more than an explicit assertion already regarding the religious connotations of this contact without presupposing an answer—this is found in the question of life without appeal. This is not to say that Merleau-Ponty promotes thinking along religious lines that involves endorsement or theological assumption. Rather, mine is the argument that moralism's logic is consistent with my objectives as they currently stand.
- 28 Frances S. Connelly, introduction to *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, ed. Frances S. Connelly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15. See my comments concerning Julia Kristeva and my project found in the introduction, where I also provide a rationale for my turn to Bakhtin over against other thinkers such as Kristeva and Georges Bataille.
- 29 Rina Arya is correct to warn against too "open" a use of the term *abject*. As she notes, it is not simply a feeling of disgust, nor is it simply a signifier for shit and other things frowned upon. Rather, the abject has to do with boundaries between the subject and other "things." The inadequacy of boundary stirs up abjection as a sociocultural process by which to protect or keep "clean" the individual. Abjection is a response to the ever-present subject's connection and response to the abject. The relationship of the body-thing to shit plays off this sense of the abject, but the abject/abjection is not restricted to this example. See Rina Arya, *Abjection and Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
- 30 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); James Luther Adams, Wilson Yates, and Robert Penn Warren, eds., *The Grotesque in Art and Literature: Theological Reflections* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997). In this text, I am most interested in Yates's "An Introduction to the Grotesque: Theoretical and Theological Considerations," which in its scope and detail provides something of a theoretical framing for the overall project. In addition to this turn to Bakhtin, Ola Sigurdson argues there are ample examples of the grotesque within the Christian tradition from which one can draw. See Ola Sigurdson, *Heavenly Bodies: Incarnation, the Gaze, and Embodiment in Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016). Sigurdson argues that within the Christian tradition even

- the historical and felt presence of God is framed by the grotesque (493). In this there is also a turn to a modified Bakhtinian sense of the grotesque, but like with Yates, it is sanitized by the needs of Christian logic: “The point of the grotesque as a theological category is not to deny the genuine insights of the theological tradition, but rather to attempt, like Barth, to reach a more critical view of these conceptions on the basis of the cross” (503). What I find problematic with Yates’s discussion applies here as well. The appeal in this book to a theologized sense of the demonic takes away from the sense of the grotesque I want to follow in that it troubles—casts as negative—the openness, the multiple sides of the body to the extent it limits description to theologized language of good and evil. It also highlights the individualization of the body. What this book calls the grotesque regarding Julian and others, I argue is better described as the suffering body, the body in pain seeking wholeness—not the open body content in itself. Talk of a healing function for the grotesque betrays all this I critique.
- 31 I have no argument with much of what Yates writes regarding Bakhtin’s framing of the grotesque as a positive assessment of life, one that, through carnival for example, celebrates much of what social norms despise.
- 32 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 40.
- 33 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 47.
- 34 I am unable to provide images in the text. However, photographs of the exhibits are available at <https://kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk/da/udstillinger/tori-wraanes> and <https://kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk/en/exhibitions/ovartaci-2>.
- 35 Kunsthal Charlottenborg Exhibit, viewed on November 9, 2017.
- 36 Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, “ARSI7—Ed Atkins,” YouTube video, May 9, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3vDyaZXx28>. A portion of the audiovisual is available at Erich Mülla, “Ed Atkins—Ribbons, 2014,” YouTube video, January 11, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EkqVWXBVOQ>.
- 37 Ed Atkins, “Ribbons,” a 2014 installation (channel 4:3 in 16.9 HD video with three-channel surround soundtracks). Louisiana Museum, “Being There,” Copenhagen, viewed on November 11, 2017. The quoted text is drawn from the statement provided by the museum in relationship to the Atkins project.
- 38 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 49.
- 39 A turn to the grotesque (through Nietzsche) is also found in African American constructive theology. See, for example, Victor Anderson, *Beyond Ontological Blackness: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1995).
- 40 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 47.
- 41 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 51.
- 42 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 52.
- 43 Yates, “Introduction to the Grotesque,” 52.
- 44 Coco Fusco, *The Bodies That Were Not Ours: And Other Writings* (London: Routledge, 2001), 42.

- 45 See, for instance, Deuteronomy 23:11–15.
- 46 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 318.
- 47 This is Yates's thinking, but I argue that it is also present in the work of other theologians who frame life in terms of the "image of God." See, for example, M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); James H. Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). The same could be said of theologians such as Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann.
- 48 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 363–68.
- 49 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
- 50 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
- 51 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19.
- 52 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 281.
- 53 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 322.
- 54 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19–20; emphasis added.
- 55 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 26.
- 56 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 317. While not my primary concern, it is worth noting that this interplay has affective markers to the degree that urinating involves discomfort and relief, and the same can be said for defecating. This link between two responses speaks to the manner in which defecating involves both a leaving the open naming-thing and an entering into the world of a new thing-thing (335).
- 57 Still, there is a romanticization element in Bakhtin that I resist: "Cosmic terror is the heritage of man's ancient impotence in the presence of nature. Folk culture did not know this fear and overcame it through laughter, through lending a bodily substance to nature and the cosmos; for this folk culture was always based on the indestructible confidence in the might and final victory of man" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 336n9).
- 58 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.
- 59 Connelly, introduction to *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, 2, 4, 5.
- 60 These images are part of the Yoko Ono exhibit at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, "Transmission," which I viewed on November 9, 2017. See <https://kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk/en/exhibitions/yoko-ono-transmission/>.
- 61 The connection between a "banquet" and a toilet, I argue, speaks well to the carnivalesque impulse highlighted by Bakhtin.
- 62 Related to this, I appreciate Kirsten A. Hoving's pronouncement: "As the traditional site of the grotesque, the body and its norms were the starting point for the blurring of distinctions between things, leading to misshapeness, and even to complete disintegration." Kirsten A. Hoving, "Convulsive Bodies: The Grotesque Anatomies of Surrealist Photography," in Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, 221.
- 63 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, in *Quicksand and Passing* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005).

- 64 In future work I will take up the issue of African American moralism using Du Bois, Larsen, Wright, and several others. In so doing, I will read African American thinkers-activists with and over against Albert Camus.
- 65 For additional information on Nella Larsen, see George Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Thadious M. Davis, *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A Woman's Life Unveiled* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); and Charles R. Larson, *Invisible Darkness: Jean Toomer and Nella Larsen* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993).
- 66 For more information on Wright, see, for example, Hazel Rowley, *Richard Wright: The Life and Times* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2001); Michel Fabre, *The World of Richard Wright* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985); Fabre, *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Virginia Whatley Smith, ed., *Richard Wright: Writing America at Home and from Abroad* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016); Abdul R. JanMohamed, *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- 67 Richard Wright, *Eight Men: Short Stories*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008).
- 68 Richard Wright, *Black Boy (American Hunger): A Record of Childhood and Youth*, 60th anniversary ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005); Wright, *Native Son*.
- 69 Paul Gilroy, "Introduction to the Harper Perennial Edition," in Wright, *Eight Men*, xiii.
- 70 Gilroy, "Introduction to the Harper Perennial Edition," xv.
- 71 Richard Wright, "The Man Who Lived Underground," in Wright, *Eight Men*, 20.
- 72 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 21.
- 73 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 25.
- 74 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 32–33.
- 75 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 33–34.
- 76 Keep in mind Bakhtin's perception of the mouth as of great importance for the grotesque body as an opening to the world.
- 77 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 20; Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 30.
- 78 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 31.
- 79 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 32.
- 80 Wright, "Man Who Lived Underground," 84.
- 81 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 113.
- 82 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 113.
- 83 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 121.
- 84 Nella Larsen's concern with sexuality in *Quicksand* can be read as a racialized-gendered presentation of the grotesque body—the open body. However, I am most concerned with Helga Crane from the point of her turn to the church in that it is the most graphic depiction in the novel of the open body—the penetrated and penetrating body.

## 2. THE ART OF PLACEMENT

- 1 Robert C. Fuller, *Spirituality in the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.
- 2 Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 11.
- 3 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*, 3, 5.
- 4 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*.
- 5 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*, 37.
- 6 I draw from the work of Jean-Pierre Warnier, “Inside and Outside: Surfaces and Containers,” in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler-Fogden, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 186–95. However, it is important to note that my approach to the body is not anthropological in nature and is not Warnier’s thinking on the body. I do not share Warnier’s take on defining the techniques of the body used to present itself over against an ability to actually know the body as such. Yet there is some overlap in terms of a shared interest in the nature and presentations of subjectivity.
- 7 Warnier, “Inside and Outside,” 186.
- 8 Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 4.
- 9 Brown, “Thing Theory,” 4.
- 10 Arthur Danto, *What Art Is* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 128.
- 11 Arthur Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*, 21st ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 2003), 139–42.
- 12 Danto, *Abuse of Beauty*, 142.
- 13 Danto, *What Art Is*, xii.
- 14 I offer here what might be an obvious point of clarification. My concern is not with what is labeled “religious art,” in that it assumes the conclusion, assumes the meaning, which intends a particular outcome. It assumes, first, that religion is a something—that religion is established in light of rituals, deeds, creeds, etc.
- 15 Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 61.
- 16 Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 41.
- 17 Arthur Danto, *Remarks on Art and Philosophy* (Mount Desert Island, ME: Acadia Summer Arts Program, 2014), 21–141.
- 18 Danto, *Remarks on Art and Philosophy*, 23.
- 19 Danto, *Remarks on Art and Philosophy*, 29.
- 20 Danto, *Abuse of Beauty*, 4–5.
- 21 In earlier work I brought Danto’s philosophy of art at the end of art into religious studies and constructive/humanist theology so as to “find” cartographies of religion, and I concerned myself with the manner in which the very question of a difference between the box in the store and Warhol’s box provides a way of gauging the structuring of the religious. I framed it in terms of



the “stuff” of religious traditions and to what it might point—the stuff behind the stuff. Such a question and answer points in the direction of things. In this project, I have related questions with which to contend.

- 22 Danto, *What Art Is*, 28.
- 23 Danto, *What Art Is*, 36.
- 24 As will become clear in later chapters, art as such and religion as a technology are in my mind probed by an awareness that something must be said about the absurd as Camus hauntingly explores and explains it—“the desperate encounter between human inquiry and the silence of the universe.” The concept of the absurd and its contextualization as the silence of absurdity hold me in certain ways and by extension my theory of religion; and as a consequence, the uncertainty demanded has some bearing on what religion probes and what art can offer regarding that probing. In this way, my discussion of religion as a technology and artistic expression is tied to my interest in the moralist position and its target called absurdity (more on that later). I use Camus to soften some of the optimism of Danto, for example, and to better ground the un/certainty over against meaning endemic to this technology of religion’s engagement with art and overall project. Camus does not negate the need to act, to do, but rather questions the plausibility of success. Obligation and opportunity are not removed for him by absurdity, but rather the ramifications of our push, our “No!” to the absurd are limited in impact and scope.
- 25 Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 82.
- 26 Camus, *Rebel*, 253.
- 27 Danto, *What Art Is*, 19.
- 28 Danto, *What Art Is*, 49.
- 29 Danto, *What Art Is*, 49.
- 30 Danto, *What Art Is*, 38.
- 31 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 53–54.
- 32 Stephen Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 42–67.
- 33 Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder,” 49–51.
- 34 Being mindful of Camus’s cautions, this potentiality is of limited consequences. What I propose, if anything, is only small comfort—not hope—in the same way a time/space for arranging the stuff of life provides something of a reprieve for the figure fixated on order, but it is not a final resolution by any means.
- 35 The Cameron notion of the gallery as temple is referenced in Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, “Introductions: Museums and Multiculturalism,” in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*, 3; Carol Duncan, “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Culture*, 90, 91.

- 36 *Member: Pope.L, 1978–2001*, Museum of Modern Art, New York City, viewed on January 3, 2019. For additional information on Pope.L, see, for example, Nathan Taylor Pemberton, “Crawling through New York City with the Artist Pope.L,” *New Yorker*, November 22, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/crawling-through-new-york-city-with-the-artist-pope-l?verso=true>; Adrian Heathfield, Adrienne Edwards, Andre Lepecki, Malik Gaines, Martha Wilson, Naomi Beckwith, Thomas Lax, et al., *member: Pope.L 1978–2011* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2019); Mark H. C. Bessire, ed., *William Pope.L: The Friendliest Black Artist in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 37 Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 53.
- 38 Elaine Heumann Gurian discusses some of the pedagogical and experiential limitations to gallery display imposed by “producers of exhibitions.” See Gurian, “Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities,” in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Culture*, 176–90. Of course, there are race, gender, and sexuality considerations related to the production of exhibits and access to space that merit consideration. Those are beyond the focus of this particular book, but those interested in such considerations should see, for instance, Lonnie G. Bunch III, *Call the Lost Dream Back: Essays on History, Race and Museums* (Washington, DC: American Library Association Editions, 2011); Amy K. Levin, ed., *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- 39 Svetlana Alpers, “The Museum as a Way of Seeing,” in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Culture*, 27.

### 5. ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF TRANSIENCE

- 1 Metoyer’s family’s history is in Louisiana and Texas, tied to landownership and business success.
- 2 For information on Houston’s Project Row House, see <https://projectrowhouses.org>.
- 3 Deborah M. Colton, introduction to *Angelbert Metoyer: Babies Walk on Water: Present, Future, and Time Travel*, by Angelbert Metoyer (Houston: Deborah M. Colton Gallery, 2013), 1.
- 4 In an email exchange on April 18, 2016, he listed the following as his influences: “People, Jesse Lott, Ornette Coleman, and Anthony Braxton.”
- 5 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016.
- 6 In conversation, Metoyer raised the question of whether or not his work had an Afrofuturistic “feel” to it because of its attention to the past/present/future in ways that pull on science (particularly physics), African American cultural forms that speak to history as a fluid concept, and so on. Metoyer, *Babies Walk on Water*, and the corresponding gallery show (November 16, 2012–January 26, 2013) serve as an example of this Afrofuturistic sense of time and space. For information on Afrofuturism, see Ytasha L. Womack, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture* (Chicago: Lawrence

- Hill Books/Chicago Review Press, 2013); Alondra Nelson, ed., “Afrofuturism,” special issue, *Social Text* 20, no. 2 (2002); Mark Dery, ed., *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones, eds., *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016); Mark Bould and Rone Shavers, eds., “Afrofuturism,” special issue, *Science Fiction Studies* 34, no. 2 (July 2007).
- 7 This exhibit took place at the University of Texas Warfield New Gallery, May 12–December 12, 2016.
  - 8 A shorter and revised version of this statement was found on the wall of the gallery space housing the exhibit.
  - 9 Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 37.
  - 10 Useful discussions of Vodou include Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*, updated and expanded ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (New Paltz, NY: McPherson, 1983); Leslie Gérald Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).
  - 11 See W. E. B. Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” in Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990).
  - 12 These and other interrogations of thing-things in this chapter and much of the larger text are inspired by my reading of thing theorists such as Bill Brown. See, for instance, Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–16; Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
  - 13 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 97.
  - 14 This is something along the lines of what historian of religions Charles Long discussed in terms of “crawling back through history” to our first creation. The distinction here is that I do not intend to suggest there is such a point of origin, but rather just greater clarity concerning what we are not. See Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986).
  - 15 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 97–98.
  - 16 I find something of this sentiment expressed by Metoyer in conversation. With Camus, I think it plays out in the story “The Artist at Work,” in Camus, *Exile and the Kingdom* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 110–58.
  - 17 Brown, “Thing Theory,” 2.
  - 18 Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 38.
  - 19 Hodder, *Entangled*, 58.
  - 20 Brown, “Thing Theory,” 4–5.
  - 21 Marcel Duchamp, “The Creative Act,” Session on the Creative Act, Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Houston, Texas, April 1957, included

- as the appendix to Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1996), 510.
- 22 John Frow, "A Pebble, a Camera, a Man Who Turns into a Telegraph Pole," in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 353–54, 357–58.
  - 23 Eric N. Mack's exhibit *Lemme Walk across the Room* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art used textiles (e.g., shirts and pieces of fabric) to force a similar recognition—the points of contact and impact between bodied naming-things and other things. For Mack, the arrangement of these items in the main hall of the museum allowed for interaction with viewers—a performance of artistic space as dependent on viewers as on artistic "objects." The location of pieces within this exhibit encouraged movement but also disallowed movement to the extent that pieces of fabric hung and draped across rope produced soft barriers that made viewers mindful of their bodies through imposed limitations, while also pointing out the fabricated nature of these restrictions. I viewed the exhibit on April 20, 2019.
  - 24 Arthur Danto, *What Art Is* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 14.
  - 25 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016. I have edited the presentation of our conversation to clear up prose so as to move the conversation from a casual email exchange to book form.
  - 26 *Sankofa* is a Ghanaian word indicating "Go back and get it," suggesting the importance of the past for a proper working present and future. It is typically symbolized as a bird with its head turned backward, as if its moving forward is guided by its gaze to what is behind it.
  - 27 He first discussed "Artworld" as a way of philosophically working through the impact of Andy Warhol's 1964 exhibit on his thinking. See Arthur Danto, "The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (October 1964): 571–84.
  - 28 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016.
  - 29 Quoted in Michael Agresta, "Angelbert Metoyer at Co-Lab Projects," *Arts + Culture*, November 10, 2015, <http://artsandculturex.com/life-machine> (accessed July 2018).
  - 30 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*, 10.
  - 31 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*, 9.
  - 32 Steven Psyllos, "Angelbert Metoyer," in Metoyer, *Babies Walk on Water*, 4; emphasis added.
  - 33 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016.
  - 34 Belting, *Anthropology of Images*, 17.
  - 35 Although I draw from Arthur Danto's philosophy of art as opposed to other possibilities, I have in mind the line from John Dewey's *Art as Experience*: "If there is justification for proposing yet another philosophy of the esthetic, it must be found in a new mode of approach. . . . But, to my mind, the trouble with existing theories is that they start from a ready-made compartmentalization, or from a conception of art that 'spiritualizes' it out of connection with the objects of concrete experience" (Dewey, *Art as Experience* [New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1934], 11).

- 36 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 108.
- 37 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016. While there are significant differences and contrasting perspectives, there is something of Metoyer's intent in the words of John Dewey regarding art. "The work of art," Dewey notes, "is complete only as it works in the experience of others than the one who created it" (Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 106).
- 38 Email exchange with Angelbert Metoyer, April 18, 2016.
- 39 Hodder, *Entangled*, 3, 4.
- 40 Heather Pesanti, "Strange Pilgrims," in *Strange Pilgrims* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 11.
- 41 Barbara E. Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 63. Here Johnson is providing her take on Heidegger's work related to things.
- 42 This statement should remind readers of the work done by Julia Kristeva related to the abject and abjection.
- 43 See, for instance, Metoyer, *Babies Walk on Water*.
- 44 Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 260.
- 45 Works by philosopher of art Arthur Danto are helpful with respect to the metaphysical content and considerations of the visual arts. See, for instance, Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
- 46 See Marcus J. Guillory, "The Meta: On the Artwork of Angelbert Metoyer," in *I–AoI (LU–X project)* (Houston: Angelbert's Imagination Studios, 2008), 49–50.
- 47 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 214.
- 48 Colton, introduction to Metoyer, *Babies Walk on Water*, 1.

#### 4. THE "STUFF" OF PERFORMANCE

- 1 Anthony B. Pinn, *The New Disciples: A Novel* (Durham, NC: Pitchstone Publishing, 2015), 215–16.
- 2 See Matthew Akers, dir., *Marina Abramovic: The Artist Is Present* (Music Box Films, 2012). The impact of Abramovic's work is far reaching, and this includes a turn toward conscious performance art in hip-hop culture. I have in mind Jay Z's video for the song "Picasso Baby." I would also suggest that many of the videos produced in relationship to Missy Elliott involve a blending of a surrealist aesthetic with a performance art quality. For an example of this, see Missy Elliott and Da Brat, "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)," YouTube video, October 26, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHcyJPTTngw>. In a way that Metoyer would appreciate there is also an Afrofuturistic quality to some of her work, including Missy Elliott and Da Brat, "Sock It 2 Me," YouTube video, October 26, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

- v=9UvBX3REqSY. Margarita Simon Guillory has done intriguing work on Missy Elliot. See “Intersecting Points: The ‘Erotic as Religious’ in the Lyrics of Missy Elliot,” *Culture and Religion* 10, no. 1 (March 2009): 81–96, reprinted in *The Hip Hop and Religion Reader*, ed. Monica R. Miller and Anthony B. Pinn (New York: Routledge, 2015).
- 3 Amelia Jones, “The Now and the Has Been: Paradoxes of Live Art in History,” in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Chicago: Intellect Books/University of Chicago Press, 2012), 11–13. Scholars have connected performance art to a variety of practices, and these practices have been explored from various disciplinary perspectives, including psychology, gender studies, media studies, and anthropology.
  - 4 “Performativity, Cultural-Politics, and the Embodiments of Knowledge: An Interview with Amelia Jones Conducted by Jonathan Harris,” in *Dead History, Live Art? Spectacle, Subjectivity and Subversion in Visual Culture since the 1960s*, ed. Jonathan Harris (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 91. The essays in this book, including this interview, provide intriguing discussions of what performance art entails and how it has been documented within scholarship.
  - 5 Laurie Carlos, “Introduction: Performance Art Was the One Place Where There Were So Few Definitions,” in *Performance: Live Art since 1960*, ed. RoseLee Goldberg (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 13.
  - 6 I give limited attention to an expansion of this idea later in the chapter when discussing artists such as Ron Athey. On a related note, readers may find the following book interesting: Christopher Braddock, *Performing Contagious Bodies: Ritual Participation in Contemporary Art* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
  - 7 Carlos, “Introduction: Performance Art Was the One Place,” 30.
  - 8 Allan Kaprow, “The Real Experiment,” in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, by Allan Kaprow, ed. Jeff Kelly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 202.
  - 9 Kaprow, “Real Experiment,” 201.
  - 10 Kaprow, “Real Experiment,” 205.
  - 11 Lynn MacRitchie, “Introduction: The Sincerity of Events,” in *A Split Second of Paradise: Live Art, Installation and Performance*, ed. Nicky Childs and Jeni Walwin (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1998), 21.
  - 12 The definition of performance art is widely debated within the literature. Numerous configurations have been considered, but as far as I can tell there is a shared sense of the body as important within “performance” art despite disagreement over its more detailed intents and forms. Within this chapter, how performance art is defined entails a very limited concern in that I provide a definition in terms of parameters simply through the rather fixed range of artists discussed.

During an earlier period (some of which is covered earlier in this volume), the context justified the argument that the gallery place involved a conscious manipulation of time and space for the purpose of particular and orchestrated modalities of exploration. The naming-thing came into contact with

- thing-things in ways that raised questions concerning the significance and agency of both. However, there were still assumptions of distinction—at least some distinction—that performance art is out to destroy.
- 13 There is no “outside” in that even the writing of this chapter (and the next) involves performance on my part—a relationship between body-thing and thing-things—that is meant to reflect upon the performance art of others through the illusion of reification long enough to see this art without seeing it. There is no way around, at least in the context of this text, participation in performance—an embodied naming-thing/thing-thing interaction that speaks to the mutability of both for the purpose of exploration and, as I suggest throughout this book, moralistic awareness and lucidity of circumstances.
  - 14 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 2.
  - 15 RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 131.
  - 16 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 7–9.
  - 17 Laurie Anderson, foreword to Goldberg, *Performance*, 6.
  - 18 Anderson, foreword to Goldberg, *Performance*, 34.
  - 19 Andrew Quick, “Taking Place: Encountering the Live,” in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. Adrian Heathfield (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 93.
  - 20 Anna Deuze, “Do-It-Yourself Artworks’: A User’s Guide,” in Harris, *Dead History, Live Art?*, 187–207.
  - 21 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 147.
  - 22 Clifford Owens, “Notes on the Crisis of Black American Performance Art (2003),” in *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, ed. Valerie Cassel Oliver (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2013), 36.
  - 23 For a discussion of performance art in relationship to art history and to temporality and repetition or capture, see Jones and Heathfield, *Perform, Repeat, Record*.
  - 24 Nick Stillman, “Clifford Owens,” in *BOMB; New Art Publications*, no. 117 (Fall 2011): 56.
  - 25 Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 110–11.
  - 26 I highlight the twentieth century, but Marvin Carlson notes that more recent developments, what he labels “avant garde” performance art, are tied to a longer history of performance that merits consideration for context. See Carlson, *Performance*, chapter 4.
  - 27 Carlson, *Performance*, 104–5.
  - 28 Jens Hoffmann and Joan Jonas, “Entrance: On Performance (and Other Complications),” in Hoffmann and Jonas, *Art Works: Perform* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 11.
  - 29 Gavin Butt’s edited volume on art criticism and the place of the critic in that work is interesting in light of my phrasing above—“of most interest to me”—in

- that it provides context and offers a way of thinking about my concern and my relationship to my discussion of performance art and the other developments discussed in this book. Butt, ed., *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).
- 30 Dominic Johnson, *The Art of Living: An Oral History of Performance Art* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.
  - 31 MacRitchie, "Introduction: The Sincerity of Events," 28. For a concise discussion of the history of this art movement, see Goldberg, *Performance Art*.
  - 32 Readers should not assume that my comment entails an embracing of redemptive suffering strategies. I remain opposed to them in all their forms. Here I am simply describing the use of the naming-thing by a particular genre of artists, and I do so without theological judgment.
  - 33 Camus experienced the early phase of performance art. For instance, RoseLee Goldberg tells the story of Camus's presence at Yves Klein's exhibit *The Void*, in which the actual exhibit space was blank and the color blue appeared on the exterior of the gallery and the doors, the principle being the "real" blue was present in the impression—the life—brought into the gallery space. In response, in the guest book, Camus wrote, "With the void, a free hand." See Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 145. Scholars also note thematic connections with existentialism in performance art as it emerged in the years after World War II.
  - 34 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 120–21.
  - 35 Dominic Johnson, "Intimacy and Risk in Live Art," in Deirdre Heddon and Jennie Klein, eds., *Histories and Practices of Live Art* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 136.
  - 36 Examples of Athey's work, such as *St. Sebastian* and *Body Art*, are available on YouTube. The commentary provided with the *Body Art* performance on YouTube is particularly helpful in that it places his work within the context of traditional Pentecostal penetration by the Holy Spirit. See also an interview with Athey: Walker Art Center, "In Conversation: Ron Athey," YouTube video, April 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zURUN4GdXBo>.
  - 37 *Marina Abramovic: The Artist Is Present*. MoMA, 2010. It involved eight hours each day for almost three months—sitting across from attendees, looking at them as they looked at her.
  - 38 For a short, interesting essay on how "live art" (and by extension performance art) wrestles with time, see Beth Hoffmann, "The Time of Live Art," in Heddon and Klein, *Histories and Practices of Live Art*, 37–64.
  - 39 Sayre, *Object of Performance*, 4.
  - 40 See the poster for the film *Marina Abramovic: The Artist Is Present*: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2073029/>.
  - 41 See Orlan's website, <http://www.orlan.eu/>, and Stuart Jeffries, "Orlan's Art of Sex and Surgery," *The Guardian*, July 1, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/jul/01/orlan-performance-artist-carnal-art>. Amelia Jones, "Survey," in *The Artist's Body*, ed. Tracey Warr (New York: Phaidon, 2006),



32. For examples of Orlan's work as related to the commentary above, see diy artem, "ORLAN, Omniprésence, 1993. Extrait," YouTube video, February 14, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNiteX2xzho>. This concern with pain as strategy is central to the novel with which I open this chapter. In that book it is a strategy for interrogating and collapsing theological assumptions regarding righteousness and sin over against a particular mode of humanism. See Pinn, *New Disciples*.
- 42 Consider this argument in relationship to the work, for example, of Susan Bordo: Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, 10th anniversary ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Bordo, *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).
- 43 Cherise Smith provides an important discussion of the manner in which performance tackles issues related to cultural construction of identity. See Smith, *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
- 44 Valerie Cassel Oliver, preface to Cassel Oliver, *Radical Presence*, 10.
- 45 Cynthia Carr, "Talk Show," in *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*, by Cynthia Carr (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 200–205.
- 46 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 210–15.
- 47 Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Skira, 2000), 289.
- 48 Valerie Cassel Oliver, "Putting the Body on the Line: Endurance in Black Performance," in Cassel Oliver, *Radical Presence*, 14.
- 49 Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 7.
- 50 See Adina Rivera, "Adrian Piper, Mythic Being 1973," YouTube video, April 30, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVcXb8En\\_Tw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVcXb8En_Tw); Kennedy, Peter, dir., "The Mythic Being." excerpt from *Other Than Art's Sake*, APRAF Berlin, 1973, [http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/video\\_tmb.shtml](http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/video_tmb.shtml); and John B. Bowles, *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, and Embodiment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
- 51 Adrian Piper, "Preparatory Notes on the Mythic Being," quoted in McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 125. Also see Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 1, *Selected Writings in Meta-Art 1968–1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).
- 52 John P. Bowles, "'Acting Like a Man': Adrian Piper's Mythic Being and Black Feminism in the 1970s," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 3 (2007): 621.
- 53 Smith, *Enacting Others*, 727–77.
- 54 Bowles, "'Acting Like a Man,'" 633.
- 55 Ken Johnson, "Art in Review; Adrian Piper," *New York Times*, November 17, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/11/17/arts/art-in-review-adrian-piper.html>.

- 56 Holland Cotter, "Adrian Piper: A Canvas of Concerns—Race, Racism and Class," *New York Times*, December 24, 1999, <http://www.asu.edu/cfa/wwwcourses/art/SOACore/piper-art-review.html>.
- 57 Clifford Owens, "Notes on the Crisis of Black American Performance Art," in Cassel Oliver, *Radical Presence*, 36.
- 58 Christopher Y. Lew, ed., *Clifford Owens: Anthology* (New York: MoMA PSI, 2012), 8; emphasis added.
- 59 Kara Walker, "Instructions," in Lew, *Clifford Owens: Anthology*, 5.
- 60 Stillman, "Clifford Owens," 52.
- 61 Clifford Owens, introduction to Lew, *Clifford Owens: Anthology*, 8.
- 62 Christopher Y. Lew, "Trust Me: *Anthology* from One Perspective," in Lew, *Clifford Owens: Anthology*, 46. See Clifford Owens, "Anthology (Maren Hassinger) 2011," YouTube video, March 5, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AojNZxEOnul>.
- 63 Lew, "Trust Me," 43.
- 64 Laurie Carlos, "Introduction: Performance Art Was the One Place Where There Were So Few Definitions," in Goldberg, *Performance*, 9.
- 65 I make these remarks in part through my encounter with the work of Stephen Bayley. See Bayley, *Ugly: The Aesthetics of Everything* (London: Goodman Fiell, 2012).
- 66 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 212.
- 67 Ron Athey is discussed again in the next chapter, which deals with body-thing/thing-thing configurations through body fluids and performance art.
- 68 For interesting texts related to issues of race and gender in performance art, see Catherine Ugwu, ed., *Let's Get It On: The Politics of Black Performance* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); Smith, *Enacting Others*; Cassel Oliver, *Radical Presence*.
- 69 Still, it must be noted, this takes place within cultural worlds—always within these worlds—that mark bodies in particular ways, allow or force rather body-things to speak certain social structures of place and meaning. See Dominic Johnson, ed., *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey* (Chicago: Intellect Books/University of Chicago Press, 2013); Johnson, "Perverse Martyrologies: An Interview with Ron Athey," in Johnson, *Art of Living*, 195–218.
- 70 For a sense of Orlan's thinking on the body, see Science Gallery Dublin, "The Future of the Body with Performance Artist Orlan," YouTube video, July 1, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjxEWPAxNdc>.
- 71 Kristine Stiles, "Quicksilver and Revelations: Performance Art at the End of the Twentieth Century," in *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, ed. Linda M. Montano (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 481. One could think of early acts as representing protoperformance art. So self-mutilation by Vincent van Gogh—the cutting off of his ear—while associated with other issues that should not be downplayed, also spoke a particular performed message.
- 72 Guillermo Gómez-Peña, "In Defense of Performance Art," in Heathfield, *Live: Art and Performance*, 78–79.
- 73 Quoted in Johnson, "Perverse Martyrologies," 195.

- 74 I saw *Inverted Birth* at Copenhagen Contemporary (Copenhagen, Denmark): <http://cphco.org/en/exhibition/bill-viola>.
- 75 Bill Viola, “Inverted Birth,” Copenhagen Contemporary program brochure. Installation viewed November 9, 2017.
- 76 I saw *The Raft* at Copenhagen Contemporary (Copenhagen, Denmark): <http://cphco.org/en/exhibition/bill-viola>.
- 77 I viewed this exhibit on March 17, 2019, in London at the Royal Academy of Arts.
- 78 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 164–65; and TheMACBelfast, “Meet the Artist: Stuart Brisley Interview,” YouTube video, February 9, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t54I3QABGWY>.
- 79 Quoted in Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 145.
- 80 See, for instance, LagunaArtMuseum, “Chris Burden—Through the Night Softly,” YouTube video, October 27, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OB6ggi2hc8>; and *New York Times*, “Shot in the Name of Art | Op-Docs | The New York Times,” YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drZIW53Dlik>.
- 81 Carr, *On Edge*, 17; this quotation includes commentary from Burden. For more of Burden’s description of his work, see Linda M. Montano, “Chris Burden,” in Montano, *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, 343–47.
- 82 Carr, *On Edge*, 19. Also see Johnson, “Perverse Martyrologies,” 195–218.
- 83 Carlson, *Performance*, 105. Carlson indicates Milan, but the Manzoni website indicates Rome, April 1961.
- 84 “The Artist’s Shit,” Piero Manzoni Archive, [http://www.pieromanzoni.org/EN/works\\_shit.htm](http://www.pieromanzoni.org/EN/works_shit.htm).
- 85 Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 128.
- 86 Marvin Carlson, introduction to Carlson, *Performance*.
- 87 Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA; Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 94 and 97–98.
- 88 Tracey Warr, preface to Warr, *Artist’s Body*, 12–13.

## 5. THE ART OF ELIMINATION

- 1 See, for instance, Associated Press, “A Golden Throne for the Everyman,” YouTube video, September 16, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PivoXTXNbj4>.
- 2 Another example was located a few years ago at London’s Saatchi Gallery. Terence Koh’s *Untitled (Medusa)* is a small box, dark inside with a urinal. In bringing the elimination of body waste into the gallery, a similar presentation of the body as open takes place. See a description of this work at [http://www.artnet.com/artists/terence-koh/untitled-medusa-a-xy1OmQnbrh\\_rFgM5373Uwg2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/terence-koh/untitled-medusa-a-xy1OmQnbrh_rFgM5373Uwg2).
- 3 Quoted in Martin Engler, “Merda d’Artista (Artist’s Shit),” in *Piero Manzoni: When Bodies Became Art*, ed. Martin Engler (Frankfurt am Main: Stadel Museum, 2013), 194.

- 4 I restrict my discussion to the use of human waste. Among those who have used animal waste, readers should consider Chris Ofili. See, for example, Coco Fusco, "Captain Shit and Other Allegories of Black Stardom: The Work of Chris Ofili," in *The Bodies That Were Not Ours: And Other Writings*, by Coco Fusco (London: Routledge, 2001).
- 5 Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 77.
- 6 For a working theory related to this point, see Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*.
- 7 Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, 39.
- 8 See Gillian Whiteley, *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011). Gignac describes his "New York City Garbage" this way: "In 2001, I started selling garbage. 100% authentic New York City Garbage. The trash is hand-picked and arranged in Lucite cubes that are signed, numbered, and dated. Today, more than 1,300 cubes have been sold to over 20 countries." See Justin Gignac, "New York City Garbage," <https://www.justingignac.com/nyc-garbage>. Also see "Meet the Creatives," accessed July 2019, <http://www.meetthecreatives.design/y73tfg259roiupuurvcg3gx23bq5h>.
- 9 Ellah Shohat and Robert Stam, "Narrativizing Visual Culture: Towards a Polycentric Aesthetics," in Nicholas Mirzoeff, ed., *The Visual Culture Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 52, and quoted in Whiteley, *Junk*, 7.
- 10 It is interesting to note that the pop-up Unko Museum outside of Tokyo opened recently and is dedicated to "poop." According to reports, roughly 10,000 people visited during its first week of operations.
- 11 Whiteley, *Junk*, 8.
- 12 Whiteley, *Junk*, 27.
- 13 Cattelan is not the only artist to privilege the evacuation of the bowels as having artistic value of some sort. Cornelius Kolig has used human waste, and has exhibited a picture of himself with pants down, book in hand, and appearing to defecate. "Chaos, Excrement and Cats: A Visit to Artist Cornelius Kolig," *Profil*, October 30, 2013, <https://www.profil.at/gesellschaft/chaos-kot-katzen-besuch-kuenstler-cornelius-kolig-368706>. Also see Whiteley, *Junk*, 30.
- 14 One could add to this discussion the recent exhibit by Kara Walker in New York City, at Sikkema Jenkins and Company. Drawing on images that have populated her work for some time—now not as cut-outs but water-color images—one finds, if one looks carefully, the production and consumption of human waste and other body fluids. This to some degree suggests open bodies—as the scenes demonstrate—coded with social markers of difference such as race, gender, and class. Bodies in the various pieces blend together, overlap, bleed through, and so forth. Again, in this way they suggest the possibility of reading through a race-, gender-, class-sensitive framework of the grotesque.
- 15 Susan Signe Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoeitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 140, 146.

- 16 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 2.
- 17 David Waltner-Toews, *The Origin of Feces: What Excrement Tells Us about Evolution, Ecology, and a Sustainable Society* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2013), 10.
- 18 David Waltner-Toews notes, "Like its sibling scat, shit has the same ancient proto-Indo-European root (*skei*) as the word science, with a meaning having to do with separating one thing from another." *Origin of Feces*, 8.
- 19 *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "shit," accessed January 2, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shit>.
- 20 According to Nick Haslam, "Shit is consistently among the two most frequently uttered swear words in English and can be used in a bewildering variety of ways." Haslam, *Psychology in the Bathroom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 95.
- 21 This openness and interplay between naming-things and thing-things is depicted in the photography of Thomas Mailaender, who for an exhibit at the Saatchi Gallery in London produced pictures of exposed body parts that are tattooed with other images. These tattoos are not produced with ink and needles but rather through a stencil covering skin that is exposed to the sun. The image appears embedded in sunburned skin. See Saatchi Gallery, "Artist: Thomas Mailaender," [http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/thomas\\_mailaender\\_iconoclasts\\_i.htm](http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/thomas_mailaender_iconoclasts_i.htm).
- 22 Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 4–5.
- 23 Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 27.
- 24 Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*.
- 25 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 16, 26.
- 26 Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, xix.
- 27 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 15.
- 28 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 5.
- 29 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 19–25.
- 30 William A. Cohen, "Introduction: Locating Filth," in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), x and xi.
- 31 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge, 2002), xvii.
- 32 Simone Schnall, "The Mind beyond Boundaries: Concluding Remarks," in *Purity and Danger Now: New Perspectives*, ed. Robbie Duschinsky, Simone Schnall, and Daniel H. Weiss (New York: Routledge, 2016), 272–73.
- 33 As a corrective to Douglas's argument, William Viney argues that waste is also matter "out of time." That is to say, Viney wants to reassess the descriptions of waste that have dominated because of the manner in which they limit our sense of "contingency and flux" that actually marks our relationship to waste. This attention to time also fosters alternate ways of thinking about use and value: "The value of things raises and diminishes according to the work they do or the future imagined for them, in other words, to their potential realized in time." William Viney, *Waste: A Philosophy of Things* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 4.
- 34 See Rhys Williams, "There's Power in the Dirt: Impurity, Utopianism and Radical Politics," in Duschinsky, Schnall, and Weiss, *Purity and Danger Now*,

- 69–84. Also see Katie Shepherd, “Portland Police Chief Says Antifa Protesters Used Slingshot to Launch Urine and Feces-Filled Balloons at Riot Cops,” *Willamette Week*, June 23, 2017, <http://www.wweek.com/news/city/2017/06/23/portland-police-chief-says-antifa-protesters-used-slingshot-to-launch-urine-and-feces-filled-balloons-at-riot-cops>; Mark Hay, “A Brief History of People Protesting Stuff with Poop,” *Vice*, April 8, 2015, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/wd7n8z/a-brief-history-of-people-protesting-stuff-with-poop-197](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wd7n8z/a-brief-history-of-people-protesting-stuff-with-poop-197); “Venezuela Accuses Faeces-Throwing Protesters of Using ‘Chemical Weapons,’” *Sky News*, May 11, 2017, <http://news.sky.com/story/venezuela-accuses-faeces-throwing-protesters-of-using-chemical-weapons-10873140>; Renée Feltz, “Nato Protester’s Prison Term Extended for Throwing Human Waste at Guard,” *The Guardian*, April 12, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/apr/12/nato-summit-protester-prison-term-extended-jared-chase>; “Cape Town ‘Poo Wars’: Mass Arrests in South Africa,” *BBC News*, June 11, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22853095>.
- 35 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.
- 36 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3.
- 37 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3.
- 38 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3–4, 9, and 15.
- 39 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 142.
- 40 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 147, 150.
- 41 See Gay Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 54.
- 42 Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Trash Talks: Revelations in the Rubbish* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2. Also see Greg Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash: The Disposable and Its Problematic Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); and Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- 43 Taro Gomi, *Everyone Poops* (St. Louis: Turtleback, 2001). There is also Julie Markes, *Where’s the Poop?* (New York: HarperFestival, 2004). These are just two of the numerous books devoted to introducing children to the social world of shit. Evacuating one’s bowels is made natural—an intimate dimension of our being as embodied creatures in need of energy to maintain existence, but foreign enough to require explicit consideration and attention within these books. The distinction and disregard for shit is socially constructed in that up to a certain age children demonstrate no aversion to fecal matter. Books such as these naturalize this process in part by socializing the distinctive location and process for removing shit from sight.
- 44 Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
- 45 Rodolphe el-Khoury, introduction to Laporte, *History of Shit*, xi.
- 46 Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, introduction to *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, ed. Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott (New York: Routledge, 1994), 3.

- 47 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 9 and 11.
- 48 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 2.
- 49 According to Waltner-Toews, “Our eating and defecating behavior says far more than any voting behavior about what kinds of citizens we are on this planet. This is why fundamentally, shit matters.” Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 64; also see 87. Also see Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 28: “What the world reassures and admires is just dung or filth that which has no true worth in terms of Christianity history,” for example, “and is a sign of foulness and perfidy.”
- 50 Ingen Frygt installation, *Value Art* exhibit, Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde, Denmark. I viewed this on November 9, 2017.
- 51 See Haslam, *Psychology in the Bathroom*, 2–3.
- 52 Rose George, *The Big Necessity: The Unmentionable World of Human Waste and Why It Matters* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 2.
- 53 Nick Haslam writes, “As Rozin and Fallon (1987) show, humans have no innate aversion to excrement and only come to acquire a revulsion in early childhood.” Haslam, *Psychology in the Bathroom*, 109.
- 54 George, *Big Necessity*, 3.
- 55 Dave Praeger, *Poop Culture: How America Is Shaped by Its Grossest National Product* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2007), 127.
- 56 Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 100, 103–4; Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 17.
- 57 Biblical texts related to feces include Ezekiel 4:12; 4:15; Isaiah 36:12; Psalm 83:10; Zephaniah 1:17; Judges 3:21–22; 2 Kings 9:37; 18:27; Jeremiah 9:22; Deuteronomy 23:12–13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Luke 4:24–27; Philippians 3:8.
- 58 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 28.
- 59 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 37, 53.
- 60 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 130.
- 61 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 35.
- 62 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 61.
- 63 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 63. The biblical-theological references connecting shit to the soul—shitting to spiritual life—continue: “[Psalm 113:] ‘Who is like the Lord our God? Who is seated on high? Who looks far down upon the heavens and the earth? He who raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. . . .’” Here Laporte ends his quoting of the Bible, and says, “He who seizes my soul literally lifts me out of the shit. To him I swear my eternal love. He who lifts me out of the shit will, by definition, discourage me from smelling it. He will not want me to claim that now- distanced pile—it is a repugnant thing, but one that my desperate attempts to flee only confirm as forever mine” (64).
- 64 For the curious, the makeup of shit is as follows: “Our shit is 75% water. Beyond that, the 150 grams of daily output include an average 10–12 grams of nitrogen, 2 grams of phosphorus and 3 grams of potassium. . . . Our excrement

- also includes 8% fiber and 5% fat.” Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 17, 18. Also see Ralph A. Lewin, *Merde: Excursions into Scientific, Cultural and Socio-Historical Coprology* (London: Aurum, 1999), 79.
- 65 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 14; Waltner-Toews, *Origin of Feces*, 148.
- 66 Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 25.
- 67 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1963), 245–46.
- 68 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 245–46.
- 69 Lewin, *Merde*, 146.
- 70 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 34. Unlike Laporte, I am not concerned with the relationship of shit to economic-political structures such as capitalism. My concern is simply the dimension of his argument that speaks to what shit might suggest regarding the material dimensions of embodied existence, what it might name regarding our relationship to our bodies as open.
- 71 Laporte, *History of Shit*, 28–32, 98, 102. According to Susan Signe Morrison, “As Victoria Sweet points out, bodies are understood within and reflect the context of the society studying them. For us, the body is analogous to a computer; DNA, like microchip for computers, hardwires our physical and perhaps even behavioral destiny. During the industrial revolution, bodies were seen as machines, but in the Middle Ages, a fundamentally agrarian culture, bodies were seen as plants. This vegetable body has resultant waste—such as semen—to be ‘composted’ for the engineering of future ‘vegetables.” Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, 18.
- 72 Captain John G. Bourke, *Scatalogic Rites of All Nations: A Dissertation upon the Employment of Excrementitious Remedial Agents in Religion, Therapeutics, Divination, Witchcraft, Love-Philthers, Etc., in All Parts of the Globe* (Washington, DC: W. H. Lowdermilk & Co., 1891), 12.
- 73 Cohen, “Introduction: Locating Filth,” viii.
- 74 Praeger, *Poop Culture*, 11.
- 75 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 17.
- 76 Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, “Scatology and the Realist Aesthetic,” *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 41–46.
- 77 Jeff Persels and Russell Ganim, “Introduction: Scatology, the Last Taboo,” in *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art: Studies in Scatology*, ed. Jeff Persels and Russell Ganim (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), xiv.
- 78 Alison G. Stewart, “Expelling from Top and Bottom: The Changing Role of Scatology in Images of Peasant Festivals from Albrecht Dürer to Pieter Bruegel,” in Persels and Ganim, *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art*, 119.
- 79 For example: *I Poop You* gallery show in the San Francisco Bay Area (2013) and *Gold Poo*, spray-painted gold dog feces in Brooklyn. In addition, Tobias Wong made pills that, when ingested, turned feces a glittering gold color; Terence Koh sold “his own gold-painted excrement for \$500,000”; and Toronto has a “Poop Café.” Gerald Silk, “Myths and Meanings in Manzoni’s Merda d’artista,” *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 65–75.



- 80 Susan M. Canning, "The Ordure of Anarchy: Scatological Signs of Self and Society in the Art of James Ensor," *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 47–53.
- 81 Jojada Verrips, "Excremental Art: Small Wonder in a World Full of Shit," *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (2017): 19. As another example within the twentieth century, Verrips turns to surrealism: "Two famous surrealists, Salvador Dali and Joan Miro, shocked their colleagues and audiences with the painting 'The Lugubrious Game' (1929) and 'Man and Woman in Front of a Pile of Excrement' (1935). Dali's canvas shows a man who evidently has shit in his pants and has soiled his legs, and Miro's shows exactly what the title says" (24).
- 82 Verrips, "Excremental Art," 19. Images are available at <http://www.gilbertandgeorge.co.uk>.
- 83 According to Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, "Marieluise Jurreit relates several of these performances [by German and Austrian performance artists of the 1960s and early 1970s], such as the one by the Austrian artist Gunter Busch who, on the stage of an auditorium of the University of Vienna, undressed, urinated, drank his urine from his cupped hand, and vomited. He ended his performance by defecating with his back to the audience, then smearing his feces on his naked body while singing the Austrian national anthem." Ten-Doesschate Chu, "Scatology and the Realist Aesthetic," 41.
- 84 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 53.
- 85 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 108.
- 86 Hal Foster et al., "The Politics of the Signifier II: A Conversation on the 'Informe' and the Abject," *October* 67 (1994): 3–21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778965>.
- 87 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 208.
- 88 Jan Koenot, "When the Body Speaks Louder Than Words: The Image of the Body as a Figure of the Unknown," in *Fluid Flesh: The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*, ed. Barbara Baert (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2009), 5.
- 89 Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this project. However, those interested in the ritual implications of other body fluids should see the following: Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (New York: Basic Civitas, 1998); Blake Leyerle, "Blood Is Seed," *Journal of Religion* 81, no. 1 (2001): 26–48; Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 2 (1969): 166–76; Dennis J. McCarthy, "Further Notes on the Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92, no. 2 (1973): 205–10; Rachel Adler, "In Your Blood, Live: Re-visions of a Theology of Purity," *Tikkun* 8, no. 1 (1993): 38–42; Jeff Rosen, "Blood Ritual," *New Republic* 207, no. 19 (1992): 9–10; Richard John Neuhaus, "By the Blood of His Cross," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, May 2000, 66–70.

- 90 See, for instance, Athey's thinking on blood, life, and art: Ron Athey, "Polemic of Blood," *Walker Reader*, March 19, 2015, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/ron-athey-blood-polemic-post-aids-body>; and Amelia Abraham, "Ron Athey Literally Bleeds for His Art," *Vice*, September 24, 2014, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/vdpx8y/ron-athey-performance-art-amelia-abraham-121](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/vdpx8y/ron-athey-performance-art-amelia-abraham-121). See also Dominic Johnson, ed., *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey* (Chicago: Intellect Books/University of Chicago Press, 2013).
- 91 Koenot, "When the Body Speaks Louder Than Words," 16.
- 92 Also of interest are Serrano's *Body Fluid* and *Shit* series. In general, his early work counterpositions body parts, blooded human bodies, and other animal bodies over against Christian images such as crosses and religious leaders. While these pieces are intriguing, the images pull body fluid from the body—fostering a sense of distance. My concern is maintaining the tension between the body and what it eliminates so as to highlight the body as open. See Serrano's website: <http://adresserrano.org>.
- 93 For an interesting historical discussion of the body that relates to the period of St. Augustine, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- 94 For a discussion of smell as it relates to waste, see Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*.
- 95 *Dali/Duchamp*, Royal Academy of Arts (London), viewed on October 15, 2017.
- 96 See Praeger, *Poop Culture*, 18–48. Other materials include *Wim Delvoye: Cloaca—New and Improved* (New York: Rectapublishers, 2002); *Wim Delvoye: Studies for Cloaca 1997–2006* (New York: Rectapublishers, 2008). See Nate Freeman, "'Feces Is Very Cosmopolitan': Wim Delvoye on His Notorious 'Cloaca' at the Museum Tinguely in Basel," *Art News*, June 16, 2017, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/feces-is-very-cosmopolitan-wim-delvoye-on-his-notorious-cloaca-at-the-museum-tinguelys-retrospective-in-basel-8556>.
- 97 Praeger, *Poop Culture*, 18.
- 98 Praeger, *Poop Culture*, 151.
- 99 Verrips, "Excremental Art," 29.
- 100 Piero Manzoni, *Artist's Shit No. 014*, May 1961, viewable at <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/80768>.
- 101 In addition to the sale of shit, of interest is the effort of Stuart Brisley to chronicle "the cultural value" of shit through the creation of his Museum of Ordure. See <http://www.ordure.org>. Also see Michael Newman, *Stuart Brisley—Performing the Political Body and Eating Shit* (Belfast: Museum of Ordure, 2015).
- 102 Martin Engler, "The Body, Its Image, Its Actions and Objects: Piero Manzoni and the Biology of Art," in *Piero Manzoni: When Bodies Became Art*, ed. Martin Engler (Frankfurt am Main: Stadel Museum, 2013), 13.

- 103 This would come to include later in the twentieth century not only the presentation of shit as art, but also the mechanism of removing the residue, the final signs of shit, from the body in the form of toilet paper. Think in terms of ShitBegone toilet paper, which was art sold as a common product related to waste removal: “ShitBegone is mass-produced art appropriated by the artist as a consumer good. You can look at it in a gallery, you can read about it in art magazines, but ultimately it’s intended for you to buy in a store and use to wipe your butt. ShitBegone does not fully function as art until it’s on a store shelf next to brands evoking teddy bears and fluffy clouds.” Praeger, *Poop Culture*, 173.
- 104 For a discussion of “in” place and “out of” place, see Douglas, *Purity and Danger*. Read this, for example, in relationship to William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), and also Duschinsky, Schnall, and Weiss, *Purity and Danger Now*.
- 105 Martin Engler, “Merda d’Artista (Artist’s Shit),” in Engler, *Piero Manzoni*, 194.
- 106 For an interesting discussion of judgment, see Anthony Julius, *Transgressions: The Offences of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 107 For religio-theological interpretations, see, for instance, Dominique Laporte, “Piero Manzoni: Artisan of the Seventh Day,” in Engler, *Piero Manzoni*; Stephan de Beer, “Jesus in the Dumping Sites: Doing Theology in the Overlaps of Human and Material Waste,” in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 70, no. 3 (2014): e1–e8; Crispin Paine, “Sacred Waste,” *Material Religion* 10, no. 2 (2014): 241–42; Cecelia F. Klein, “Teocuitlatl, ‘Divine Excrement’: The Significance of ‘Holy Shit’ in Ancient Mexico,” *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 20–27; Sally M. Promey, ed., *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).
- 108 While I want to bracket her framing of this process in terms of theological ritualization in the context of “Cuban popular religion” and instead frame this process in terms of my sense of religion as technology, I do find Kristina Wirtz’s argument for the “social biography” (476) of waste items and the agency of engagement—over against Mary Douglas’s concern of a more structuralist analysis of dirt as struggle against representative social arrangements—compelling. See Kristina Wirtz, “Hazardous Waste: The Semiotics of Ritual Hygiene in Cuban Popular Religion,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15, no. 3 (2009): 476–501.
- 109 Wirtz is referencing a claim by Daniel Miller (*Material Culture and Mass Consumption* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1987], 1). Wirtz, “Hazardous Waste,” 477.
- 110 Wirtz writes in terms of the “interpenetration” of things, and I find this phrasing useful. Yet it is the spiritualization of this interpenetration that I want to bracket. Wirtz, “Hazardous Waste,” 483.
- 111 Dominique Laporte speaks of Manzoni as losing bits of his body through his work—through breathing into balloons for *Artist’s Breath* or in filling cans with his shit. See Laporte, “Piero Manzoni,” 142.
- 112 Stella Santacatterina, “Piero Manzoni,” *Third Text* 13, no. 45 (1998), 27.

## 6. PIECES OF THINGS

- 1 David Marriott, "Corpsing; or, the Matter of Black Life," *Cultural Critique* 94 (Fall 2006): 35.
- 2 Butler, quoted in Rina Arya, *Abjection and Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72. Coco Fusco makes an interesting statement concerning this process when discussing Chris Ofili's work: "The amount of colonial imagery associating blacks with dirt, waste and excrement is nothing if not staggering, as is the nineteenth-century preoccupation with illness, the association of odor with disease and symbolic rendering of blacks as carriers of dirt, and thus disease, and thus degeneracy." Coco Fusco, *The Bodies That Were Not Ours: And Other Writings* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 42.
- 3 Marriott, "Corpsing," 35.
- 4 Arthur Danto, "Postmodern Art and Concrete Selves," in *Philosophizing Art: Selected Essays*, by Arthur Danto (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 134. I highlight this political dimension of art in other essays as well. It is an ongoing theme in my writing on art. See, for instance, Anthony Pinn, et al., "Making Bodies with a Brush Stroke: African American Visual Art and the Re/constitution of Black Embodiment," *Black Religion and Embodiment* (London: Equinox, 2017).
- 5 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845); Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Hartford, CT: Park Publishing Co., 1882); Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945); Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Boston: Published for the author, 1861).
- 6 Listen to Bessie Smith songs such as "Gimme a Pig Foot and a Bottle of Beer" and "Chicago Bound Blues," and to Billie Holiday tunes such as "God Bless the Child" and "Strange Fruit."
- 7 Richard J. Powell, *Black Art and Culture in the 20th Century* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 13.
- 8 Powell, *Black Art and Culture*, 18.
- 9 This exhibit presented a compelling depiction of the manner in which African American artists have rethought the raced and classed nature of bodied naming-things. As part of the research for this chapter and the following chapter, I viewed the exhibit at The Broad in Los Angeles (March 30, 2019) and the Brooklyn Museum of Art (October 9, 2018).
- 10 Powell, *Black Art and Culture*, 159.
- 11 The performative nature of identity is well-worn territory. See, for instance, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- 12 Powell, *Black Art and Culture*, 151.
- 13 Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 2.
- 14 Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 2–3.

- 15 Arthur Danto, "Depiction and Description," in *The Body/Body Problem: Selected Essays*, by Arthur Danto (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 98.
- 16 Arthur Danto, "Art-in-Response," in Danto, *Philosophizing Art*, 59.
- 17 Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 40.
- 18 Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 189.
- 19 See Harris, *Colored Pictures*, chapter 6, which deals with inversion of stereotypes.
- 20 Biographical information on Bearden is not highlighted in this chapter. However, for those interested in a concise presentation of that material, see, for instance, Myron Schwartzman, *Romare Bearden: His Life and Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990).
- 21 Matthew S. Witkovsky, "Experience vs. Theory: Romare Bearden and Abstract Expressionism," in *Black American Literature Forum* 23, no. 2 (1989): 257.
- 22 Lee Stephens Glazer, "Signifying Identity: Art and Race in Romare Bearden's Projections," *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 3 (1994): 411.
- 23 Glazer, "Signifying Identity," 412.
- 24 Glazer, "Signifying Identity," 413.
- 25 Myron Schwartzman, *Romare Bearden: His Life and Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 197.
- 26 Gail Gelburd, *Romare Bearden in Black-and-White: Photomontage Projections, 1964* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1997), 17–18.
- 27 Schwartzman, *Romare Bearden*, 230.
- 28 Witkovsky, "Experience vs. Theory," 277.
- 29 Glazer, "Signifying Identity," 417.
- 30 Jae Emerling, "On the Image of Bearden," in *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*, by Carla M. Hanzal et al. (Charlotte, NC: Mint Museum, 2011), 65.
- 31 Schwartzman, *Romare Bearden*, 7.
- 32 Leslie King-Hammond, "Bearden's Crossroads: Modernist Roots/Riffing Traditions," in Hanzal et al., *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*, 87.
- 33 Ralph Ellison, "The Art of Romare Bearden," in *Going to the Territory* (New York: Random House, 1986), 229.
- 34 Gelburd, *Romare Bearden in Black-and-White*, 29.
- 35 Darby English speaks to this point in "Ralph Ellison's Romare Bearden," in *Romare Bearden, American Modernist*, ed. Ruth Fine and Jacqueline Francis (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2011), 13–25.
- 36 Robert G. O'Meally, "'We Used to Say Stashed': Romare Bearden Paints the Blues," in Fine and Francis, *Romare Bearden, American Modernist*, 61–87.
- 37 See Carla M. Hanzal, introduction to Hanzal et al., *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*, 21–24.
- 38 Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982).
- 39 Ralph Ellison, "The Art of Romare Bearden," in Ellison, *Going to the Territory*, 234.
- 40 Gelburd, *Romare Bearden in Black-and-White*, 29.

- 41 Robert G. O’Meally provides an intriguing discussion of similar themes in his analysis of Bearden’s artistic reflections on *The Odyssey*. See O’Meally, *Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey* (New York: DC Moore Gallery, 2007).

## 7. “CAPTURED” THINGS

This chapter is a modified version of an essay published as Anthony B. Pinn, “Why Can’t I Be Both? Jean-Michel Basquiat and Aesthetics of Black Bodies Reconstituted,” *Journal of Africana Religion* 1, no. 1 (2013): 109–32. It is used by permission of The Pennsylvania State University Press.

- 1 This chapter represents a concern with Basquiat’s art that goes back several years and is expressed over several publications. In this regard, it expands some of my existing thinking on his art and, through my concern with thing theory, pushes my reading of his art in new directions.
- 2 Nicholas Mirzoeff, “Introduction: The Multiple Viewpoint: Diasporic Visual Cultures,” in *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1–2.
- 3 See Alain Locke, introduction to *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Anthem, 1986).
- 4 Rasheed Araeen, “The Artist as a Post-Colonial Subject and This Individual’s Journey towards ‘the Centre,’” in *Views of Difference: Different Views of Art*, ed. Catherine King (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 231.
- 5 Araeen, “Artist as a Post-Colonial Subject,” 242.
- 6 James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2009); Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
- 7 Wendy A. Grossman, *Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens* (Washington, DC: International Arts and Artists; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 1–9.
- 8 Grossman, *Man Ray, African Art*, 81.
- 9 Grossman, *Man Ray, African Art*, 4.
- 10 Christoph Grunenberg, “Case Study 1: The Modern Art Museum,” in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, ed. Emma Barker (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 30.
- 11 See Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, and Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*.
- 12 Elsbeth Court, “Case Study 6: Africa on Display: Exhibiting Art by Africans,” in Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, 152.
- 13 Grossman, *Man Ray, African Art*, 31.
- 14 Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 19.
- 15 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2005).
- 16 Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia*, 18.

- 17 Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*, 23–24.
- 18 Alpers, "Museum as a Way of Seeing," 19.
- 19 Will Rea, "Finding Your Contemporaries: The Modernities of African Art," in *Identity Theft: The Cultural Colonization of Contemporary Art*, ed. Jonathan Harris (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 137.
- 20 Alpers, "Museum as a Way of Seeing," 20, 87.
- 21 Graham Lock and David Murray, introduction to *The Hearing Eye: Jazz and Blues Influences in African American Visual Art*, ed. Graham Lock and David Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- 22 Thomas McEvilley, "Jean-Michel Basquiat Here Below," in *Dubuffet, Basquiat: Personal Histories* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2006), 33.
- 23 McEvilley, "Jean-Michel Basquiat Here Below," 34.
- 24 McEvilley, "Jean-Michel Basquiat Here Below," 34.
- 25 McEvilley, "Jean-Michel Basquiat Here Below," 34.
- 26 Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 195.
- 27 Richard J. Powell, *Black Art and Culture in the 20th Century* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 78–80.
- 28 Useful materials related to Lorraine Hansberry include Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun: A Drama in Three Acts* (New York: Random House, 1959); Imani Perry, *Finding Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019); Pat McKissack and Fredrick McKissack, *Lorraine Hansberry: Dramatist and Activist* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1994).
- 29 Henry Geldzahler, "Jean-Michel Basquiat (1983)," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews, and Talks*, by Henry Geldzahler (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 197.
- 30 Geldzahler, "Jean-Michel Basquiat (1983)," 199.
- 31 Gianni Mercurio, ed., *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Show* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2006), 18.
- 32 For information on Basquiat in relationship to the physicality and representational significance of New York and the New York art world, see the following documentaries: *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child* (Cinedigm, 2008) and *American Masters: Basquiat* (PBS, 2018).
- 33 Peter Halley, *Peter Halley: Collected Essays, 1981–1987* (Zurich: Lapis Press, 1988), 108.
- 34 Geldzahler, "Jean-Michel Basquiat (1983)," 200.
- 35 See Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 18.
- 36 Geldzahler, "Jean-Michel Basquiat (1983)," 205. Read this remark—"People laugh when you fall on your ass. What's humor?—in light of Robert Farris Thompson, "Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets: Jean-Michel Basquiat," in Lock and Murray, *Hearing Eye*, 276.

- 37 This painting sold for \$110.5 million in 2017. At the time, it was the most expensive painting ever sold by an American painter.
- 38 Jonathan Jones, "Is This Basquiat Worth \$100m? Yes—His Art of American Violence Is Priceless," *The Guardian*, May 19, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/19/jean-michel-basquiat-110m-sothebys>.
- 39 Richard D. Marshall, "Jean-Michel Basquiat: Speaking in Tongues," in exhibit catalog, Lugano, Museo d'Arte Moderna, Jean-Michael Basquiat, 2005, p. 40. Quoted in Sotheby's Contemporary Art Evening Auction: <http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.24.html/2017/contemporary-art-evening-auction-n09761>, accessed December 30, 2019.
- 40 Cross Damon: Richard Wright, *The Outsider* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008); Bigger Thomas: Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005).
- 41 See, for example, "Mother of Pearl Face and Ebony Mask" (1926) at <http://www.manraytrust.com>.
- 42 The following provides the image as well as a story concerning the tremendous sum paid for it: Associated Press, "Jean-Michel Basquiat Skull Painting Sells for Record \$110.5m at Auction," *The Guardian*, May 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/19/jean-michel-basquiat-skull-painting-record-1105m-at-auction>.
- 43 Geldzahler, "Jean-Michel Basquiat (1983)," 203.
- 44 The Boxer Rebellion was a movement from 1899 to 1901 that fought against Christianity and imperialism.
- 45 Henry Geldzahler raises this question with respect to the photograph. Geldzahler, "What I Know about Photography," in Geldzahler, *Making It New*, 333.
- 46 Celeste-Marie Bernier, *African American Visual Arts: From Slavery to the Present* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2008), 194.
- 47 Robert Farris Thompson, "Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets: The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat," in Lock and Murray, *Hearing Eye*, 254.
- 48 Phoebe Hoban, *Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 80–81.
- 49 Jennifer Clement, *Widow Basquiat: A Love Story* (Edinburgh: Payback Press, 2000), 75.
- 50 Powell, *Black Art and Culture*, 167.
- 51 Clement, *Widow Basquiat*, 75.
- 52 Clement, *Widow Basquiat*, 38.
- 53 Dick Hebdige, "Welcome to the Terrordome: Jean-Michel Basquiat and the 'Dark' Side of Hybridity," in *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, ed. Richard Marshall (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art/Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 62–63.
- 54 Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 256.
- 55 Hoban, *Basquiat: A Quick Killing*, 116.
- 56 Hoban, *Basquiat: A Quick Killing*, 116.
- 57 Hoban, *Basquiat: A Quick Killing*, 168.



## 8. PROBLEM THINGS

- 1 W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Striving," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990), 1. This essay was first published in *Atlantic Monthly* as "Strivings of the Negro People," August 1897.
- 2 I am grateful to friends and colleagues who read early versions of this chapter and offered helpful feedback that improved my argument. Thank you, Peter Paris, Jeffrey Kripal, April DeConick, and Mark Ryan. This chapter was first presented as the Annual William James Lecture at Harvard Divinity School, March 2017. A version of that lecture was also given at the American Institute, Oxford University (November 17, 2017), and as the annual American Journal of Theology and Philosophy Lecture held at the American Academy of Religion's 2018 meeting.
- 3 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 3.
- 4 My goal is not to interrogate, nor describe Du Bois's praxis, but rather to better understand his diagnosis of a problem. For an interesting discussion of the introductory and closing materials of *Souls*, see Shamoan Zamir, "The Souls of Black Folk: Thought and After Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Shamoan Zamir (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 7–36.
- 5 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 7; italics added.
- 6 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 8.
- 7 Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 142.
- 8 Arnold Rampersad notes about Du Bois that "enumeration is crucial to his style." And so there is no reason to believe the importance of duality is limited to double-consciousness. Instead, it is useful to recognize that tension is vital to his presentation: twoness related to consciousness, secular over against religious, liberal arts over against industrial training, and so on. See Rampersad, *The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 73; Shamoan Zamir, *Dark Voices: W. E. B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888–1903* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 116. Such a reading of the category informs, for instance, the thinking of Robert Gooding-Williams, who remarks, "Given his understanding of the Negro problem, we may suppose that Du Bois took 'How does it feel to be a problem?' to be asking 'How does it feel to be excluded from the group life of American society?'" Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 71.
- 9 David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race: 1868–1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993), 96. Lewis also suggests a connection to Goethe and Chesnutt, who make use of a similar construction (282). Shamoan Zamir argues for a Hegelian turn in Du Bois's work, which accounts for the use of twoness. See Zamir, *Dark Voices*. Also see Ross Posnock, "The Influence of William James on American Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997),

- 327–40; and James’s discussion of the “Hidden Self” in Robert Richardson, ed., *The Heart of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 79–100.
- 10 Rampersad, *Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois*, 74.
  - 11 Posnock, “Influence of William James on American Culture,” 338.
  - 12 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 14.
  - 13 Like Camus, Du Bois notes hypocrisy, and exposes values that actually promote disregard. Even his attention to the Negro problem speaks to this moralist posture in that it offers a jeremiad—i.e., a clear vision of circumstances and a warning regarding their outcome. *Souls* discusses these circumstances and draws attention to socioeconomic, cultural, and political approaches of redress. In this way, Du Bois calls for consistency between the best of the Reconstruction aims and an ongoing commitment to radical change. West, *American Evasion of Philosophy*, 142.
  - 14 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 68–69.
  - 15 Cornel West represents double consciousness as the cause of a problem soul and ultimately critiques it in terms of dissatisfying structures of communal leadership. Others critique him for the inherent limitation of doubleness, which fails to consider the variety of ways in which African Americans are rendered foreign. Gender, sexuality, and a host of other constructions shape our presence in the world, but they are not captured by the black-white dichotomy, which binds Du Bois’s souls. Yet this twoness and accompanying insight has served as a signifier for the marginality, the “otherness” of African Americans. Although critiqued, the persistent application of this signifier suggests its utility depends on the intended approach toward otherness.
  - 16 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* says the following on page 72, which speaks to the Negro problem as the context for the earlier narrative he provides regarding the three moments: “Yet after all they are but gates, and when turning our eyes from the temporary and the contingent in the Negro problem to the broader question of the permanent uplifting and vacillation of black men in America, we have a right to inquire, as this enthusiasm for material advancement mounts to its height. . . . Is not life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?” Du Bois is here critiquing the Washingtonian model of education for African Americans.
  - 17 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 16.
  - 18 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 28.
  - 19 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 34.
  - 20 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*: “What is thus true of all communities is peculiarly true of the South, where, outside of written history and outside of printed law, there has been going on for a generation as deep a storm and stress of human souls, as intense a ferment of feeling, as intricate a writhing of spirit, as ever a people experienced. Within and without the somber veil of color vast social forces have been at work—efforts for human betterment, movements toward disintegration and despair, tragedies and comedies in social and economic life, and a swaying and lifting and sinking of human hearts which

- have made this land a land of mingled sorrow and joy of change and excitement and unrest” (131–32).
- 21 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 9.
  - 22 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 10.
  - 23 Terrence Johnson, *Tragic Soul-Life: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Moral Crisis Facing American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.
  - 24 Johnson, *Tragic Soul-Life*, 38–39.
  - 25 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 143–44.
  - 26 Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race*, 280.
  - 27 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1963).
  - 28 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 87.
  - 29 Martin Halliwell, “Morbid and Positive Thinking: William James, Psychology, and Illness,” in *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation: Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Martin Halliwell and Joel D. S. Rasmussen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 101.
  - 30 Charles Taylor, “Twice-Born,” in *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*, by Charles Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 339.
  - 31 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 90.
  - 32 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 130.
  - 33 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 137.
  - 34 Pericles Lewis, “James’s Sick Souls,” *Henry James Review* 22, no. 3 (2001): 251.
  - 35 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 135.
  - 36 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 144.
  - 37 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 139.
  - 38 Halliwell, “Morbid and Positive Thinking,” 101; Lewis, “James’s Sick Souls,” 252; Gary T. Alexander, “William James, the Sick Soul, and the Negative Dimensions of Consciousness: A Partial Critique of Transpersonal Psychology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48, no. 2 (1980): 200.
  - 39 As found in Jill L. McNish, “‘Failure, Then, Failure!’ Shame and William James’s ‘Sick Soul,’” *CrossCurrents* 53, no. 3 (2003): 393. A similar sense of exhaustion and surrender marks early African American conversion accounts.
  - 40 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 187.
  - 41 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 144–45.
  - 42 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 145.
  - 43 One could read the story of John as a not-so-subtle critique of higher education as a mechanism for countering racial disregard. What John encounters instead suggests that antiblack racism does not bend to logic and is not subdued by reasonable argument.
  - 44 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 189.
  - 45 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 9.
  - 46 Cornel West, “Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization,” in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Civitas, 1999), 89.
  - 47 West, “Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization,” 89–90. Arnold Rampersad offers a different perspective. He suggests that Du Bois maintained a certain

- mode of optimism over against the pessimism of the masses. Whereas West seems to sense an embedded hopefulness, a strategic optimism premised on the disruptive cultural practices of African Americans, within the larger community of African Americans, Rampersad notes a deep pessimism. See Rampersad, *Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois*, 86.
- 48 West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 89–90. Also see, for example, the discussion of the "talented tenth" isolated in Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West, *The Future of the Race* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).
- 49 West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 89. Also see Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).
- 50 West, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," 93.
- 51 Ultimately, West is concerned with the outcomes of this attachment to community and ritual, whereas I am concerned with the description of a particular posture toward the world as opposed to resolution of the challenges presented by that view.
- 52 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 188.
- 53 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 151.
- 54 Gerald Horne, 1986, 345, in Paul C. Taylor, "What's the Use of Calling Du Bois a Pragmatist?" *Metaphilosophy* 35, nos. 1–2 (2004): 101.
- 55 Taylor, "What's the Use of Calling Du Bois a Pragmatist?" 101.
- 56 Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- 57 Charles Taylor, "The Twice-Born," in Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today*, 340, 342.
- 58 I find Julia Kristeva's discussion of melancholy more compelling than most accounts, particular the framing of a "living death." Yet its affective and psychological dimensions, for my mind, do not capture Du Bois's sentiment. See Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). Also see Sanja Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- 59 Charles H. Long, "The Oppressive Elements in Religion and the Religions of the Oppressed," *Harvard Theological Review* 69, nos. 3–4 (1976): 401. This globalizing of the issue is important. Du Bois understood the Negro problem as a localized dimension of a larger world problem. See Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World," in *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1995), 42.
- 60 See Richard Rorty, "Religious Faith, Intellectual Responsibility, and Romance," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For what this personal experience of dread might say concerning issues of masculinity and domestic space, see Jessica R. Feldman, "A Shelter of the Mind: Henry, William, and the Domestic Scene," in Putnam, *Cambridge Companion to William James*.
- Long, "Oppressive Elements in Religion," 407. This is also not the dread chronicled by Kierkegaard in that he collapses into God in the face of

- dread and fear, but not so for Du Bois. See, for example, Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (n.p.: Merchant Books, 2012), and read this against Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, and Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), for instance.
- 61 Long, “Oppressive Elements in Religion,” 409, 411.
- 62 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 152.
- 63 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 152. A similar and persistent sense of the world as suffering emerges, for example, with Richard Wright through family. “My mother’s suffering,” he writes in *Black Boy*, “grew into a symbol in my mind, gathering to itself all the poverty, the ignorance, the helplessness, the painful, baffling, hunger-ridden days and hours; the restless moving, the futile seeking, the uncertainty, the fear, the dread; the meaningless pain and the endless suffering.” Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), 111.
- 64 Quoted in Robert D. Richardson, *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 399.

## EPILOGUE

- 1 Anthony B. Pinn, *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).
- 2 I initially framed the book in relationship to three tasks pointing to (1) enhancement of the study of religion by expanding the forms of cultural production interrogated; (2) pushing the study of religion’s engagement with culture beyond the relationship of organized religious traditions and their cultural signifiers to a more expansive sense of the religious; and (3) contributing to an important and growing discourse on religion and embodiment through a framing of religion and culture in terms of bodies and what bodies construct (and “arrange”) in time and space. I believed working toward these three would add greater complexity and richness to the study of religion by highlighting the “ordinary” nature of the religious in relationship to human experience within the context of material history.
- 3 I understood religion as a quest for complex subjectivity to involve meaning making. In that earlier work, in that phrase “meaning making,” what was most important was the meaning. Now the central dimension is “making”—as in the interaction between things.
- 4 Much of *Terror and Triumph* involves a subtle embrace of dimensions of Camus’s sense of the human and/in the world. Here I make this conversation partner an explicit figure.
- 5 Camus is aware of shit, noting in *The First Man* the impact of its odor: “Camus, *The First Man*: This night inside him, yes these tangled hidden roots that bound him to this magnificent and frightening land, as much to its scorching days as to its heartbreakingly rapid twilights, and that was like a second life, truer perhaps than the everyday surface of his outward life; its history would be told as a series of obscure yearnings and powerful indescribable

- sensations, the odor of the schools, of the neighborhood stables, of laundry on his mother's hands, of jasmine and honeysuckle in the upper neighborhoods, of the pages of the dictionary and the books he devoured, and *the sour smell of the toilets at home and at the hardware store*, the smell of the big cold classrooms where he would sometimes go alone before or after class, the warmth of his favorite classmates, *the odor of warm wool and feces that Didier carried around with him*, of the cologne big Marconi's mother doused him with so profusely that Jacques, sitting on the bench in class, wanted to move still closer to his friend . . . the longing, yes, to live, to live still more, to immerse himself in the greatest warmth this earth could give him, which was what he without knowing it hoped for from his mother" (italics added). This is from the *New York Times Book Review*, and I accessed it as quoted in Gabriel P. Weisberg, "In Deep Shit: The Coded Images of Travies in the July Monarchy," *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 36–40.
- 6 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 94.
  - 7 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 97.
  - 8 For Niebuhr's thinking on theological anthropology and issues of justice, see, for example, Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002); and Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996).
  - 9 More compelling than Niebuhr for me, although still a perspective I do not embrace, is the thinking of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. While there is still a vertical framing, he does also acknowledge in a more "earthy" and engaged manner the horizontal nature of interplay. What I find most appealing about his work is the much stronger sense of the tragic quality of life and work—reflecting to some extent, although perhaps in a limited way, the realities of the marginalized through his involvement with Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Involvement in/with the world comes with a more significant cost and entails a more "costly" ethical outreach. In a word, he promotes a modality of ethics with dirty hands. See Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Touchstone, 1997); and Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995). Mindful of this, I find it less difficult to read Camus and Du Bois theologically in light of Bonhoeffer than in relationship to most theologians/ethicists.
  - 10 It is not only his nonfiction that speaks to these conceptual frameworks of concern to me. Although not addressed in this chapter, *The Plague* by Camus speaks of the open body—in fact, the book's action is impossible if bodies are not open, are not porous. The rats, the bite of fleas, the presence of blood and other tainted body fluids speaks to this openness. However, for Camus in this book, the open body compromised and changed prompts philosophical and theological questions regarding suffering by means of which he interrogates psycho-ethical frameworks for life (or the plague, as the two are the same for

- his characters). My primary interest here is not the psycho-ethical response to inadequate philosophical-theological claims regarding suffering, but rather the shit of life, literally the shit of life, marking the presence of open bodies. That is to say, I focus on the naming of that initial moment of contact between body-things and thing-things—and body waste, such as shit, as a mark of this openness—an openness that speaks to the nature of the body and the body as device within religion as a technology.
- 11 Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 305.
  - 12 Camus, *Rebel*, 8.
  - 13 Camus, *Rebel*, 9.
  - 14 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 121.
  - 15 Job 1:18–19 (KJV).
  - 16 Job 2:5–7 (KJV).
  - 17 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 19.
  - 18 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 54.
  - 19 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 97.
  - 20 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 98.
  - 21 W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), 130–31.
  - 22 This is the second story in the collection titled *Eight Men*. The story was first published in 1942 in the journal *Accent*. A longer version was published two years later in *Cross Section: A Collection of New American Writing*, edited by Edwin Seaver (New York: L. B. Fischer, 1944). The version of the story referenced in this lecture is the 1944 version (pages 58–102).
  - 23 Richard Wright, “The Man Who Lived Underground,” in *Eight Men: Short Stories*, 3rd ed., by Richard Wright (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), 25.
  - 24 W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Souls of White Folk,” in *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1995), 453. Du Bois might be said to turn to the mystical dimensions of capacity—the manner in which the mystical might open the hidden passages marking the subconscious self. This would serve to elevate the “blindness” regarding others noted by William James. See James, “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” in *The Heart of William James*, ed. Robert Richardson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 145–63.
  - 25 Du Bois, “Souls of White Folk,” 454.
  - 26 Du Bois, “Souls of White Folk,” 456.
  - 27 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, in Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 82.
  - 28 Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 15. Camus, of course, is referring to existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre’s novel *Nausea*.
  - 29 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 130.
  - 30 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 130.

- 31 Kristin Hunter Lattany, “Off-Timing: Stepping to the Different Drummer,” in *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, ed. Gerald Early (New York: Penguin Press, 1993), 164.
- 32 Slavery, as sociologist Orlando Patterson has aptly noted, involves a social death—the surrender of will or authority for the sake of physical life. This certainly has shaped the context and content of African American existence in the Americas, but I have in mind a different dimension of this situation. What Patterson describes so vividly entails the existential arrangements of “life,” the experience of living within a context of race-based discrimination. One should not ignore ontological considerations—ways in which the very being of African Americans is defined by the presence of demise. An African American body is a social construct meant to signify and speak of the end of being as subject.
- 33 Materials related to Crummell include Crummell, *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840–1898* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); J. R. Oldfield, ed., *Civilization and Black Progress: Selected Writings of Alexander Crummell on the South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- 34 Wright, “Man Who Lived Underground,” 30.
- 35 Wright, “Man Who Lived Underground,” 30.
- 36 Wright, “Man Who Lived Underground,” 51, 54.
- 37 W. E. B. Du Bois was familiar with *Quicksand*. In fact, he named it one of the best works of fiction by an African American since Chesnutt. Deborah E. McDowell references this in the introduction to Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing*, ix; Wright, “Man Who Lived Underground,” 30.
- 38 Wright, “Man Who Lived Underground,” 60, 61.
- 39 Robert Zaretsky, *A Life Worth Living: Albert Camus and the Quest for Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 10, 16.
- 40 Zaretsky, *Life Worth Living*, 8.
- 41 Orlando Patterson, *The Children of Sisyphus: A Novel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965).
- 42 Patterson, *Children of Sisyphus*, 20.
- 43 Patterson, *Children of Sisyphus*, 26.
- 44 Butler quoted in Rina Arya, *Abjection and Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72.
- 45 Patterson, *Children of Sisyphus*, 71.
- 46 This is a reference to a line from the short essay on Sisyphus found in Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*: “One must imagine Sisyphus happy” (119–23).
- 47 Larsen, *Quicksand*, 135.
- 48 Patterson, *Children of Sisyphus*, 156–58, 160.
- 49 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 6:10.
- 50 Patterson, *Children of Sisyphus*, 63.