

"Design as Dasein": Scar, ... to be accompanied by video (v. 10.3.07)  
(victor j. vitanza, Austin, TX, October 2007; previous visits: 1986, 1991)

The title—*Design as Dasein*—is the working title of a third book of mine—on death, **or** the place of negativity—that I began researching several years ago, though I have been called to work on it, all of my life. As the good Sisters used to say: a call, or vocation, is a call to be authentic. Similarly as Martin Heidegger says: "... one [is] called. ... To one's own Self" (*B&T* 317). After all, my signature—*Victor Vitanza*—calls me to this task of *Design as Dasein*. As you may know: *Victor Vitanza* signifies *Conqueror of Death*. While I am called to *Dasein*, I am also predisposed to an **ir-re-so-luteness** toward death. ... Hence, let it be heard: I hereby resolve: *living on*, just as Maurice Blanchot, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Giorgio Agamben do in **rethinking** the early Heidegger. ... This declaration of my name—I am *Conqueror of Death*—might sound silly. But recall the Latin saying: *nomen est omen* (or name is omen, or the name is a *sign*) . . . *nomen est omen* calls us to be true to our names. To our *éthea*. Our other own. This perhaps is the only becoming for me.<sup>1</sup> As I would hope for all of us.

**What** the title of this presentation, with its presumptuous entitlement, of "Design as *Dasein*," says, then, to me is that I am called to conquer the onto-theological thinkings about death itself. But No, I'm not suffering from any Messiah complex. I'm just falling back, for the time becoming, into the statelessness, irresoluteness, of the primary orality of my name. My *éthea*. My wildness. My ownmost (authenticated) impossibility becoming impossibilities. Back to a negation of negativity itself. To an *absolute negation* but without Spirit (Hegel). Why, "back," as in a return? Why, again? Because the conditions for the possibilities of living, in my name, should not have exclusively, as their horizon, the limit of *death*. (Now, I am well aware that this can be upsetting, disconcerting, for many of my friends and colleagues who have in their own name the limit of death, but I must follow my own here, though my own is not by any means unique. As I have said, Others have followed this *as such* before me. [cf. Agamben, *Coming* 43-44]. I must announce, on this special occasion of the third visit here at UT, that if I had three DDDs for my name, I would be dancing summersaults now from one end of this room to the next and next; for the name can count to three: *Dasein1, Dasein2, Dasein.some.more.*) Simply put, though

this is no simple issue, I am called to rethink DeSIGN—or Of Sign—so as to rethink *Da Sein*, being-the-there, or being-there (which, in its everydayness as a noun, denotes the existence of any entity), and yet, I am called to rethink the early Heideggerian *Dasein*, being-there (which expresses a re-so-lute-ness toward death: or in other Heideggerian terms suggests *existence*, *thrownness*, and *fallenness*). The total loss of subjectivity (see Heidegger, *B&T* 67-77). It is the case—I would agree with Jean-François Lyotard, Agamben, and Christopher Fynsk—as well as with Clarise Lispector and Hélène Cixous—that it is necessary to die as the "*infans*," that is, the "infant" or the Imaginary statelessness, prior to falling into the Symbolic, and to die as a subject (sub-stance), in a species, determined by qualities or *differentiae*, in some category system, in dis/order to live, writing-living on, in the disaster: in scar-lines (cf. Heidegger 62).<sup>2</sup> But again, my Being-called is an *IR-RES-O-LUTE-NESS* toward death. To my friends who share my concerns, perhaps I can explain more clearly in thirds: I recognize the problems of (i.) *Infinitude* (or infinity, transcendence, immanence, etc.) but also at times I recognize the problem of (ii.) *Finitude* (*if* predicated exclusively on resoluteness toward death, or a not yet accomplished Nihilism). Instead, for the lack of a third

term, I would mis/identify with (iii.) *Eschara*, which in early Greek is the sign for *Hearth*, as well as *burn* and *scab*. At home, there is anxiety and danger. But this scheme of threes really explains **Nothing**, for the paracept of *Finitude* can—and more often than not, does—bleed over into *Eschara*, and vice versa. As we have been saying for some time now: Out of the impossible comes possibilities. There can be a communion without Communion between the paracepts *Finitude* and *Eschara*. So the second and the third terms are imminently reversible in their potentialities, or rather their impotentialities, which should suggest a *living that has **not yet** become living*. ... I should apologize for at times voicing sentences or *sayences* that are not standard ones, and also for refusing the standardization, for example, of calling on the verb *to be*, in its varied conjugated forms, when what is called for is *to become*, or *becoming*, as in a *time to come* or in *the coming community* (see Agamben)... As I said earlier, I am called! But one should be suspicious, as I always am, and ask, Is this a crank call? Or is the caller and the called foolishly, or overly, "prophetic" and "optimistic," about *living on* as the conditions for possibilities over death? ... If the answer is Yes, then, that's what some architectural critics say about MadelineGins&Arakawa, the paraceptual architects

who in combining their thinking and practices have decided against the Onto-Theological tradition altogether—saying that this thinking is mis-founded on a "crisis ethics" (*Architectural Body* xviii) and that *it is possible*—architecturally—to reverse our (so-called) destinies (i.e., reverse death/life itself into life/death [recall N. O. Brown's *Life Against Death*]). Gins&Arakawa write:

"Architecture must be made to fit the body as a second, third, fourth, and, when necessary ninth (and counting) **skin**. We believe that people closely and completely allied with their architectural surrounds can succeed in outliving their (seemingly inevitable) death sentences!" (xv-xvi).

But please: When I allude to Gins&Arakawa, I, myself, am not suffering from, let's call it, the Lazarus complex! Nor from some Hegelian idea that Spirit will vanquish all wounds and scars. Or death itself. If you recall Hegel in the *Phenomenology* speaks of the disappearance of the scar altogether: He writes: "The wounds of the Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind" (§669). Such is transcendence. I think that this is a very dangerous idea. And in response to it, I am obliged to say: What we have to live *in* is our scars. But I'm emphasizing Living *in*, not just borderlines, but Living *in* our scars. Not *with* our scars, but *in* them.

**[Start Video]**

This is my project. This word "project" has a rather interesting history: etymologically, it means "to cast an image on a screen." We get the word *projectionist* from *project*. I am keenly aware that in as much as I try to get away from a resoluteness toward death, the more words that I use the more I am taken, projected, back to death. Itself. The project, its history, along with the words *subject*, *object*, *abject* return us to negativity and death itself. Moreover, let us not forget Heidegger's own use of "project(ing)" [*Entwurf*, *entwerfen*] when speaking of *ecstatic temporality* and "facticity (thrownness)" and "existence (projection)" (*B&T* 329-30). But in the light or dark of film, or photography, let me interrupt this flow and ask: Have you read Laura Mulvey's new book *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*? But what am I getting at? Projection as *existence* and as *thrownness*, or as images cast on a screen, for *Dasein* as a being thrown there, in film and in photographs, **is** intimately connected with death. Let's not forget Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*! But in remembering so as to forget, I'm going to *plod* and *plot* on. Nonetheless.

Therefore, what I'm going to think through, in particular, in terms of Derrida's "structure, sign, and

play," is *the sign* (design) of the *scar*. *Dasein* as scar; scar, as *Dasein*. The issue for me is not living forever, but living without any resoluteness toward a future death. Some might say, living without any mourning. Whatsoever. Without mourning! Which of course is heretical! The issue is living-around and then living-within not only multiple layers of skin, as Gins&Awaraka suggest, but also, and more so, living *in* the scar. The anarchitectural scar!

In preparing for this call and assignment, I've been most recently taken by the opening section of Petra Kuppers' new book *The Scar of Visibility*. Petra writes:

A scar: Meeting place between inside and outside, a locus of memory, of bodily change. Like skin, a scar mediates between the outside and the inside, but it also materially produces, changes, and overwrites its site. If skin renews itself constantly, producing the same in repetition, the scar is the place of the changed script: mountains are thrown up, the copy isn't quite right, crooked lines sneak over smooth surfaces. (1)

Many of us, if not all, could disrobe and bare our scars here in front of each other, as if we don't always already. Do such a thing. It's irrepressible, though invisibly visible. Private meets public! The other in the ordinary! The unhomely in the homely. I myself thought of making a video of my own scars for *being-over-there*. Videocy. Visibly invisible a la Bill Viola. But I must tell you parenthetically: I searched on *YouTube*, and I could not believe what I found: People showing their scars. So many "cutters", being there, showing us their cuttings! Cuts becoming scabs becoming scars!<sup>3</sup> Instead of showing our scars—mine and yours—I thought that I would rather project an online episode of *Chasing Windmills* called "Scar Tissue." (The title as well as the contents of this caustic, satirical episode is influenced by the Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Scar Tissue" lyrics.) What we have over there (in the silent, yet screaming, video) **is** a female and male denouncing therapy and analysis and then turning, nonetheless, to announcing, perhaps anointing, and showing each other their scars. Both physical and psychic scars, as if there's a difference, all across the surface of their skin, in as much as their scars over-write their skins, creating borderlines. ... This episode of *Chasing Windmills* should be enough, on *the exchange-economy of scars*! But

also, along with the video, I thought that I would work with a set of objective correlatives.

Placing myself, or rather being-caught, in the over-writing middle, in *ex-stasis* (let's not forget Heidegger's *ecstasis*), in the sign of the scar—where foreground and background collapse—negotiating between life and death, skin and scar, public and private, I will *hallucinate* on a series of cultural objects that would provide us with exemplary ways of "living on" *in the scar* of the sign as *Dasein*. But as I do that, note that I do that semiotically across the images being unfolded over t.here. *Da Sein*. But. Of Sign. The episode of "Scar Tissue." I am trying to situate myself, through a series of interruptions, corruptions, eruptions, between over there and here. Becoming be-tween. *Ec-static*. Perhaps after a while you, too, will situate yourselves in between there and here. Within the /Scar/, situated in between. (Call me SCAR.) To facilitate that tweening forth and back, I will rapidly follow the correlative *traces* of

- Odysseus's scar (according to Erich Auerbach's discussion in his book *Mimesis*):

- Michel de Montaigne's scar (according to Philip P. Hallie in his book *The Scar of Montaigne*):
- Jacques Derrida's scar (according to himself in *Circumfession*): &
- Lebbeus Woods' thinking of the radical, architectural scar,

a thinking that complements, yet extends, Gin's&Arakawra's refusal of the scar altogether, if and when **the scar** is seen negatively finite as the sign of death instead of the affirmative conditions for the possibility of *living a life, yet another life, and still yet other lives*. Let us not forget, in this thinking of Being, that *finitude* itself creates the conditions for the compossibility of impossibles. So this project, projection, is not just a simple matter of negating death, forgetting death, for the project is by far more complicated in terms of a set without a set of paradoxes that are not to be overcome, resolved, but to be ir-resolved as projections of the past in the future. A sum of coming communities without any sense of what traditionally constitutes community. Without sub-ject, ob-ject, ab-ject; rather, with adjacency. Not agency, but adjacency.

All that I can do is to suggest rapidly here some sense—some *third sense*, as Barthes might say—of what wants to be said through a few acoustical and visual imaginary associations with various skins, cuts, and scars and hope that they vibrate all across the surfaces of your bodies. Re-activating your own scars. Your own, yet other ego. As Freud says: "a bodily ego." On the surface, on our skin (see "The Ego and the Id," *SE XIX*, 26.) And also let us reactivate Freud's own scar. The site of the speaking cure. The Jaw, Mouth, Lips, the Tongue! Are we really surprised that, as Georges Bataille says: we communicate across our lacerations, scabs, and scars (*Guilty* 30-31, 65-66). Therein lies my communication's triangle.

1. Odysseus's scar: ... Let us recall Odysseus's return home to Ithaca and to Penelope in book 19 of the *Odyssey*. As soon as Euryclea—Odysseus's nurse in childhood—attempts to lift Odysseus's foot to wash it, she sees the scar on Odysseus's thigh. It's the sign—the very identity—of Odysseus himself. It is at this very moment, however, that Homer interrupts the lifting of the foot to begin a lengthy excursus of the nature and origin of the scar. He interrupts by cutting the running narrative—the apparent major *diagesis*, disrupting the condition for identity,

negation, itself—so as to create one more condition for the possibility of a scar in the narrative of the *Odyssey*, but then, the epic is nothing but a collection of cuts and scars—becoming in between, perpetually *in medias res*—all on the surface, healing and over-writing to make for numerous blocks of excurses **unto** an epic. The linkages between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are nothing but disruptive ruptures forming eventually (*Ereginis*) scars over-writing themselves all the way across.... Through Virgil's *Aeneid* to Joyce Carol Oates' *Rape: A Love Story*.

Again: Let us think of the ex-cursus as a cut in the narrative flow that presents and brings forth the scar. But this ex-cursus is not inserted to create suspense as it will in later stages of orality on its way to literacy; for as Auerbach tells us, "the Homeric style knows only a foreground," a surface, a skin, unlike the early manuscript and print cultural representations of the Biblical style in the Abraham and Isaac story, that Auerbach speaks of, with the OT God in the background, remaining forever resistant to representation (this is God as Lacanian Real), yet manipulating Abraham in a call to sacrifice Isaac (7). And later, the NT God in the background calling for the de-sign of the cross. While the son, Christ, was Da-sein for the

time being. Bringing not the sign of the cross, that is, bloody sacrifice, but Mercy.

The Homeric epics are architecturally constructed with blocks of scars as discussed in terms of primary orality—in an assemblage of scars (i.e., as discussed by Walter Ong and Eric Havelock and casuistically stretched by me). In the Homeric style this repeatable excursus, or scar, can represent metonymically the repeatable absence of Odysseus, in his attempts to become full presence. (He is, after all is said an undone, "noone"!) The Fates weave, while Penelope both weaves and unweaves. While the Fates are fixed, Penelope knows how to reverse the apparent, fated outcome. The eruption and over-writing of the origin of the scar, however, is not background to the story. Rather, it is present on the surface, as scar tissue, which is ever revising and remounting itself. It is scar tissue semiotically all the way across the surface of the narrative skin. But these proliferating scars across scars, naturally sutured, are, in temporality, to use Auerbach's words, "only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective **present**." The cut combined with the scar, as Kupper might say, "incites the look, invites the narrative, fuels the story." The scar is the site wherein Odysseus lives and

relives, always already in a present time, his experiences of loss and gain. The scar is the site of Odysseus (the man of many turns); and with the weaving, cutting and stitching, or cobbling, the scar is the site of Penelope (the woman of many turns), who weaves and unweaves (such are her turns) a burial shroud for Laertes. But Odysseus and Penelope. Resolutely. Live on. *Living on! In!*

Now let's cut to the chase, through Montaigne's scar and Derrida's scar, but it is crucial to remember that we are now beginning to talk about texts (felt textiles in print culture, no longer in primary orality or in an orality verging on print cultures). Felt text tiles attached to tiles semiotically all the way across. . . .

2. Montaigne, in his essay "Of Presumption," writes about his failings in *resolving* the differences between public life and private life. In writing, he is constantly avowing, while disavowing, his personal writings. He asks, "Why is it not permissible in the same way for [someone] to portray himself with the pen, as he portrayed himself with a pencil?" (That is, pen : public writings :: pencil : private-personal writings.) Montaigne is struggling with self-representation in public and in private, a distinction

that is apparent in literacy, with the personal becoming highly problematic. Montaigne accuses himself: "I do not want to forget **this further scar**, very much unfit to produce in public: **irresolution**, a most harmful failing in negotiating worldly affairs. I do not know which side to take in doubtful enterprises" (496). The scar is ir-re-solute-ness itself! Is the deferring of a decision. Montaigne perpetually critiques reason—far from the dynamism of primary orality—perpetually critiques, that is, the tools for *decisions*—an interesting word "decision," which etymologically is derived from the Latin cognate *decidere* [de-ci-dere]: to decide is to cut, or to cut off—because reason is, Montaigne says, "a two-edged and dangerous sword" (496-97). At the end of Montaigne's essay "Of Presumption," Hallie says, Montaigne's "conclusion of an elaborate argument [zig-zaging and oscillating in every direction] appears as a scar on Montaigne's own face" (133). (Let us not forget Freud's scar!) While Montaigne complains, however, he 's enjoying his *éthea*, or the wildness of *his own* symptoms. (Much as Freud does, who is the primary zig-zagger of all time!) After following his elaborate suspensions in the essay "Of Cannibals," there's little doubt for me Why Montaigne admires cannibals, for they *live* to eat *others* so that they will not have *others*

eat them (150-59). Put simply, Montaigne and cannibals follow and eat *their own*. Their wildness. Living on. Living in. Now let us cut to ...

3. Jacques Derrida's scar (according to himself in his quasi-autobiography *Circumfession*): Derrida's scar is, like Montaigne's scar, a deferring. A resolute ir-resoluteness. It's summed up in the puncept *Différance*. Which, as a misspelled (doubled) word, **is**, as some venture to say, informed by Heidegger's withdrawal of Being, of presence, and hence informed by the anticipation of death. And yet, there is more to Derrida's scar. Which is the scar of circumcision, supported by yet another scar: un-namely, of Derrida's *decision* not to have his sons circumcised (95). Circumcision becomes both the sign *différAnce* and the *double session*: Circumcised, not circumcised. A cut not to cut. What's the difference! A death that is not a death. As Derrida points out in *Aporias*, *decidere* [de-ci-dere] can signify to walk away from death itself that is not death (37).

Keep in mind that Derrida's *Circumfession* is a high- or post-modern form of print culture that has crossed over, making raids, into a secondary orality (if we follow Ong)

or has crossed over, as an electrical arc might jump from circuit to circuit, into choreography or electracy (if we follow Greg Ulmer). *Circumfession* calls on, or is called by, all the para-elements of post-critical thinking. It's a doubled-sometimes short-circuited, public-private-autobiography, with Geof Bennington writing at the top half of each page, summarizing the basics of Derrida's thinking (there's humor at the top level!), and Derrida at the bottom, dis/engaging in circumscription and circumcision-writing. Hence, my doubleness here/there. Idiocy/Videocy.

What is rather obvious about Derrida's autobiography-his confession cobbled with his secret notebooks on circumcision-is that there are not only the parallels between Augustine and Derrida in their relationships with their mothers, but also there are parallels with Montaigne in his essays (319-21). I'm not going to survey these parallels but say that, like Montaigne's *identifying* with cannibals (*MM* 150-58), Derrida works on what he refers to as "a rhetoric of cannibalism," for he is interested in, yes, "loving-eating-the other" (327; cf. 65-69, 158-59).

Derrida's, like Montaigne's, is a personal literacy, with foregrounding manipulated by secreted backgrounds,

which Derrida brings to the foreground, though none of these personal secrets achieves presence. After all, How could they ever, given Derrida's thinking about representation! Given that he writes the *Gram* or *Différance*. Which is composed, in grammatology, by grafting and miming, or of the cutting, and suturing of skins. Or, if someone wishes, it's collage and montage thinkings. One needs but to recall Derrida's *Glas*, which is a double book, two books cut together and then recut with countless citations (70-71, 190). With this parallel built on Montaigne, or rather montage, Derrida says, he loses his face. His constant disavowal of self leads to, in his reading, the actual paralysis of his face, whereupon he wears his scar. Though the paralysis as scar is visible for a short time, his face, Derrida says, remains invisibly forever scarred (123-24). Derrida claims, as Freud claimed, he is an hysteric, and what is an hysteric other than the deepest personal performances of the body. Let me show you my scars! But Derrida, again, performs through grafting and mimicry. He's an hysteric-mime.

4. Now we turn rebeginningly to Lebbeus Woods, to his thinking of the architectural scar, which I will put ever so briefly, though his work deserves our closest, most

careful consideration: In his book *Radical Reconstruction*, Lebbeus, as a conceptual—I would rather say, punceptual—architect **takes on** the common desire *to reconstruct* what has been damaged and lost in war times. His prime example is Sarajevo. Lebbeus argues that State architects generally consider *reconstruction* to be *restoration*, which, Lebbeus says, serves "the past social order that ended in war" (15). The project of *reconstruction* that is really a *restoration*, he says, "ends as parody, worthy only of the admiration of tourists" (15). Lebbeus argues for a radical reconstruction in terms of the post-war **scabs** and **scars** in the buildings. He writes:

Ragged tears in walls, roofs and floor structures . . . are unique and complex forms and figurations, unique in their history and meaning. . . . They are the beginnings of new ways of thinking, living, and shaping space, arising from individuality and invention. From them a heterarchical community can be formed. (16)

For Lebbeus, building (or remaking) should exhibit the appropriation of these **scabs** and **scars**, adding to the integrity of the architecture as history. He explains:

To accept the scar is to accept existence. . . .  
 Healing is not an illusory, cosmetic process, but  
 something that . . . both deeply divides and joins  
 together. . . . The city of self-responsible people,  
 of individuals—each of whom tells a personal (even  
 private) story—exhibits its unique scars, its  
 transformations in solitude, which are a new kind of  
 history. Increasingly, these would be stories of  
 resourcefulness and invention, more and more distant  
 from conditions created by conformity to social norms.  
 (16)

As I study Lebbeus's sketches, his artful re-  
 renderings of torn buildings in Sarajevo in his book  
*Radical Reconstruction*—specifically his drawings of scabs  
 over wounds, forming the life of a building's scars—I begin  
 to see how the *pencil* and the *pen* of his grafting and of  
*miming* are at play, as well as at work. The visually  
 resonating tension between **scabs** over wounds and then **scars**  
 built **onto** and deep **into** the **damaged body** of the  
 architectural frames become a composite. Etymologically: A  
 putting together in place.

This process is hard to follow through the ears. I've flashed a few of Lebbeus' sketches in the narrative of the video. I'm passing around the book now for you to see and experience his sketches. But Let me also explain this once more in comparative detail: Lebbeus is against demolishing a building or in restoring it to its so-called original design. He is against the restoration economy. (I'm referring to Storm Cunningham's book, *The Restoration Economy: The Greatest New Growth Frontier*. Lebbeus would rather cover the war "wounds" with a temporary scab and to construct the wound in such a way that it would be an architecturally re-designed scar. When the scar-construction is done, he would remove the scab. Perhaps. The scar-construction, however, would not, in many cases, be inhabitable, for scar-tissue becomes thick. Filling in damaged flesh-space. The scar-construction, in Lebbeus's view, would be-there (as *Dasein*), as a *sign of history*. And without sentimentality. Without Disney-fication.

But I'm not sure that I've communicated fully enough yet what Lebbeus attempts. I'm haunted by the failure of getting this across to you, in its complexity, though aesthetic simplicity. So please allow me to explain further in terms of my various, previous discussions: The visually

resonating tension between **scabs** over wounds and then **scars** built **onto** and deep **into** the **damaged body** of the architectural frames become a composite. I see and experience Lebbeus' work, as I have see and experience "Homer's" *Odyssey*, or as I have Derrida's "Circumfession," or his attempt to write and consume other works, e.g., that of Blanchot's *The Instant of my **Death*** & Shelly's *Triumph of **Life***, sutured together—Death & Life, Life & Death—but without one sutured piece touching, or bringing into presence, the other. Such is **becoming-there**: Wherein we can dis/engage *living on* in our individual and collective **scars**. Therein lies *Lebbeus*, in between, as he himself says, while signifying a man of heart; praising; confessing, as in praising his convictions. . . . *////////////////////* [vv: There is more, always some more—a four-page postscript on Lebbeus and then Derrida/Cixous—but let's Stop here for a rebeginning!]

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**If I may add postscript here**, a personal statement at this point of the end, for a rebeginning, I met Lebbeus at the European Graduate School in 2006 for the first time. His seminar was right after my seminar. When I arrived, I was told, he asked for me. We had never met, but only traded a single piece of email in the Fall of 2005. Cynthia

Haynes had selected us to be on a panel at the Cs. So she handled most of the communications. When I walked out into the garden of the hotel—which is where we have meals—he got up and welcomed me. As if we were friends for the longest time, or in some previous life. We talked and talked. Some wine was consumed.

I was honored to be able to sit in on his seminar, and to work with him and our students on an architectural project. You saw some of the photos I took of him when meeting with students. But a thing or two, while waiting for a third, happened. The thing is that Lebbeus was not able to attend the Cs in March, for right before that event, he suffered a *heart* attack. I received an email from Aleksandra, his spouse, who told me of this attack and, as she phrased it, "this first period of recovery." ... Living on. Being cut and then becoming scarred and ... living on. But it's more than living on, it's living irresolutely in the facelessness of mortality. Itself. Somewhere between Heidegger, on the one hand, and Madeline Gins and Arakawa, on the other; somewhere within the scab and the healing into a scar, there is another condition for possibilities. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, writes: As potentiality-for-Being, *Dasein* cannot outstrip the possibility of death" (294). Gins and Arakawa, In *Making Dying Illegal*, write of

a statute against death that reads: "Not making an all-out effort to go on living and the act of dying are from this date on classed first-order felonies. Citizens will need to strive to define the heartiness of their existences and be responsible for astute and timely assessment of negative turns of events and failed or failing conditions. Choosing to live within a tactically posed surround/tutelary abode will be counted as an all-out effort to go on living" (25). You know: I just have to love both sides. Being here, being there. Somewhere. In the middle.

But before I rest for a moment, before doing my Victor-in-the-box routine again, I cannot not speak of, share with, you, two other sides, which many people think only speaks *beside the point*. Which, I would persist in insisting on, is what we ourselves *might* do. It's Derrida again, but with Hélène Cixous. No doubt, some of you know of, or have read, the various exchanges in print between Derrida and Cixous. In the epilogue to *H.C. for Life, That Is to Say...*, Derrida writes: "Between her and me [HC and JD], it is as if it were a question of life and death. Death would be on my side and life on hers" (158). He continues: "Death counts for her, certainly, on every page, but she herself does not count. For me, death counts, it counts, and my days, my hours, and my seconds are numbered"

(158). I still find this separation, or joining, *odd* for Derrida, and yet, perhaps I don't at all. I'm sure it was not easy being JD, but someone had to be. I find it odd because, JD is the author of "A Number of Yes." Which I made much of in *Negation, Subjectivity, and The History of Rhetoric*. But this is not odd, for HC and JD are adjacent. They are besides themselves. Impertinent (cf. Düttmann 30, 115). They are not subjects (or objects, or abjects), but what we might see as *adjacencies*. Cixous in a conversation with JD in print refers not to being here and being there, as I said earlier, in my relation to the video, but **rethinks** Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* (literally translated as There-Being, or Being-there) and **reinscribes** it when she writes, "the problem of **Here or There** poses itself right between my eyes, clashes head-on with me . . . makes *my* nose [emphasis mine] into the axis **of both sides, beside-Here** and **beside-There**," which she says, "almost splits me" (quoted by Derrida in *H.C. For Life*; boldface in original). Being becomes beside. Not here or there. But beside. I am besides myself.

But let us continue to think, as we are invited to think, of the nose as a bridge. That has avoided, through adjacency, altogether the logic of the cut. Think of it as a Moebius-strip nose-bridge that has only one side, in

other words, not subject to having been cut in two, or *diaeresis*. Which, as Cixoius says, would only split her in two. The word "nose," which sounds like multiple NO's (e.g., No, I said: No, No), resonates with the impolite meaning "nosey," given her archaeological digs in this passage, that is, with the negative "no" in the first syllable and "sey" in the second. No say. Say NO? Or don't say NO? I cannot determine! Cixous's statement becomes, therein, paralogically, as we might hear, *nosey* (no-sey), but the homonym of NO, the negative, in the first syllable of that word is not stable, or fixed enough ... it wants to drift ... , for in drifting, the word NO, in adjacency with SEY, invites us, through a conductive paralogic, to see the *imminent reversibility* of the second syllable of no-sey, which in reverse spells YES, the affirmative, or rather now a non-positive affirmation. The neutral that is an affirmation *outside*—after all, it's impertinent—it's in *ec-stasis*, or *ecstasy*—of the principles of reason: that is, of identification, non-contradiction, and excluded middle. We all know about the doctrine of stasis. Do we all know the ill-begotten para-doctrine of ec-stasis. It's a whole new condition for impossibles, or counter-factual worlds. In the outside of species-genus analytics, in other words, in ec-stasis, the very idea of "Being" or "being" becomes

beside, alongside. Dialectical principles are not at work here. They have already done their dirty work, creating these remainders, remnants, tossed aside, for they are beside the point, but forever returning like the repressed. There's no retaining wall to hold them outside the city of one God, or One of any kind, for what is coming can only subtract One. Altogether. For being and time, as we have constructed them in philosophical rhetorics, are becoming pointless. I've been taught now to write *When* ... but might write *While* the excluded middle is balanced across the bridge of our nose. Allowing, as a new lens to see what we, in our trained incapacities, could not previously see. To see what? That adjacency that counts to YES, that accounts for YES. Outside Here and There in a neutral zone, where the new virtue that is not a virtue is impertinence. Impertinence. Impertinence. And therein, Death becomes beside the point. To get to that pointless, we are going to have to unlearn most of what we have learned. But we don't have to construct a curriculum, for it's everything that the curriculum has said NO to.

1. Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, writes: "As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that *possibility which is one's ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped. As such, death is something*

*distinctively* impending. Its existential possibility is based on the fact that Dasein is essentially disclosed to itself, and disclosed, indeed, as ahead-of-itself. This item in the structure of care has its most primordial concretion in Being-towards-death" (294; Heidegger's emphasis). Giorgio Agamben responds to this notion of death in *The Coming Community* (44) and in *Language and Death*, the "introduction" and throughout. Cf. Derrida, *Aporias*, e.g., 35-36; Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 70-71; Blanchot, *The Space of Literature* 240-41.

2. The reference to the *Infans* is to an *experience* that is prior to that of an "infant" becoming a subject, prior to entering the symbolic: It's a primordial, narcissistic "child," in a *word-less* experience. I am specifically referring to Lyotard's *Lectures d'enfance*, Agamben's *Infancy and History*, Fynsk's *Infant Figures*, as well as Blanchot's *The Writing of the Disaster* 125-28. Cf. Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, Seminar 7*; and Serge Leclaire, *A Child Is Being Killed*.

3. *Cutters* and *cuts* refer here to "cutters" (of skin and flesh through self-mutilation) and "SI" (self-injury) as well as SIV (self-inflicted violence). In many ways this paper is addressed to self-infliction. See <http://www.vinland.org/scamp/institute/scar/> and <http://www.vinland.org/scamp/institute/dsh.html> for starters. As I say, youtube.com has numerous videos of cutters showing their cuts/scars. I had intended to include China Miéville's novel *The Scar*, which has a couple—called "the Lovers"—who cut each other. The activity of cutting each other, being caught up with the genre of fantasy and science fiction and the search for the SCAR at the bottom of the ocean is just too difficult to include in this my discussion, especially in such a brief paper. If I continue to develop this idea of SCAR for a larger piece, then, I will include it.

**Dedication:** Michel de Montaigne, my brother: "I am myself the matter of my book" But "What do I know? ... an unpremeditated and accidental [academic]!"

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