

Interiors

Interiors:
Interiority/Exteriority in Literary
and Cultural Discourse

Edited by

Sonia Front and Katarzyna Nowak

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Interiors: Interiority/Exteriority in Literary and Cultural Discourse,
Edited by Sonia Front and Katarzyna Nowak

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INTRODUCTION

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Sigmund Freud relates a story of his grandson playing a game which basically depended on throwing small objects, such as a spool, away from him, and then pulling the string so that the object reappeared within the scope of vision. With our entry into the symbolic order, into the realm of language, we learn to cope with disappearance of what is dearest to us, with the elusive, and also with the past, and that is what the *fort da* game represented for Freud. This game, we may say, is also one way of representing the distinction between the interior and the exterior, and it is also a representation of an attempt at controlling it – or making sense of it – by means of our bodies. It is the bodily dimension that provides the scope of vision and hence the point of reference, that at the same time necessitates and enables drawing the borders of the interior versus the exterior. In the realm of theory, the distinctions between what we choose to include and what we exclude remains a political choice, often fraught with dilemmas that cannot be resolved. How to distinguish between interiors and exteriors? Where do we draw dividing lines? Do we want to draw them, anymore? Or, alternatively, can we afford not to divide and distinguish between the inside and outside, between here and there, between “us” and “them”? If the binary divisions, so much discredited, no longer hold, if we must include multiplicity and plurality of readings, is any distinction between these dimensions possible? The essays collected in the present volume attempt to present a plethora of answers to these pressing questions.

Interior or interiors encompass a multitude of meanings; however, more often than not they are associated with the interior of the body: the spiritual, personal, emotional, instinctive and imaginary. Looking at the interior from this perspective inevitably entails setting it in opposition to the exterior. Concerned with bodily boundaries is **Wojciech Kalaga** (University of Silesia, Poland). He discusses the notion of the Third as the outcome of the mediation between the body and the other, which explodes the inside/outside opposition. Anatomizing the Third as “occup[ying] the place both overlapping and bracketing binaries,” he focuses on its three manifestations: the pro-ject, the ab-ject and the in/ter-ject. **Anna Chromik-Krzykawska** (University of Silesia, Poland) asserts in her article that the body begins to be viewed in terms of the interior and

exterior only in early modern period. She finds the change in the conceptualization of the self and the body to lodge in the differentiation of the human body from the universe and to demarcate the boundaries of the self. **Filomena Vasconcelos** (University of Porto, Portugal) deals with voice, or rather voicelessness, as the condition of the post-war subject in Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* and *Stories and Texts for Nothing*. She draws the reader's attention to the subject's speechlessness, that is, his/her incapability of communicating the interior self as the result of the devaluation of language after World War II. Voice is one exemplification of the Third, another one being the phantom house which **Teresa Bruś** (University of Wrocław, Poland) recognizes as the effect of one of the possible relationships between a human being and home/house, others being the modes of dwelling, loitering and inhabiting. Comprising stabilizing, memorializing and focal objects which define the identity of the resident, the exterior of the house thus manifests itself as the projection of the interiors of its resident.

The inner and outer space inevitably interact with each other, then, and the encounter's consequence is usually a reshaping of the interior system, the mind and sometimes the body. **Paweł Jędrzejko** (University of Silesia, Poland) concentrates on the internal organization of knowledge, and its changes from the limited, politically charged categories of library search to the rhizomatic, liberal and impermanent infinity of the Internet. With this shift, Jędrzejko elucidates, comes the change from the Word, governing the Judeo-Christian world, to words, in their non-hierarchical "disorder." **Monika Kowalczyk** (University of Silesia, Poland) touches upon a different type of reshapings of interiors. On the basis of Lucjan Wolanowski's *Heat Wave and Fever*, she demonstrates that a human being, in this case a traveller, internalizes the elements of the observed space by means of his body, which constitutes a channel of perception. The flood of images being too violent, it appears too detrimental to his self, therefore in the course of processing his experience, he creates distance as a protective mechanism against the real.

Nevertheless, not all characters are able to develop a mechanism of coping with trauma, be it war-time experience, the sight of other atrocities, or an accident. In some cases it may result in a psychic collapse. **Stephen Butler** (Koszalin University of Technology, Poland) discusses an exemplification of such a psychic collapse, schizophrenia, in J. G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*. Schizophrenia can be defined as a failure to communicate with the world and with one's inner self, which results here from the horrors of war, and more significantly, "the biomorphic horror of

our own bodies.” Describing the protagonist’s inner topography, Butler emphasizes the imaginative and creative capacities of the mind. To Ballard it is the interiors of the person that shape the external world, and also time which constitutes a psychological quality, “a perspective of the personality.” Immeasurable multi-layered subjective time, a perpetual present, is what the protagonists of the works explored by **Sonia Front** (University of Silesia, Poland) experience as a result of a psychic collapse. Both the protagonist of *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly*, a film by Julian Schnabel, and the protagonist of Umberto Eco’s novel *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, become trapped in their half-dead bodies, while their interiors remain active. Their attempts to come to terms with the past arrest their movement forward, and the failure to differentiate between the real and the imaginary appears threatening to selfhood.

The next section, Postcolonial Revisions, presents perspectives on the interior and the body from the vantage point of post-colonial studies, and lets us hear voices that otherwise – because of unfavorable geo- and socio-political circumstances – are often silenced. **Erhard Reckwitz** (University of Duisburg–Essen, Germany) starts with a handful of remarks on the categories of time and space in cultural studies, giving the reader a broader philosophical perspective, to turn to narratology. Reckwitz uses Bakhtin’s idea of *chronotopos*, where the two orders of space and time merge, and Lotman’s elucidation of text as a cultural model, with movement in time and space as central to it, to discuss these concepts in the postcolonial context, using as an example a novel by Marlene van Niekerk, a South African writer. He touches upon the issues of apartheid, segregation and displacement to offer Homi Bhabha’s idea of the third space as a tentative solution. **Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska** (The University of Warmia and Mazuria in Olsztyn, Poland) situates her reading in a similar context, offering insight into “the mechanism of internalizing inhuman ideologies.” She analyzes Mark Behr’s *The Smell of Apples*, focusing on the concepts of truth, responsibility, confession, and guilt. Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska addresses issues central to an understanding of South African identity, such as hegemonic masculinity, compulsory heterosexuality and the arbitrariness of race. **Klara Szymańko**’s text (University of Wrocław, Poland) also concentrates on postcolonial identities, this time, however, in the context of a Korean-American minority, scrutinizing such concepts as immigrants’ invisibility and whiteness on the example of Chang-rae Lee’s novel. Szymańko analyzes the Asian American model minority myth to offer a vision of “a multiethnic diaspora” where accented English enriches the mainstream discourse. **Julia Szoltysek** (University of Wrocław, Poland) undertakes the task of analyzing “the Easternized West of the 21st

century” on the basis of texts by J.M. Coetzee and Ruth Praver Jhabvala. Szołtysek comes to the conclusion that “modern day interiors and exteriors successfully oppose quantification”; this, however, does not mean admitting helplessness in the face of the aforementioned concepts, but rather sums up a postulated plurality of readings, which is characteristic of all of the essays in this section.

It may be befitting to conclude a discussion on the interior and its bodily dimension with a section examining precisely what is considered the cessation of all carnal activity, and attempting to look beyond that: towards the eternal plane, but also catching a glimpse of its monstrous aspect. The last part of the present collection, *Death, Gothic, Monstrosity*, opens with **David Punter**’s essay (Bristol University, United Kingdom), providing a smooth transition between the postcolonial and the Gothic. The author concentrates on the presentation of literary dreams, proffering a reading of Gothic interiors as the interior of the mind. He presents examples from the literary canon (Poe, Lovecraft, Dickens) as well as from the younger generation of postcolonial writers (Arundhati Roy) and suggests that to catch a glimpse of the evasive, flickering reflection of an interior we cannot look directly at the phenomenon, but, somewhat in Žižek’s fashion, we must look awry. Reading an “unaccountable space” of the unconscious as well as that of postcolonial fiction, Punter arrives at a paradoxical conclusion that the “‘interior’ is always modeled on the ‘exterior’, while being always prior to it.” **Dorota Wiśniewska** (University of Łódź, Poland) posits a monstrous body in the center of Gothic fiction and analyzes the phenomenon on examples of horror movies and literary cases from *Dracula* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *American Psycho*. Wiśniewska sees this centrality as a necessary transference of the “neglected, marginalized organic life” and reads skin as the contact zone between the outside and the inside, without stable meaning but rather necessarily imbued with conflicting messages about ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class. Monstrosity gains another dimension in **Rafał Boryśławski**’s text (University of Silesia, Poland), with which we leave the domain of the Gothic, yet remain within the gloomy province of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Boryśławski concentrates on the poetry’s visual aspects and provides examples from *Beowulf*, *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*. Here nature is presented as hostile and chaotic, yet it is only through contemplation of the external that we are provided with a glimpse of “the emanation of the divine order.” With **Łukasz Borowiec**’s essay (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland) we reach the end of the earthly endeavor: death is the focus of his essay, or, more specifically, the process of dying,

which is dissected as not only “lonely” but also “irrational.” Analyzing both the structure and the language of the play, Borowiec concentrates on the “physical interiority of dying” in Harold Pinter’s *Moonlight*.

All four sections of this collection, then, present a specific order: we start with an examination of the philosophical issues concerning the bodily dimension and interiors, to proceed with the body and mind analyzed in their re-shaped, misshapen and re-fashioned emanations. Then a view of the political facets of interiority is proffered, with emphasis on gender, class, and ethnicity, which in the postcolonial context are much contested dividing lines. Finally, the Gothic, the monstrous and the deadly provide an ultimate – in the most basic human sense – perspective on the bodily dimension of interiors. Certainly not exhausting the possibilities of understanding the variety of interiors and bodies, this volume aims at initiating a discussion that is as theoretical as it may prove fertile.

—Sonia Front
Katarzyna Nowak

PART I:

INTERIOR PHILOSOPHY AND BODY

CHAPTER ONE

IN/EXTERIORS:
THE THIRD OF THE BODY

WOJCIECH KALAGA

Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?

—Donna Haraway
A Manifesto for Cyborgs

If one really thinks about the body as such, there is no possible outline of the body as such. There are thinkings of the systematicity of the body, there are value codings of the body. The body, as such, cannot be thought, and I cannot approach it.

—Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,
“In a Word,” interview with Ellen Rooney

What I mean by the Third in the following discussion is a category emerging from an encounter of the same and the other—the encounter all too frequently leaving out an undefined space of the in-between.¹ Otherness, one of the key concepts of the contemporary discourse of the humanities, relies on the principle of *tertium not datur*, the excluded middle, which leaves no realm beyond the binary. The origin of this exclusion is rooted in what generally might be called a rationalist stance: from Descartes to structuralism, for which the binary opposition was the basis of defining linguistic and cultural reality. Even though, despite the demise of structuralism itself, binary thinking still persists and dominates, manifestations of the Third can be observed in some areas of modern thought along-

side tendencies towards binarism. One of these manifestations—surprisingly, a rationalist one—is Peirce’s concept of Thirdness as synthesis or law (having its distant predecessor in the Hegelian *Aufhebung*). Another is Bakhtin’s *chronotopos*, as the third of space and time. In poststructuralist (or pre-poststructuralist²) thought, the Third reveals itself in such concepts as Kristeva’s pre-linguistic semiotics and her use of *chora*, in Deleuzian notions of *pure game* and the fold, or in Derrida’s *différance* and supplement as a surplus of meaning. A more obvious manifestation of the Third is the idea of hybridity frequently foregrounded in the postmodern/poststructuralist discourse.

In short, the Third, in a fuzzy, nebulous form, occupies a place both overlapping and bracketing binaries. It is in this context and this mode that I want to take up the question of the body, its other and the third that emerges from their encounter. The approach adopted in my argument is not that of “objectifying” the body as a matter separate from, or even alien to, the mind, but rather a hermeneutics of the lived body, including the (inter-)subjective experience.

The body, in the Cartesian or classical framework, defines itself within the dichotomy inside-outside. A strong impulse to overcome that dichotomy comes from the feminist rethinking of the body, and more specifically from

rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject [...] by showing [...] the torsion of the one into another, the passage vector or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside.³

The feminist objective, generally speaking, is “to reclaim the body from the realms of immanence and biology in order to see it as a psycho-social product.”⁴ While leaving aside the ideological and political aspect of the feminist critique of the body, I will consider feminists’ claims and explorations on the one hand as a significant contribution to and, on the other hand, as a manifestation of the tendency in contemporary discourse towards a “non-dichotomous understanding of the body,”⁵ and towards overcoming and questioning the body’s immanence.

Within the poststructuralist/postmodernist paradigm, rather than of bodily states of affairs defined by the clear-cut inside/outside dichotomy, we should speak of processes of internalization and externalization—processes which tend towards their goal (and are thus teleological processes) but never fully succeed. Externalization and internalization—and not the stabilizing categories of the inside and the outside—are the two types of the dynamics of the body’s interaction with the world. The exter-

nalized always retains an element of sameness with the body, and the internalized retains a moment of otherness. It is at this junction that the Third appears. Yet, rather than in terms of the processes leading to its emergence—while keeping in mind its ever dynamic quality—it seems more productive, because more directly related to the present cultural discourse, to analyze the Third in terms of the lived experience of boundary overlap. I will, therefore, concentrate on three of its most pervasive manifestations: the pro-ject, the ab-ject and the in/ter-ject.

Pro-ject

The lived body is not confined to the anatomical flesh, clearly separated from its outside—the realm of otherness—but encompasses what has variously been called the phenomenal body, body image or gestalt, the imaginary body, the corporeal schema or the body schema,⁶ or what from a more generalizing perspective can be seen as a manifestation of the body's Third. The idea goes back to Henry Head's notion of a "postural schema," or "postural model" of the body:

It is to the existence of these 'schemata' that we owe the power of projecting our recognition of posture, movement, and locality *beyond the limits of our own bodies* to the end of some instrument held in the hand. [...] Anything which participates in the conscious movement of our bodies is added to the model of ourselves and becomes part of these schemata.⁷

In other words, the subject's corporeal experience and awareness reaches beyond the limits defined by physical boundaries. An effectual and appealing example of this transgression is the so-called phantom limb, a term coined by S. Weir Mitchell to describe the phenomenal experience of a limb that has in some way been severed, but remains a source of pain.

The quasi-presence of a phantom limb is only an emblematic manifestation of a more obvious presence—a corporeal transgression which, however, does not take on physical or corporeal substance, but which is still lived as part of corporeal experience. Especially valuable and relevant to the question of body boundaries—or, more exactly, questioning the definitive binarity of the inside-outside dichotomy with reference to the experience of body limits—is the work of Elizabeth Grosz, who casts doubt on the long-established interpretation of the phantom limb experience. Contrary to traditional psychology, for which the phantom limb is a memory, Grosz follows neurophysiologist Paul Schilder in treating the phantom limb as a (deficient) part of the body image and one of the proofs of the validity of this concept: "The phantom limb is not a memory or an image

(of something now absent). It is ‘quasi-present’. It is the refusal of an experience to enter into the past; it illustrates the tenacity of a present that remains immutable.”⁸

Following Schilder’s early and more recent research, and also relating to the work of Lacan on the early stages of infant development, Grosz questions the self-perception of the body as defined by anatomical limits:

The limits or the borders of the body image are not fixed by nature or confined to the anatomical ‘container’, the skin. The body image is extremely fluid and dynamic; its borders, edges and contours are ‘osmotic’—they have the remarkable power of incorporating and expelling outside and inside in an ongoing interchange.⁹

She also discerns a similar transgression of bodily confinement in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, one of those philosophers who persisted in subverting, or as we might say today, deconstructing the polarizing binarism of dichotomous thinking. As Grosz observes, Merleau-Ponty “affirms Schilder’s notion of the plasticity of the body image, adding to it the philosophical idea of the body image’s crucial function in establishing the lived space and time of the subject.”¹⁰ Body image thus mediates between consciousness and the space in which the body lives and interacts with objects.

A terminological remark is in place here. Some authors postulate a conceptual differentiation between the body image and the body schema. Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Cole, in a paper which originally appeared in *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* in 1995, propose the conscious or unconscious operation as the criterion for distinction. For them, the body image

consists of a complex set of intentional states—perceptions, mental representations, beliefs and attitudes—in which the intentional object of such states is one’s own body. Thus the body image involves a reflective intentionality.¹¹

Body schema, on the other hand, even though it “can have specific effects of cognitive experience [...], it does not have the status of a conscious representation or belief.” Body schema “involves a system of motor capacities, abilities, and habits that enable movement and the maintenance of posture.”¹² As such, body schema “can be functionally integrated with the environment, even to the extent that it frequently incorporates certain objects into its operations—the hammer in the carpenter’s hand, the feath-

er in the woman's hat, and so forth."¹³ However, as the writers also observe,

More permanent attachments to the body—such as prosthetic devices—can become incorporated into both the image and the schema of the body affecting our bearing and approach to the world in both conscious projection and movement. Similarly some prostheses and even clothes greatly affect the way in which we view ourselves and our personal image.¹⁴

While Gallagher and Cole may have their specific disciplinary reasons for making the distinction between body image and body schema, I follow the more dominant tradition (dating back to Schilder's earlier work) of using both terms interchangeably, without distinguishing between conscious and unconscious components of the experience, and referring generally to what Grosz calls "a 'fictional' or fantasmatic construction of the body outside or beyond its neurological structure."¹⁵ In this sense, the body image or schema, construed as a spatiotemporal projection of the subject's body, occupies an ambivalent position between the body and its "outside"; being neither the body itself nor its other, it belongs to the body as its Third. As the body's Third, it mediates between the body and its externality, the outside world, while involving both as its components.

This mediation, it has to be emphasized, consists of a two-directional movement. In one sense, body image is an effect of the negotiation of the body with space, a carving out from the outer space of a spacial (perpetually dynamic) fragment—a lived space which is body's own and incorporated into its image. Conversely, this process of projection involves its reversed double: the formation of the body image consists also in an incorporation of otherness, which then ceases to be otherness and becomes the body's third: "External objects, implements, and instruments with which the subject continually interacts become, while they are being used, intimate, vital, even libidinally cathected parts of body image."¹⁶ The absorption of the other, then, may occur not only on the level of language (ideology, prejudices. etc.), but also at the pre-rational level of the body; and, paradoxically, through its double projection into and of the surrounding space: "The body and its various sensations are projected onto the world, and conversely the world and its vicissitudes are introjected into the body of the subject-to-be."¹⁷

It is also important to observe that the body image is determined not only by the subject's individual psycho-somatic constitution, but also by the socio-historical and cultural context. This is clearly manifest in the phenomenon of so-called personal space: an intrusion into the space around the body is considered an infringement upon the self's (and the

body's) privacy—obviously an individual response—but the various types of distance delimiting this personal space in different cultures result from socio-cultural determination. Consequently, there is a similar individual/cultural parallel in the dynamics of the body image. On the one hand, it is subject to change on the diachronic axis of the subject's individual development: the body image changes, as Schilder claims following Freud, from early childhood throughout the subject's life, and may undergo major transformations in the case of psychic illness. At the same time, alterations in the socio-cultural context—through its conceptual apparatus, hierarchies of values, conventions etc.—will effect changes in individual body images.

What follows from the above remarks, then, is that body image, as Third, is subversive of boundaries and dichotomies in two senses: on the one hand—by constituting a realm of the subject's bodily reach extending beyond the physical flesh but experienced as a condition and part of the body's functioning—it undermines the clear-cut spatial boundaries between the corporeal inside and the outside world. On the other hand, it also undermines the body-mind duality: the lived experience of the world occurs in an inseparable interaction of body and mind projected into space.

Ab-ject

While the generally positive connotation of the pro-ject, as an effect of projection, is contained in the ambiguous morpheme *pro-* (forward, but also for), the ab-ject—even though it also pertains to body boundaries and margins—is the pro-ject's opposite. In two major and most influential discussions—by Mary Douglas and Julia Kristeva—it is identified with danger and horror, and relegated, albeit for different reasons, to the sphere of dirt, taboo, and impurity. Both Douglas and Kristeva approach the abject in negative terms: Douglas in terms of the danger of the margin to social homogeneity, Kristeva in terms of expulsion, but related to an individual (and primarily female) subject.

Mary Douglas, in her anthropological analysis of the concept of pollution and taboo in *Purity and Danger*—a book whose role as a source of inspiration for Kristeva is conspicuous—aims at demonstrating how the danger inflicted to bodily boundaries (or to the symbolism of those boundaries) symbolically coincides with the danger inflicted to community boundaries. (Douglas actually does not use the terms abject and abjection, but refuse, excrement, matter issuing from ..., etc.) While analyzing rites related to pollution, she opposes views reducing such rites to individual preoccupation with (the danger of) pollution of the body. Working on the

assumption that “the symbolism of body’s boundaries is used [...] to express danger to community boundaries,” she claims that the purity of the body reflects and symbolizes the integrity of a community:

When rituals express anxiety about the body’s orifices, the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority. [...] The threatened boundaries of their [Israelites, in this case] body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity and purity of the physical body. [...] The anxiety about bodily margins expresses danger to group survival. [...] The rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body.¹⁸

Yet, even if on the broader and more general anthropological level one has to appreciate Douglas’s contention that “the analysis of ritual symbolism cannot begin until we recognize ritual as an attempt to create and maintain a particular culture,”¹⁹ at the basis of this ritual lies the ambivalent status of that which subverts the clarity and purity of bodily margin.

Kristeva approaches the abject from the feminist psychoanalytical perspective (and reproaches Douglas for what truly is a merit of the latter’s book: namely that “a hasty assimilation of [...] data leads Mary Douglas naively to reject Freudian premises,”²⁰ a rather conceited comment given Kristeva’s indebtedness to Douglas’s analyses). Throughout *Powers of Horror*, abjection emerges as a broad concept relating to what threatens the subject’s identity, being neither completely the other nor fully a part of the subject’s sameness. Primarily, however, abjection relates to the pre-oedipal moment of the separation of the infant from the mother (or, more exactly, the mother’s body) and the consequent entrance into the (Lacanian) Symbolic Order and the submission under the Law of the Father. In the context of the prelinguistic mapping of the body (maternal, according to Kristeva) as opposed to the symbolic (paternal) and, consequently, linguistic order, abjection may be seen as a semantic concept, an interesting instance of the meaning’s third. Here, however, I want to concentrate on the corporeal aspect of abjection—the abject in its physical form. I will abstract here from Kristeva’s ideological purposes and the purposes of the feminist discourse her work has generated, whose objective is to undermine the patriarchal hierarchy of clear-cut bodily cleanliness (male) as opposed to “dirt” and “horrifying” abjection (female). What interests me rather is the opposition to the Cartesian-driven ontology of solidity and separateness.

This solidity may be exemplified by the concept of body construed as container, as delineated, for example, by Mark Johnson: “Our encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of

our bodily experience.”²¹ On Johnson’s account, reflecting the (apparently) generally shared experience, we apprehend our bodies as “three-dimensional containers” into which various things, like food and fluids, are put, and from which other things come out. Yet the proclaimed obviousness of the shared experience of self-containment is obviously undermined by the ambiguous nature of the substances issuing from the body—the abject.

The disturbance of the clear-cut opposition between the body and its other by the third, the abject, occurs on two planes. In what might be called the soft version or plane, even though involving physical abject matter, it refers to the self-constitution of the subject. Judith Butler rightly observes that “the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constituted outside of the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, ‘inside’ the subject as its own founding repudiation.”²² In other words, if the subject’s identity—including corporeal identity—is constituted in opposition to the refused abject, then the “trace” of the abject itself is incorporated into subjectivity: the psychological and cognitive ambiguity thus reconfirms physical ambiguity. The operation of the Third as abject coalesces here partly with the Third of the body image; the organic objects, the separated bits of the body and its by-products or waste products, also constitute a part of the body image: “The voice, the breath, the odour, faeces, menstrual blood, urine, semen, are still parts of the body image even when separated in space from the body.”²³

On the other plane—in its hard material version—what further undermines the I/Other, inside/outside opposition is the ambiguous ontological status of the abject with respect to body’s identity:

The abject is what of the body falls away from it while remaining irreducible to the subject/object and inside/outside oppositions. The abject necessarily partakes of both polarized terms but cannot be clearly identified with either.²⁴

And, as Grosz has observed earlier, these rejected organic components “retain something of the cathexis and value of a body part even when they are separated from the body.”²⁵ Important here is the temporal determination of spacial inclusion/exclusion: the moment of radical separation from the body of what has been a part of its apparent totality—the moment extended to a continuum through the permanent activity of the flesh refusing itself. In the ontological sense, the abject vacillates between the body and non-body; what is now me (my nails, my hair, my mucus) in a moment may become not-me (the abject): “Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either.”²⁶ The Third.

Furthermore, most of the abject substances (apart from hair, nails, scab and crust) are fluid, which further destabilizes the solidity of the body. These body fluids, as Elizabeth Grosz observes, “attest to the permeability of the body, its necessary dependence on an outside, its liability to collapse into the outside (this is what death implies), to the perilous division of the body’s inside and its outside.”²⁷ From the point of view of disgust and fear, one might devise a hierarchy of those abject stimuli, with tears, sweat and saliva at one extreme and excrement and urine at the other. Yet these hierarchies can easily be overthrown: the romantic lover kissing the tears off his beloved’s face and the masochist lover eating excrement or drinking urine in de Sade’s world both aim at intimacy. Purity of the substance is not the point: Kristeva is right when she writes that, “It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect order, position, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”²⁸

While ontologically limited to the material and occupying the lowest stratum in the cultural hierarchy, the abject Third reaches also into the metaphysical and eschatological. The vulnerability of bodily boundaries,²⁹ the ease with which the refuse undergoes the temporal conversion from alive to dead, while still retaining a material link with the its origin, the subject’s flesh, constitute a permanent reminder of the subject’s own temporality: of the Heideggerian being-towards-death. Kristeva stresses this eschatological aspect of the abject:

These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such waste drops so that I might live, until from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit—cadere, cadaver.³⁰

Even though from the organic point of view this might be seen as a simplification because there is a continual reproduction of the refuse, eschatologically the abject Third remains a material embodiment of finality and thus a cause of anxiety, of *Angst*, in the face of the ultimate.

In/ter-ject

In/terjection as a mode of emergence of the Third of the body is more heterogeneous than the previous fields of its operation and, as the title of this section suggests, involves both the surface of the body and its in-depth constitution. In the following discussion, I will focus on the amalgamation

of the organic and the inorganic (or alien), especially the technological, consisting either in an invasive integration of the other with the body's structure (metaphorically: in-jection), or their surface merger (inter-jection). Both types, although in different measure, raise ontological questions of liminality and hybridity. I will illustrate the first type with the increasingly notorious issue of the implant, and the second with parergon and interface.

Third as Parergon

Beyond the soma, in cultural terms, the body may be seen, and is now seen, as text. The textuality of the body makes it legitimate to view its surface limit as a parergon, the concept made available to contemporary theory by Jacques Derrida in *The Truth in Painting*, where he uses it with reference to the textuality of works of art. With respect to the body, the "parergonization" of its surface is an effect of an intrusion, either the subject's own or imposed by the socio-cultural context, or both. Ranjana Khanna, commenting on Derrida's comment on the concept of beauty in Kant ("neither the finality nor the end, neither the lacking goal nor the lack of a goal, but the edging in *sans* of the pure cut,"³¹) places emphasis on radical intervention: "The aesthetics of the parergon is especially concerned with this cut or interruption...."³² This applies equally well to the text/ure of the body, in which case the "cut" consists in an incorporation into its surface of the other, which now, with the moment of incorporation, ceases being the other but, not fully being the body itself, becomes the body's Third. The visibility of the parergon is the effect of this Third.

While parergon is frequently perceived in terms of a threat or danger to the border (it carries "implications of threatened borders, their antinomies, and the opening up of oneself to potential risk and damage by the supplement or trace threatening the border" or "damage caused by the supplement"³³), this is not necessarily so in the case of the body. Despite the metaphorical "cut," the mechanism of intervention need not be violent, and even if it is, it may at the same time involve a welcome incorporation of the Third into the body's surface for the sake of expounding its textuality.

Many of the practices of parergonization of the body have been known since remote times (and in cultures remote to the West), but it is only in the context of postmodernity that these interventions have become discursively identifiable as forms of negotiation of the body and its other, and as undermining the limits of both flesh and self. The practices of the production of the parergon Third are multifarious: from mild alterations of the