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**Fictive Images and the Feminist Democratic
Imagination**

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by

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation titled "Fictive Images and the Feminist Democratic Imagination," examines post-9/11 identity politics through Art Spiegelman's craft of cartooning. Using Spiegelman's work on 9/11, *In The Shadow Of No Towers* (2004), I study both his style of image making (cartoons) and his images (cartoon figures of animals and ghosts) to reflect on new possibilities for feminist democratic theory and politics. I use the term "fictive images" to describe the cartoon images that work beyond categorical oppositions of the fictional and non-fictional. Fictive images constitute a mode of visualization which in its blurring of the identity categories of the human and real, deftly illuminates the construction of these categories themselves. Wedded to deconstructive ways of knowing, fictive images are a mode of visualizing (im)possibilities that have been rendered unintelligible by dominant ways of perceiving the world. By focusing on 9/11 my dissertation situates these reflections as a response to working through the trauma of the event. It is the ethic of possibility that fuels my project, an attempt to unwrap the emancipatory potentials of feminist democratic politics in speaking to the needs of our times. What kind of feminist politics can speak to 9/11 without being trapped in its vicious circle of violence? How do we move beyond simply mirroring the present conditions where we are unwittingly legitimating the very divisions we seek to contest? Fictive images dare to dream beyond codings, and provide a prism to visualize democratic politics after 9/11.

In my dissertation I explore how the apparently simple form of cartooning illuminates complex reality with breathtaking dexterity. Through their deceptive simplicity, cartoons demonstrate the freedom to play with ideas, to reveal contradictions which necessitate thinking beyond prescriptions. By playing with normal pictures, Spiegelman's cartoons undo a singular

mode of seeing or doing. Animal cartoon images are used by Spiegelman to problematize identity constructions and emphasize stereotypes. They provide a means to work through issues of accurate representation by playing on the category of "human" itself. While Aristotle and other political theorists use the "animal" to affirm man's political identity, Spiegelman uses animals as a means of "undoing identity." These animals exhibit the active tension in a politics that creates boundaries (of form, territory, and ideology). The animals haunt our notion of human differences. The cartooned ghost images work alongside the animal images. Spiegelman's ghost image in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* is a picture of the North Tower glowing with fire. The "haunting" is a means for Spiegelman to work through the trauma of the past and the present. This directs our attention to a "politics" throbbing with "life" in its very engagement with its "ghosts."

I propose specter-cular democracy as counter politics to the present. Premised on a deconstructive and utopian ethos, specter-cular democracy would be in constant conversation with otherness and alterity. Blurring boundaries and boundedness, specter-cular democracy is transformative and regenerative in inspiring mobile becomings fueled by the democratic energy of incessant yearnings. I theorize on future-oriented feminist democratic politics through the prism of specter-cular democracy. This mode of doing politics would provide an antidote to the politics of binaries which encapsulate the "other." It would showcase the tenuousness of our social constructions, their investments. Irreverent of the "real," a future oriented feminist democratic politics would be border-crossing, borders of conventions, identities, nations, and bodies. I argue for a democratic image (ination) vibrantly alive and ebullient, conscious of its processual quality, and tuned to a constant process of becoming. My project theorizes about transformative politics through visual images. I emphasize that image (de)building can astutely

showcase our world building, an indispensable analytical motivation. Living at all times with/in images, I argue that by playing with images, re-imagining them, we can re-envision democratic prospects and possibilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Images	vii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Chapter 1 Fictive Images and the Feminist Democratic Imagination.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 What do I mean by democratic imagination?.....	15
1.3 What are "fictive images"?	28
1.4 Foils and catalysts: situating the theory	38
1.5 The feminist democratic imagination:an ethic of possibility	44
1.6 Overview of arguments	45
Chapter 2 Cartooning 9/11:Art Spiegelman's Visual Politics	49
2.1 Introduction.....	49
2.2 Responses to 9/11.....	50
2.3 What is a cartoon?	56
2.4 Undoing of identity as a response to 9/11	60
2.5 Spiegelman's response.....	64
2.6 Spiegelman's cartoons and the undoing of identity	68
Chapter 3 Becoming Animal and Deconstructing Animality: A Feminist Exploration .	91
3.1 Introduction	91
3.2 The political animal and animal politics	94
3.3 Feminism, the question of the animal, and feminist democratic politics today.....	105
3.4 Spiegelman's response.....	116
3.5 Conclusion.....	130
Chapter 4 Specter-cular Democracy.....	135
4.1 Introduction.....	135
4.2 Security and liberal democracy.....	136
4.3 The spectacle and the specter.....	148
4.4 Spiegelman's ghosts and ghostly politics.....	160
4.5 Conclusion.....	176
Chapter 5 (In)Conclusion.....	184
Bibliography.....	202

LIST OF IMAGES

Fig. 1, page 1: Source: <http://cagle.msnbc.com/working/051213/englehart.gif>.

Fig. 2, page 36: Source: Women's eNews, 12/18/05,

<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/context/commentoon>.

Fig. 3, page 52: Source: Long 2007, 284.

Fig. 4, page 54: Source: Bok 2002, 41.

Fig. 5, page 73: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

Fig. 6, page 78: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 6.

Fig. 7, page 82: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1 and Plate VI.

Fig. 8, page 90: Source: Spiegelman 2004, front cover.

Fig. 9, page 119: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 2.

Fig. 10, page 121: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 9.

Fig. 11, page 125: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 5.

Fig. 12, page 126: Source: Image from *Maus in* Baker 1993, 147.

Fig. 13, page 141: Source:

<http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/images/blbushsecurityybkanet.htm>.

Fig. 14, page 163: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

Fig. 15, page 169: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

Fig. 16, page 171: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 2.

Fig. 17, page 175: Source: Spiegelman 2004, 9.

Fig. 18, page 179: Source:

<http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/images/blbushdubcula.htm>.

Fig. 19, page 200: Source: Photo by Alexa Schriempf 2005.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

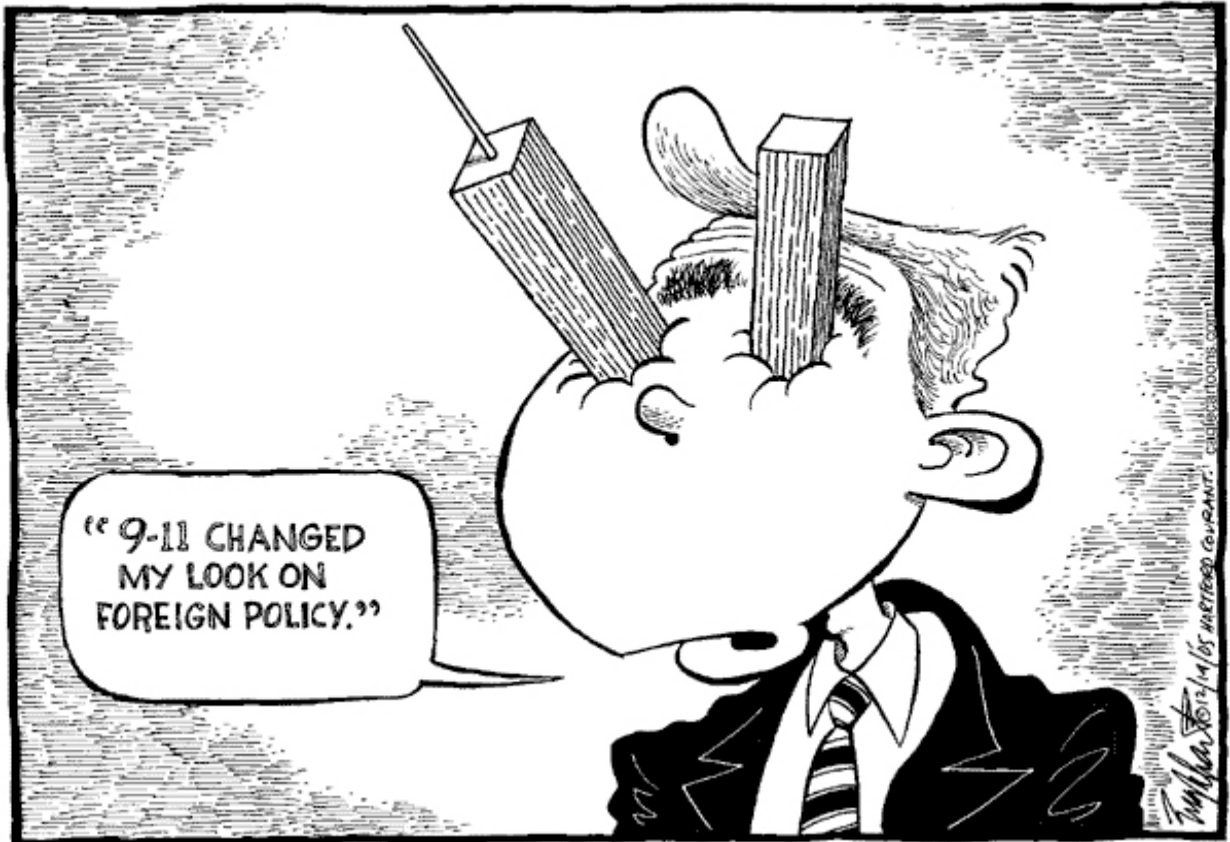


Figure 1¹

9/11 changed my look on politics. I was in India, when the attacks shook our world. The Indian press, along with the media in the rest of the world, went wild. Initially, they went wild, not with critique, but, in the sheer possibility of spectacular news coverage of this terrifyingly glamorous event. Two planes flying straight at and destroying the World Trade Center in America! How could/did that happen? Stunned disbelief kept audiences around the world glued

¹ Source: <http://cagle.msnbc.com/working/051213/englehart.gif>

to the screens of their TV sets. The image of the collapsing world trade center shadowed all conversations; the world stared at the incredulous, all invincibility made vulnerable. The burning twin towers questioned the super-power imaginary, broadened the spectrum of terrorism, and riddled our conceptions of controllable time and space. Above all, notwithstanding the real human tragedy involved, the events of that September day, pierced us through our eyes, very much like the image above. The towers remained embedded in our eyes for days after. American foreign policy justified itself around the collapse of the towers. As the image showcases, the burnt towers re-materialized on our eyes. The twin towers singularly ruled our vision, eradicating other horizons of vision. The twin towers 9/11 is/was a visual phenomenon, macabre fire-works destined to haunt our politics and its imaginary. Figure 1 frames the phallic symbolism of 9/11. The twin towers were the pinnacle of global capitalism and its castration ensured the super-power's wrath.

Initially, I grappled with the difficult prospect of obtaining a visa to study in the US. Increased security checks made all procedures even more daunting. The events of that September day had ramifications far beyond individual visas and travel plans. But, visas are never simply just the access document they purport to be and, individual issues are never solely private. 9/11 affected all our personal lives in myriad ways, justified under State-driven language of security concerns. Telephone lines were tapped, and computer accounts accessed without consent. Our public life was affected as well, since thereafter congregating in large numbers in any space was deemed extremely dangerous and a threat to public order. In India, I remember being cautioned against watching a film in a movie theater after 9/11. The apprehensive people were convinced that "international terrorists" who blew up the world trade

center, would certainly target our movie theaters in consort with our local terrorists. The assumption being that Bollywood (the Indian film industry) was symbolic of India as the World Trade Center was to America. I am not trivializing the event or its effects on people, but simply trying to showcase the personal, everyday effects of so distant an event, its haunting of local spaces around the world. No symbolic, meaningful space was safe anymore. Ground-zero came to be imagined in every space.

More than three thousand people were killed on September 11, 2001. America declared war against an enemy which was largely amorphous, nebulous, defined as "evil." The economy reeled after the attack.² Amidst a faltering economy, increased security and military spending, the powers of government expanded intrusively. An aggressive foreign policy which did not heed treaties or consult its allies was used as a benchmark to install the new attitude of governance—pro-active, interventionist, preemptive. Witnessing the Superpower's superagency amidst the creation of the Homeland Security Department, and passage of the Patriot Act, many lamented the fall of American democracy (Wolin 2008; Butler 2004; Baudrillard 2002 etc.).³ The super-

² See <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/aug02/homeland.asp>. Close to 200,000 jobs were destroyed or relocated out of New York City, at least temporarily. The destruction of physical assets was estimated in the national accounts to amount to \$14 billion for private businesses, \$1.5 billion for state and local government enterprises and \$0.7 billion for federal enterprises. Rescue, cleanup and related costs have been estimated to amount to at least \$11 billion for a total direct cost of \$27.2 billion.

³ The Homeland Security Act (HSA) was pushed through Congress in the months following 9/11, to better protect America from future terrorist attacks. The 484-page Act was the biggest change in the federal government in over 50 years. Its passage, on November 25, 2002, consolidated more than 20 existing federal agencies into a single Homeland Security Department, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

The USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) was signed into law on October 26, 2001. The Act expands the powers of the government (for example, the government may seize papers and property owned by citizens for terror investigation).

citizens watched in horror, shock, and awe their melting Bill of Rights. Sheldon Wolin writes, "No previous administration in American history had demanded such extraordinary powers in order to muster the resources of the nation in pursuit of an enterprise as vaguely defined as 'the war against terrorism' or demanded such an enormous outlay of public funds for a mission whose end seemed far distant and difficult to recognize if and when it might be achieved" (2008, 73).

Americans reacted to the terrorism of 9/11, with terror at home, and abroad.⁴ Terror mirrored terror. The war on terror unleashed havoc and death in Afghanistan and Iraq. The war against terrorism was of global reach, the enemy or "evil" seen and unseen. As Wolin succinctly notes, "Terrorism, power without boundaries, becomes the template for superpower; the measureless, the illegitimate, becomes the measure of its counterpart" (2008, 73).⁵ In other words, the Superpower models itself on the terrorism it seeks to combat and vice versa. Two forms of power, terrorism and super-power remain locked in indefinite mimicry. Both become pervasive, measureless, endangering democracy, and its subjects. As terrorism can strike anywhere, anytime, the superpower models itself accordingly. Uncertain time and space become simple alibi for a State's policies to intrude any time and space. "The war against terrorists of global reach," according to the US government's National Security Strategy, "is a global enterprise of uncertain duration" (quoted in Wolin 2008, 72). As terrorists swarm globally, the super-power follows suit. As power reflects power, politics becomes de-politicized, reactive to a

⁴ The terror at home and abroad was not the same kind of terror. Terror at home instilled a subjective attitude of awe and powerlessness, while terror abroad violated International law. However, despite the need to understand differences in space (i.e., home and abroad), it is very difficult to neatly demarcate space in the context of the government's extensive and aggressive intervention in all spaces.

⁵ The term "superpower" first gained parlance in the 1950s in relation to the US and USSR where they were designated as the two super-powers of the world. In the contemporary world, the term denotes a power which can project dominating power anywhere in the world.

power politics that keeps it firmly within its own orbit. Where is the space for democratic functioning or democratic re-imagining within this orbit of sheer violence, of vicious mimicry?

People all over the world responded to the events of 9/11 in a variety of ways. Disbelief led to scathing criticism of the terrorist attacks, condolence to the family members of those killed in the attacks, candle light vigils, amidst repeated media re-playing of the burning towers in everybody's homes and eyes. The left, academicians, intellectuals, criticized US foreign policy which was not bereft of blame in provoking the attacks. Noam Chomsky saw the attacks as a carry-on effect of US sponsored terrorism during the cold war and thereafter. Arundhati Roy declared that bin Laden had been, "sculpted from the spare rib of a world laid waste by America's foreign policy" (quoted in Butler 2004a, 10).⁶ In the face of "un-patriotic" criticism President Bush retorted that "Either you're with us or you're with the terrorists," join us or face the certain prospect of death and destruction. Force mirrored force; violence was met with violence at the cost of democracy.⁷

⁶ Similarly Frederic Jameson argued that "America created bin Laden during the Cold War (and in particular during the Soviet war in Afghanistan), and that this is therefore a textbook case of dialectical reversal" (In Jay 2003, 184). Martin Jay offers a critique of this perspective in his book *Refractions of Violence* (2003). To him, from the perspective of those who suffered in 9/11, it was the coldest of comfort to be told that their misery was due to the logic of dialectical reversal. Jay urges us to re-think dialectical thinking in a meaningful way that honors the irreducible value of individual lives (2003, 187).

⁷ Edward Said depicted the Bush administration as "American Taliban" intent on branding as guilty anyone it suspects of engaging in anti-American behavior. Said laments the unending stereotypes in the Us against Islam, and in the Islamic world against the US: "I'm not saying that Arabs are innocent," Said emphasized, "Nor am I saying that the fault is entirely the United States. . . . There is no monolithic U.S., just as there is no monolithic Arab world or Islam - which has now been compressed into one rather narrow and unforgiving all-purpose formula signifying terrorism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism" (2001, 20). Said lamented the "unfortunate triumph of all these idiotic, super-real, and atrophied labels, in which in the Arab world, the U.S. has become shorthand for all our ills, and in the United States the Arabs have become a universal symbol of violence and intransigence and anti-Americanism. The result promises to be unending conflict" (2001, 22).

What kind of politics would question the mirroring of violence? How do we move beyond the status-quo of the present where we remain reinscribing our "states of injury"? This question is the central invocation in my dissertation, its propellant. If the burning towers/beams remain pierced inside our eyes, can we still see? How do we re-vision ourselves and our politics after 9/11? My dissertation explores the possibilities of a democratic re-visioning after 9/11.

Is 9/11 a "major event" in world history? Does looking to 9/11 as a major pointer in world history carry a set of problems that are antagonistic to my project's "democratic" agenda? Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida reflected on the question of 9/11 as a "major event" in conversation with Giovanna Borradori soon after the attacks on the World Trade center. Habermas calls 9/11 the "first historic world event" (Borradori 2003, 49).

Perhaps September 11 could be called the first historic world event in the strictest sense: the impact, the explosion, the slow collapse—everything that was not Hollywood anymore but, rather, a gruesome reality, literally took place in front of the 'universal eyewitness' of a global public (2003, 49).

The global public saw only a minimal amount of footage of what happened on the ground during the Gulf War. In 1991 the global public was given a media construction; in 2001, to Habermas, the same global public became a "universal eyewitness." On the other hand, Jacques Derrida, asks us to question the naming of September 11 as a major event: "We do not in-fact know what we are saying or naming in this way: September 11, *le 11 septembre*, September 11, 9/11" (2003, 86). By being attentive to language, Derrida extols us to understand what is going on "*beyond* language," and what pushes us to repeat endlessly without understanding what we are repeating ("September 11, *le 11 septembre*, September 11, 9/11") (2003, 88). Derrida notes that an "event" is made up of the "thing" itself (that which happened), and the impression of the

"thing" (at once spontaneous and controlled). Derrida urges us to think about mass murders that were not recorded, interpreted, felt or presented as "major events" and which did not give the "impression" of being unforgettable catastrophes (2003, 89). How do we distinguish between two "impressions"? Probing deeper into the question, Derrida writes:

What is an impression? What is a belief? But especially: what is an event worthy of this name? And a "major" event, that is, one that is actually more of an "event," more actually an "event," than ever? An event that would bear witness, in an exemplary or hyperbolic fashion, to the very essence of an event or even to an event beyond essence? For could an event that still conforms to an essence, to a law or to a truth, indeed to a concept of the event, ever be a major event? A major event should be so unforeseeable and irruptive that it disturbs even the horizon of the concept or essence on the basis of which we believe we recognize an event as such. That is why all the "philosophical" questions remain open, perhaps even beyond philosophy itself, as soon as it is a matter of thinking the event (2003, 90).

Derrida extols us to question the naming of an event as a "major event." In a way, one cannot anticipate an essentially major event, because if it does conform to an essence with a law or truth, it would cease to be a major event. To Derrida, a major event is "unforeseeable" and "irruptive" as it disturbs our horizon of essential beliefs: "The event is what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend comprehension: the event is first of all *that I do not comprehend*" (2003, 90). Working with his definition of an event, Derrida continues to probe the naming of 9/11 as a major event. He points out that it was not impossible to anticipate an attack by "terrorists" on American soil. Besides the Oklahoma City bombings, there had already been a bombing attack against the Twin Towers a few years back. Moreover, even though the word "major" suggests a quantitative evaluation, the evaluation cannot rest on a quantitative assessment of the size of the towers, the territory attacked, or the number of victims. One knows, of course, that the dead are not counted in the same manner from one

corner of the globe to the other. Derrida draws our attention to the complex machinery involving history, politics, the media, and so on that construct an event as a "major event." Derrida points out that since the end of the cold war, the world order depends largely on the credit of American power (2003, 93). To destabilize this superpower, is to risk destabilizing the entire world. Thus what are threatened are not only the forces and powers that depend on the order assured by the superpower, but more radically still, the conceptual, semantic, and hermeneutic apparatus that might have allowed one to comprehend September 11 (Derrida in Borradori 2003, 93).

Derrida's analysis helps to uncover the linguistic and visual politics of 9/11, its complicity with hegemonic world politics. Moving beyond Habermas's description of 9/11 as a "major event," Derrida urges a nuanced understanding of this political nomenclature. Derrida does not disapprove Habermas's description of 9/11. Indeed, Derrida does not argue that 9/11 is not a major event. Instead, he urges us to delve into the ethics and politics of 9/11 as a major event.⁸ Indeed, if the burning tower is a "major event" and occupies our entire eyes (as Figure 1 demonstrated), how do we see that which covers our eyes, and beyond it? In this historical juncture, responsible and responsive scholarship has to read the event, understand the intricacies of any reading, and seek to move beyond it.

I situate myself as a feminist political theorist endeavoring towards responsive and responsible scholarship in speaking to our contemporary times. Perhaps not in vain, I seek a different vocabulary for politics that would transgress the set limitations of the present. I want

⁸ Simon Morgan Wortham in *Derrida: Writing Events (2008)*, explores how deconstruction thinks of writing the event, and argues that this equips us to carry a deconstructive thinking of the event into the archive of all our cultures and disciplines whatever they may be (2008, 15).

to reclaim a feisty politics that emphasizes the energy in democratic politics through an understanding of its image (innings). Feminist political theory has a unique responsibility in our present times when it must be simultaneously alert to the tensions of the present, articulate it, and provide a prism to transgress its limitations. Reclamation of democratic politics does not simply entail critique, but also an embracing of excess, of possibilities that provide the life-blood of democratic politics. In fact, for democratic politics, the envisioning of possibilities is as much its propellant as its rationale and reason for being. A programmatic mode of political theorization would remain embedded in the program of the present, its codes and models of action.⁹ Its possibilities would remain trapped within stipulated borders. In theorizing about possibilities, I work with a deconstructive and reconstructive mode of theorization that unwraps the meaning of the present and works towards alternative reconfigurations.

9/11 was configured as a visual phenomenon. The spectacle of the burning twin towers was an image of horror that imprinted itself in the minds of the entire world. This image justified greater surveillance by our government, greater control of the people, than *by* the people. Thus, as counter-politics to the present, I propose theorizing on transgressive politics based on the image. Countering an image by other images could be seen as mirror politics—politics of identical reflections and not really transgression. However, I maintain that transgressive politics that moves beyond the status-quo of the present has to work with the image(ination). And, counter-politics do not mean a politics pitted against its nemesis, without any vestiges of that which it seeks to overcome. Counter-politics un-does the parameters of expounded normalcy of post 9/11 politics that de-politicizes, or encourages apathy through the

⁹ An example of a programmatic mode of theorization is deliberative proceduralism that sees democracy in proper speeches of conduct. See Habermas (1984; 1990).

visual politics of shock and fear. In variance with de-politicizing normalization of hegemonic political imaginary, counter-politics involves a de-territorialization or shifting of the territories of image formulation and circulation. Counter-politics involves border-crossing, world-travelling, all of which is impossible without recourse to the image(ination).

The counter-politics that I propose works in active consort with our imagination. I look to cartoons, animals, and ghosts to formulate a re-envisioning of politics. Cartoons, animals, and ghosts? I bring these three modes of imagery together to emphasize the creative dissonance that propels the play of the imagination. In a sense the puzzlement that accrues in bringing these three together is the first step in my project of destabilizing the boundaries of the natural, real, and reasonable. In the preface to *The Order of Things* (1973), Foucault refers to a remarkable passage from the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. The passage quotes "a certain Chinese encyclopedia in which it is written that animals are divided into"

(a) belonging to the Emperor; (b) embalmed; (c) tame; (d) suckling pigs; (e) sirens; (f) fabulous; (g) stray dogs; (h) included in the present classification; (i) frenzied; (j) innumerable; (k) drawn with a very fine camel hair brush; (l) et cetera; (m) having first broken the water pitcher; and (n) that from a long way off looks like flies.

Foucault reports laughing when he read this:

This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought...breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age old distinction between the Same and the Other (1973, 11).

More modestly, my emphasis on the democratic imagination through cartoons, animals and ghosts is meant to provoke the laughter that Foucault experienced when reading Borges. The

three imaginings (cartoons, animals, and ghosts) signal different levels/scales of analysis. In the tension in and between these images lies democracies' spirited revelry; therein lies its (ir)rationale, where it violates our sense of order and the rules we learn about classification. Foucault in *The Order of Things*, does still maintain that systems of thought and knowledge are governed by rules, which operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given period. Thinking of cartoons, animals, and ghosts, even when they counter the present, emerges out of the conditions governed by the present. Determined by the boundaries of the present and its conceptual possibilities, they seek to subvert it. In my dissertation, I work with cartoons, animals, and ghosts to posit a mode of politics after 9/11, which purposively mocks at the pretensions and protocols of serious order, questions it, and reveals its insidious working. I aim to work towards alternative conceptualizations.

Cartoons can provide a visual image (ining) of politics, a critique of its fallacies and foibles, as well as renderings of an alternative future. Through their deceptive simplicity, cartoons provide an intricately webbed visual narrative of the present and beyond. They allow the artist the freedom to play with ideas, to reveal contradictions/absurdities, which encourage the viewer to think beyond impositions/prescriptions towards further emancipatory imaginings. They are not simply in opposition to the real/rational or even a satiric comment on the real/rational, but help us to move beyond the real/rational by acting as a fiery catalyst towards different imaginings. These images can configure, de-configure, and re-configure reality to provide an expanding zone for democratic articulation. The creativity in this articulation has significant political connotations where it expands our very understanding of a democratic arena.

The polychromatic and playfully diffused nature of the boundaries displayed in the cartoons creates a space for the working of the democratic imagination.

Situated on the hyphen between words and pictures, cartoons have been known to be controversial and hard-hitting. Art Spiegelman writing in the aftermath of the Danish "cartoon war" attempts to delineate an important political space for cartoons where they manage to speak "truth to power" (2006, 46).¹⁰ Cartoonist's insolent portrayal of power politics has marked historical precedents. Honore Daumier's cartoons of Louis-Philippe, Art Young's anti-World War I cartoons, and George Grosz's anti-Nazi cartooning are well known. Political cartooning's rich ancestry runs throughout history. From the use of caricatures during the Protestant Reformation, Benjamin's Franklin's cartoon of the severed snake, Thomas Nast's cartoons on the corrupt Tweed, and beyond, cartoons have a rich and prolific history.¹¹ The potential of this

¹⁰ The Danish cartoon controversy of 2005 began when twelve editorial cartoons, most of which depicted Muhammad, was published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. Danish Muslim organizations protested against the depiction of Muhammad in the cartoons. The controversy spread to many other countries followed by widespread protests by Muslims around the world. Around 100 people dies in violent incidents around the cartoon controversy, more than 800 were injured, and Danish embassies in Syria, Lebanon, and Iran were set on fire by violent protestors. Art Spiegelman in his article titled "Drawing Blood: outrageous cartoons and the art of outrage," points to the mocking tone in many cartoons that are bound to offend all Believers (2006). To him the tragedy of the Danish cartoon war is that it really wasn't about the cartoons at all. Spiegelman emphasized, "Cartoons, even hateful ones, are symptoms of a disease, not the cause" (2006, 43).

¹¹ Political movements as far back as the Protestant Reformation used visual propaganda in the form of caricatures images of prominent political and social figures (Shikes in Becker 1996, unpaginated). Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die," which showcases a severed snake whose parts represent the colonies is acknowledged as the first political cartoon in America. The image was explicitly political as Franklin used it in support of his plan for intercolonial association to deal with the Iroquois at the Albany Congress of 1754 (Hess and Kaplan in Becker 1996, unpaginated). Moving on, cartoons have flourished throughout our political history. A striking example is Thomas Nast's cartoons on the corrupt Tweed. Roger A. Fischer writes: "The Story of William "Marcy" Tweed and his *bete noir* Tom Nast is known to most students of American history and familiar to every aficionado of the history of American political cartooning. . . This confrontation is credited by consensus with establishing once and forever a fledgling craft. . . as an enduring presence in American political culture. In its telling is exemplified those salient themes dear to the collective scholarship of the medium, such as it is-- the power of the giants of the genre to fuse creative caricature, clever situational transpositions, and honest indignation to arouse the populace and alter for the better the

medium to mock at established order needs to be given serious consideration in understanding its political efficacy and use. Even though cartoons have been a prolific presence in our political life, not all cartoons are democratic when they showcase harmful discriminating stereotypes and maintain the hierarchical power play on the marginalized. I do recognize the non-democratic potential in cartoons. Recognizing this potential does not undermine my emphasis on the democratic possibilities through cartooning. Instead, it leads me to a richer understanding of the workings of this medium, its multifaceted politics.

Cartoons may depict the animalistic workings of society. However, "animalism" is not simply a satiric political complaint. Animals have been an important entity in our political imagination from the foundations of political thinking. Since Aristotle's characterization of "man as a political animal," animals have been used by political philosophers not only to explain the nature of man, but also, his community and life urges, inadequacies as well as endowments. Although present in all our dominant political treatises, the animal is curiously swallowed in a parallel process. Consumed by the anthropocentric gaze, the animal serves man's purpose in arriving at a definition of man and his politics. Cartoonist Thomas Nast's use of the Democratic Donkey and the Republican Elephant made these animals the symbols of partisan politics. Animals and Cartoons offer a way of image (ining) man, both in comparison to the animal and to the real. Both exhibit the active tensions in politics. Both "haunt" politics.

course of human events" (quoted in Becker 1996, unpaginated). Becker's study of the history of political cartooning traces its development through the works of other cartoonists like Joseph Keppler, a cartoonist of the Gilded Age. Keppler's magazine *Puck*, showcased cartoons through which the ideas of the intellectual elite could be relayed to the masses (Becker 1996, unpaginated). Becker uses a lithograph from the four hundredth issue of *Puck* to conclude his own assessment on the vibrant (and continual) history of political cartooning: "Men may come and men may go, but the work of reform goes on forever" (Becker 1996, unpaginated).

Along with animals and cartoons, I explore how ghostly politics recognizes no end per se but a repetitive haunting. Ghostly politics does not entail a monotonous enactment or paralysis but emphasizes the continuous life of possibilities which knows no singular end. This directs our attention to a "politics" throbbing with "life" in its very engagement with "ghosts." "Ghosts" signify the very nature of political reality which is not black or white, living or dead, not here nor there. This necessitates an understanding that is discordant and disjointed, not predicted or patterned. In engaging with ghosts the reassuring order of the present is always in doubt. Normative schemes posit the boundaries, demarcations and enclosures. They create "ghosts" who are neither in this world, nor outside, and have a uniquely fragile, irresolute, illegal, and tempestuous identity. Their intangibility (not within "normal" norms) marks their "unrealness," a ghostly theory of politics always proves problematic. Its incessant problematization renders problematic even that which in a certain frame does not seem a problem. Thus ghosts "disturb", "shake" and "haunt." They operate within a logic which is larger and more powerful than an ontology which only subscribes to a thinking of Being with a definite end. Here there is no end but only further possibilities, a constant striving. The ghost does not live or die. It haunts. Nothing is stultified or stagnant, where the very possibility of life bespeaks the necessity of engaging with ghosts. The democratic imagination needs to be haunted productively.¹²

¹² The above description contains my account of the potentials of a ghostly democratic politics which does not heed closure. Ghostly politics can be non-democratic as well when citizens are paralyzed with fear and thus do not act in accordance with the political energy characteristic of dynamic democratization. Also, ghosts are associated with the "unenlightened" premodern subject who is not well suited to a modern democratic society. Aihwa Ong (1987) in *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*, and Gerald Figal (1999) in *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*, study how ghosts have served as an integral part of the production of modernity, oftentimes subversive of State-power. I follow their lead in recognizing the potentials of ghostly politics in the context of my study. I do recognize the fear in a post 9/11 world and the consequent political apathy as a result of being haunted by the ghosts of 9/11.

Through these "fictive images" (i.e., cartoons, animals, ghosts selected for this study) we see an explicit exposition of the nature of "democratic politics" which does not heed closure. The fictive images that I select take on a self-consciously anticipatory mode; it does not simply speak in the vocabulary of the post 9/11 world that emphasized rigid categories in our political life (i.e., us vs. them, good vs. evil etc.). The three modes of imagery, cartoons, animals, and ghosts, are in dis-harmony together and each image alone is in tension with each other image. I view these tensions as productive because they do not speak to our vocabulary of normativity. This antagonistic trilogy is illegitimate, and will (hopefully) create the space for other illegitimate off-springs. Closing this trilogy to a self-contained group is at violence with their significance for my project. They are not binaries that create an/other for their own self-definition. They are guided by creative epistemologies of possibility that emphasize a way of knowing that signals constant movement without closure. They herald a "democratic politics" that can create new ghosts and also a "politics" which can engage with them and awaken new possibilities by questioning the order of the present. Hopefully, the new ghosts will not stop us short with fear. Instead, maybe the fear will un-bind us from the deathly embrace of rigidly contained politics in the post 9/11 world that works with pre-assumed categories, towards vital democratic de-construction of category formation.

What do I mean by democratic imagination?

Man consists of body, mind and imagination. His body is faulty, his mind untrustworthy, but his imagination has made him remarkable. In some centuries, his imagination has made life on this planet an intense

However, as I will argue in chapter 4, the fear of an event can un-secure us from the grips of the present, and thus offer a re-vitalized democratic ethos.

practice of all energies (John Masefield, *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life*, quoted in Brann 1991, 26).

The word "imagination" is formed on the word "image" (from *imaginem*, acc. Of Latin *imago*). Thus the imagination is originally the faculty for having or making images, a scheme, a fanciful project. Strawson (In Brann 1991, 23) distinguishes four related areas of application. First, the imagination is linked with having a mental image, such as a picture in the mind's eye or a tune running in one's head. Second, it is associated with invention, originality or insight. Bentham, for example, in his *Essay on Logic*, defines invention as "imagination directed in its exercise to the attainment of some particular end," and imagination as a faculty by which "a number of abstracted ideas ...are compounded...into one image"; his is clearly a non-visual understanding (In Brann 1991, 23). Third, it has to do with false belief, delusion, and mistakes of memory. To this set of meanings might be added deliberate pretending and make-believe. Finally, the term imagination is applied to the transcendental power for structuring perceptual cognition (Kant). One might add a group of allied uses of the term in which the imagination is tagged as a capacity for seeing similarity in difference (Shelley), or for making a conscious adjustment between the new and the old (Dewey). This categorization is not exhaustive in delineating the different ways the word "imagination" is configured. Brann distinguishes between its philosophical usages and its psychological connotations (1991, 18). In philosophy, the core definition of the imagination is that it is a power mediating between the senses and the reason by virtue of representing perceptual objects without their presence. In psychology, the preference is for defining the class of representations, that is, the mental imagery, rather than the faculty. Mental imagery is a quasi-sensory or quasi-perceptual experience which occurs in

the absence of visual external stimuli and which may be expected to have behavioral consequences different from that attendant on their sensory counterpart (Brann 1991, 24).

Learning from these insights I work with a conception of the imagination as a creative faculty of mind engaged in myth-making, imaging objects and ideas, variously grounded in reality and fanciful. "Images" are a product of the imagination, a mental and material formulation. As I look at the workings of the imagination, it doesn't work in a wholly idealistic mode, and thus without materiality. Materialism is not simply concrete matter, but also a way of actively constructing the intelligibility of matter, a way of translating the material world. The imagination can be actively material as demonstrated by the material-ification of wholly mental binaries, such as masculine/feminine, nature/culture, globalization/localization, first world/third world etc. The workings of the imagination have their own intriguing politics, its mode of legitimation when mental schemas get unduly grounded, and grounded materiality gets cast aside as mere fabrications of the mind. Understanding the politics of the imagination extols one to stop asking what is really "real."

Richard Rorty provocatively states, "Imagination creates the games that reason proceeds to play...Reason cannot get outside the latest circle that imagination has drawn. In this sense, imagination has priority over reason" (2007, 115). Rorty theorizes the role of the imagination in intellectual and moral progress, its role in figuring reason and language. Written towards the end of his life, Rorty's turn towards the importance of the imagination also paralleled his increasing attention to romanticism and the poetry of Shelly. Battling inoperable pancreatic cancer, neither the philosophy he had written nor what he had read seemed to have any bearing on the situation (2007a, 3). In the face of death no new words could be made/seen

without an active imagination. In poetry, in its imagery, he found solace. While Rorty's later works emphasize the role of the imagination as comfort and hope, it is important to situate these ruminations as one facet in the politics of the imagination. An active imagination even when offering solace in the face of death can harbor deathly politics. Hitler's politics was no less creatively imaginative. Nor is the politics of the present which actively "tried to get inside people's heads": "Within minutes of the strikes [of 9/11], US law-enforcement and intelligence-gathering authorities mobilized to find the culprits and prevent another attack...Authorities even tried to get inside peoples' heads, using supercomputers and 'predictive' software to analyze enormous amounts of personal data about them and their friends and associates in an effort to foretell who might become a terrorist, and when" (Josh Meyer 2006 *Los Angeles Times*).¹³

While attesting to the active nature of the imagination, its politics, it is important to see its central role in our political theorizations in times ancient, modern, and post-modern. Plato drew his ideal Republic, Thomas Hobbes constructed his Leviathan, Karl Marx manifested his Manifesto, and Gilles Deleuze urged us to become woman-animal-insect, premised on an active future-oriented imagination. The imagination is central to political theorizations, its inventive nature. So too, in politics converging into democracy, and in democratic theory. Since its inception in ancient Athens democratic politics has imaged itself on a politically engaged and empowered citizenry, a standard of citizenship that requires active thinking and acting. The imagination understood as an active construction of political possibilities is integral to democratic practice. Democracy by its very nature is never complete, but intrinsically process-oriented. A Democracy committed to inhibit foreclosures through processual questioning is

¹³ Quoted in Wolin 2008, 52.

posed to transgress the parameters of present situations. A transgressive imagination makes democracy, democratic. A democratic imagination works as critique, as an incessant striving without placation. In other words, as Sam Chambers eloquently writes, "Working on the democratic imagination means, then, to think the limits (and their transgression) of democratic theory and of democracy as well" (2005, 620).

To conceive of the democratic imagination as central to democracy is to work with a "celebrative" notion of democracy. Democracy seen as celebrative means to enthusiastically affirm the power of the people to change rules of governance (and governments). It is to be constantly alert to exclusions that sediment into a fossilized set up. A celebration of democracy cannot be geared simply towards stability or the maintenance of the status-quo. To be democratic means to constantly keep the democratic process alive, see the unseen, hear the unheard, or at-least delve into recognition of the unseen and unheard, and work towards readdressing the situation. Celebrative democracy is unruly, disruptive, ek-static. It heralds the human urge to live in relationality/communion with justice. And, as justice knows no ends, democracy is an incessant striving. In other words, as Romand Coles writes, "Democracy is *democratization*" (2005, xi, original emphasis).

In contemporary political theory the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy stand centre-stage. In the aggregative model, democracy is a process of aggregating citizen preferences in choosing public officials and policies. However, I emphasize that democratic politics cannot simply be interest aggregation. Interest aggregation is important in its function in helping decide what leaders, rules and policies best correspond to the most widely held

preferences. But it is not enough in helping us picturize democratic politics.¹⁴ Nor is it enough to associate democracy with open discussion and the exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies, commonly termed "deliberative democracy." In the deliberative model democracy is a form of practical reason where participants in the democratic process offer proposals for how best to solve problems or meet legitimate needs, and so on and they present arguments through which they aim to persuade others to accept their proposals (Young 2000, 22).¹⁵ Deliberative democracy is intrinsically practical. As Habermas writes, ". . . it covers only practical questions that can be debated rationally, i.e., those that hold out the prospect of consensus. It deals not with value preferences but with the normative validity of norms of action" (1990, 104). This model of democratic processes emphasizes several normative ideals for deliberating parties such as inclusion, equality, reasonableness and publicity (Young 2000)¹⁶.

While endorsing the claims and demands of the deliberative democrats for dialogue and discussion, I see any "model" for democracy as testimony to its closure. The quest for democracy cannot be reduced to pure argument. I agree with Jacques Ranciere who sees the deliberative democrats as working with the "logic of the police" which stipulates a "partition of the sensible" or a cutting up of the world and thus is necessarily antagonistic to wholesome

¹⁴ The aggregative model, also called the pluralist, or interest group pluralist model has been objected to by many who see this model as interpreting democratic political processes like market economic processes (Barber 1984; Dryzek 1990).

¹⁵ Among the writers whom I include as deliberative democrats are Habermas (1990); Jane Mansbridge (1980); Dryzek (2000); Guttman and Thompson (1996).

¹⁶ Young (2000) provides a lucid discussion of these ideals in the deliberative model. In this model a democratic decision is normatively legitimate only if all those affected by it are included in the process of discussion and decision making. Regarding equality the deliberative democrats stress that all ought to have an equal right and effective opportunity to express their interests and concerns. Reasonableness entails the willingness to listen to others who have different views from one's own. The conditions of inclusion, equality, and reasonableness, finally entail that the interaction among participants in a democratic decision making process forms a public in which people hold one another accountable (22-25).

"politics" and democracy (1999, 65).¹⁷ In its obsessive preoccupation with procedural matters freedom is given a prescriptive framework for action and emancipation would need to follow suit.¹⁸ How would we conceptualize resistance which does not adhere to norms or rules? What happens to simple sheer spontaneity where language is not always strategic? Does Habermas's use (or abuse?) of reason have a purposive intention of social coordination and integration? If so,

¹⁷ Ranciere writes about "politics" as the "sphere of activity of a common" that is always contentious (1999, 14). Ranciere emphasizes that we reduce the scope of politics if we simply visualize it as a theory of power. In *Disagreement*, Ranciere stresses on the point that "politics" is a mode of subjectification which is also a disidentification (1999, 34-39). By subjectification Ranciere refers to the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation, that which reconfigures the field of experience. Any subjectification is a disidentification because it moves one away from the naturalness of a place and opens up a "subject space." In this "subject space" anyone can be counted since "it is the space where those of no account are counted" and a connection made between having a part and not having a part (1999, 36). Ranciere makes a difference between the "police" space and a space for "politics" (not ignoring his claim that politics occurs within the police order). As conceived by the "police," society is rigidly comprised of groups who perform specific functions and occupy specific spaces. "Politics" intervenes to disturb this order. Political subjectification, to Ranciere, is very different from the mode of identification superimposed by the "police," where political subjectification decomposes and recomposes ways of *doing, being and saying* (original emphasis 1999, 40).

To Ranciere, while the "police" stipulates a "partition of the sensible" or a cutting up of the world, the partition constituting "politics" is never *given*. This is a kind of property that is inherently litigious. The essence of this politics is dissensus. Dissensus is not encapsulated within a simplistic understanding of a conflict of interests or opinions. Contrary to the "partition of the sensible," it is the "manifestation of a distance of the sensible from itself" (Ranciere 2001, 8). This then makes visible which was not previously seen, sayable which was not previously heard. Thus to Ranciere, the deliberative model by stipulating norms for politics, takes on the character of the "police" and is very different from "politics" as he understands it to be.

¹⁸ Critics of this approach to democracy see it as inherently authoritative in its "reduction of public discourse to pure argument" and quest for "rational purity in moral motivation, judgment and authority" (Connolly 1999, 36). Iris Young points out that public communication is not unified and orderly but "messy, many-leveled, playful, emotional" (2000, 168). Nancy Fraser emphasizes the recognition of other spaces and publics that lie within and outside the liberal bourgeois public sphere (in the Habermasian schema) described by Fraser as bourgeois, masculinist and white-supremacist (1997). Fraser seeks to expand discursive spaces and herald a more inclusionary democratic ambit. Joan Landes (1995) argues that Habermas's estimation of the liberatory potentials of the public sphere is too narrow and restrictive. His public sphere includes only the disembodied subjects of discursive reason and texts which embody that reason. This leads to an exclusion of the private sphere of emotions, the exclusion of women as a result, as well as a privileging of the literary institutions of the press and literature. Importantly, Landes points out that though textuality is modernity's dominant form of representation as pointed out by Habermas, other forms of representation reveal non-discursive forms of critique and subversion. An effort to democratize the public sphere, to Landes, would have to allow for multiple media of representation.

at what cost? What prejudices are we thus cementing? How truly "universalistic" is Habermas's universalism? What we see here is an almost premature foreclosure of the possibilities of politics. The liberal commitment to proceduralism is yet another way of defusing the political via a legislative mode. The legislative is political but it does not exhaust it. I don't object to the relevance of this mode of "decision making" but I question this "strategy" as a "model" for democracy.¹⁹ Is this all that democracy has to offer?

Stipulating a "model" for democratic politics is at odds with the basic democratic endeavor to represent the people and be responsive to the wants of the people. Representation and responsiveness cannot be closeable, static conceptualizations. Attention to the democratic imagination takes us beyond a strategic model of democracy to conceptualize what democracy *is* -a process of becoming rather than of static being. My emphasis on the democratic imagination celebrates processual democracy and refuses to be tied down to a rigid "model" of democratic governance with pre-stipulated tracks guiding its progress. Could my emphasis on the democratic imagination be seen as an alternative model in its very endeavor to move beyond the existing models? Here, I re-iterate that a model seen as an idealized, pre-conceptualized description does not work with a moving democratic imagination which tugs at the borders of models and seeks to open them up by undoing their biases and investments. The democratic imagination does not work "against" democratic institutions, but inside/at/with them in order to herald democracy as an incessant becoming. The "democratic imagination" plays itself out in spaces within and beyond. I suggest that in the non-canonized terrain reconfigured via the imagination lies the spirit of democratic politics—that which makes theory and politics possible. This conception of

¹⁹ Despite Habermas's insistence on keeping strategic action and communicative action separate, I see them coming together in his very insistence on a model for democracy.

the democratic imagination sees the world as unfixed and unfinished—as open. Thus my conception of the “democratic imagination” works with the given and the not yet given nature of the present (in contrast to deliberative proceduralism which concerns itself only with the given). The “democratic imagination” constitutes itself through a commitment towards understanding how democracy invents itself constantly through new images, actively pursuing possibilities.

Hinged on the search for possibilities, a democratic imagination is feminist. This statement does not mean that all feminism is democratic, or that all democratic theories are feminist. But, what I do seek to emphasize is the congruence between my conception of the democratic imagination, and feminism as an inspirational ideal where being a feminist is not knighthood claimed once and for all, but constantly strived for in living politics. Judith Butler puts it best when she writes, “Possibility is not a luxury; it is as crucial as bread” (2004, 39). Thinking of the possible has been integral to feminist democratic politics. It entailed thinking beyond prescribed borders and boundaries (e.g. Wollstonecraft 1792). It posited decoding patriarchies’ hegemonic insidiousness (K. Millet 1971; A. Rich 1981). It sought to move beyond heterosexuality as the norm (A. Rich 1984). It inspired moving beyond class and sex based oppression (H. Hartmann 1981). It offers inclusion and dialogue (I. Young 2000; J. Dean 1996) as well as promises to involve us all in a “spiral dance” to the tunes of an “infidel heteroglossia” (D. Haraway 1991, 181). Yes, the search for possibilities is the spirit of feminist democratic politics despite the differences in feminism among its many adherents. It seeks to move beyond the confines of oppressive conditions towards a philosophy of freedom.

By talking about the democratic imagination as feminist, I do not want to undermine the exclusion of women in “democratic” theory and practice. First wave feminists waged hard to

earn the right to vote. Winning the right to vote did not mean the inclusion of women in democratic politics. The demos has functioned in accordance with masculine rationality, relegating women to its margins, either incorporating them within its borders to be consumed by *the* single rationality, or simply made invisible. The liberal State that acts in the guise of a neutral body is very much a masculine body as demonstrated by recent feminist work on legislative allowances surrounding abortion, rape, domestic violence etc. The democratic state, operating as a unified body politic, does not include women. From the western inception of democracy in classical Athens, we see women divorced from the polis. Classical Athens is named after Athena, who was born from Zeus's head, not from a woman. She has no mother.²⁰ The myth surrounding the naming of Athens from Athena, tells us that she was so honored for getting rid of uncivilized elements within the polis, of ridding the polis of feminine Furies. Thus, Athena, Athens, and democracies' thereafter confirm the masculinity of the political body.

It is the feminist democratic imagination that unravels the politics of our politics, and challenges democracies to live up to their democratic potential. Thus while affirming that a democratic imagination is feminist, I also emphasize that not all democratic imaginations can have equal feminist utilities. For example, I refer here to Derrida's democratic project which has to be fine tuned to be of immediate feminist relevance.²¹ The feminist democratic imagination reads the dominant image (ination), and works through its exclusions to build a more democratic ethos. It works against myths which de-value some at the expense of others, the

²⁰ See Moira Gatens (1991) "Corporeal Representation in/and the body politic." I consider this essay to be one of the finest expositions about the masculine body politic, a must read.

²¹ Derrida has met a mixed reception within the feminist community. While some consider his work to be esoteric, and not really political, others value his contribution to feminist theory and politics. See *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Women*, 1997. Edited by Ellen K. Feder, Mary C. Rawlinson, and Emily Zakin.

myth of Athena, the myth of the need for stringent gender roles, the myth of sexual perversion in the name of policing sexuality, the myth that considers racialized politics to be a matter of the past, or the myth of George Bush when he tells us that if American forces were to step back before Baghdad is secure, then chaos would threaten the world.

The feminist democratic imagination encounters the fictional at many levels, the imagination being a tool to pry open the present, and craft alternatives. The fictional haunts our world of simulacrum created by multinational corporations, super powers, environmental degradations, and everyday advertisements. The real and the virtual lose their relevance, and spheres of operation become indistinctive in a world of virtual reality. Everything is kept alive and at a distance. The coffins of dead soldiers are not to be seen by the public. Environmental catastrophes like the Narmada Dam project and others that will affect the lives and fortunes of thousands in the "third world" get only limited attention in International media. Anti-aging products flood our television screens. Using these products will make the years disappear, on various levels of our skin, the skin of our body, and life. We live in a world of make-believe dominated by the image.

Writing of the imagination, Arjun Appadurai asserts that "the image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: *the imagination as social practice*....The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order" (1996, 31, original emphasis). Looking at the "imagination as social practice" alerts us to how new categories are foundationalized, the world imaged, and reproduced. The image is used in our globalizing world as commodity and social practice. For example The Body Shop brand of cosmetics

publicizes their products by claiming that women can “travel” in a world “without boundaries” by buying their products. The imagination as social practice cements legitimate consumption of commodities, and the conjuration of the idea of a globalizing world. Both what the imagination links together (e.g. commodities and world travelling, globalization), and what it keeps apart (e.g. the horrors of war as a distant event in Iraq), are important reckoning devices for tracing the lives, worlds, and selves that can be done and undone in our contemporary times.

Today the feminist democratic imagination has to work with fictional images, and against them. For the third wave of feminism de-constructing and re-constructing a dangerously imaged world becomes an immediate imperative.²² Without subscribing to a wholly teleological model of feminism, it is possible to decipher the increased attention to fictional images through actual border-crossing in feminist theory and politics. Improved means of communication, high-speed internet and communication lines, have made information more available and the deciphering of fact and fiction more accessible to feminists eager to move through the world to build collective solidarity among women plagued by innumerable problems ranging from environmental issues, problems of war and violence, economic hardships etc. In its hunt for oppressive fictions, borders have been trespassed, whether that of nation, culture, or ideology. Working in counter-action to border consolidation, feminists seek to de-code our containment, our traps. Below, I narrate the story of a conversation between Kublai Khan (the State-builder) and Marco Polo (the explorer), written by Italo Calvino in *Invisible Cities*.

From there, after six days and seven nights, you arrive at Zobeide, the white city, well exposed to the moon, with streets wound around

²² I don't empathize with an understanding of the feminist movement in terms of different waves which rigidly partition one period from another. Issues and influences between and through the “waves” mesh in messy splendor, though yes, I do acknowledge that certain issues do dominate a certain temporal location.

themselves as in a skein. They tell this story of its foundation: men of various nations had an identical dream. They saw a woman running at night through an unknown city; she was seen from behind, with long hair and she was naked. They dreamed of pursuing her. As they twisted and turned, each of them lost her. After the dream, they set out in search of that city. They never found it; but they found one another; they decided to build a city like the one in the dream. In laying out the streets, each followed the course of his pursuit; at the place where they had lost the fugitive's trail, they arranged spaces and walls differently from the dream, so she would be unable to escape again. This was the city of Zobeide, where they settled, waiting for that scene to be repeated one night. None of them, asleep or awake, ever saw the woman again. The city's streets were streets where they went to work every day, with no link anymore to the dreamed chase...the first to arrive could not understand what drew this people to Zobeide, this ugly city, this trap (Calvino 1979, 39).

Though fictional, Calvino's story captures the logic of female pursuit and containment that traverses through time. Women are walled into borders just as the dream foretells. Maybe, the possibility of finally seeing women is tied to working through such dreams, such imaginary frontiers and barricades. The State built around masculine desire is effectively portrayed through this fictional story. The fictional provides an invaluable glimpse at the patriarchal systemic set up. Calvino's fictional story is an exposition of a "real" gender predicament. The non-fictional (i.e., real) mirrors the fictional, in this instance. The fictional and non-fictional occupy unique spaces in our political life. Ostensibly of lower import and relevance, the fictional is relegated to a source of entertainment in our private lives. The non-fictional, facts, merit public attention, and are real. The growth of knowledge has demonstrated that the real is often simply a matter of social construction, of normalizing patterns, and socializations. The non-fictional, thus becomes fictional after closer scrutiny of its basis and biases. Travelling the abyss between and beyond the fictional and non-fictional is an imperative for feminism in its

search for possibilities. I contend that a feminist democratic imagination will have to work with and through "fictive images." The "fictive," emphasizing the potency of the imagination enables new beginnings. Beyond dualisms, the three-fold mode of fictive imagery that I use for this dissertation is cartoons, animals, and ghosts.

What are "fictive images"?

. . . Africa, have you seen it? No? Then is it truly there? . . . Kangaroos, Mount Fujiyama, the North Pole? And the past, did it happen? And the future, will it come? Believe in your own eyes and you'll get into a lot of trouble, hot water, a mess (Rushdie 1990, 63.).

Can/should an understanding of democratic imagination be articulated that asserts its fictive character? Will that be adequate to the bold task of stimulating a new way of looking at feminist democratic politics? As I hope to demonstrate in this dissertation, I claim political-ethical and thus democratic advantages for a mode of theorizing that emphasizes its fictive nature. I use the word "fictive" following Susan McManus in her book *Fictive Theories* (2005). She emphasizes that the movement from the "fictional" to the "fictive" is subtle but crucial. Whereas the fictional relies upon an opposition to its other, the true or real, the fictive is a term beyond the opposition (2005, 3). She reconceives the project of political theory as an open-ended project grounded in a future-oriented imagination: "...the possibilities, in other words, point toward an inventive political imaginary that is both deconstructive and utopian" (2005, 3). To McManus, a deconstructive and utopian mode of political theorizing speaks in a language that "does not speak about something or someone who already exists and for whom a

language and representations are somehow available, previously codified. Rather, it tries to anticipate..." (2005, 2).

I understand the democratic imagination to be premised on "fictive images." The democratic imagination entails working through a particular configuration, de-configuration, and re-configuration of bodies at multiple levels, human, geographical, cultural, political etc. Fictive images maintain a productive ambivalence between a critical and deconstructive politics as well as a utopian-progressive political project (not that they are rigidly separable). Positioned beyond the fictional and non-fictional, fictive bodies question these categories, the politics behind binary formulations which value one at the expense of the other according to socio-political exigencies. Emphasizing fictive bodies to be working "beyond" the fictional and non-fictional must be understood as an elaboration of how they expand the domain of the political. Working "beyond" the present classificatory codes, fictive bodies are transgressive. With Derrida, I do recognize that "transgression implies that the *limit* is always at work" (quoted in Chambers 2005, 622 emphasizes mine). In other words, even when we work "beyond", we remain circumscribed by the original parameters. Thus, fictive images must be understood as the work they do at, on, and to those limits, a movement beyond boundaries, actually, a movement of boundary itself. Fictive images question: "...given the subjectivizing conditions of identity production in a late modern capitalist, liberal, and bureaucratic disciplinary social order, how can reiteration of these production conditions be averted in identity's purportedly emancipatory project?" (Brown 1995, 55). How do we travel from the present towards a future emancipatory re-thinking? How do we counter the ambivalences in our very need for articulation without re-inscribing our states of

injury? Fictive images move away from the mirroring of present conditions through its robust use of the imagination.

Working on the limits of the present, fictive images are inherently messy, untidy; playful. In working with fictive images, and in the spirit of their operation, fictive bodies cannot be serious (or non-serious), they cannot stand as somber testimony to any single dogma (or dream).²³ Neither here, nor there, fictive images are a trickster; irreverent of reality they riddle our neatly demarcated world. Combining critical deconstruction with ebullient reconstruction, fictive images play with knowledge production, the ossification of stable categorizations. It is play that holds the productive tension alive in fictive images. Play decries any opposition, it enables "traveling across worlds" (Anzaldúa 2002a, 399).²⁴ In being playful we are not stuck to any particular world. We are there creatively. We are not passive. We are border crossing.

It is impossible to understand fictive images or their importance in democratic politics, without reckoning with its central propellant i.e., play. Play is keeping motion, marked in its refusal to settle down, to decree or to posit but simply to undergo, to feel, to enthuse, to emphasize a "Yes-saying" attitude to the world.²⁵ It is play that keeps the productive

²³ Play is not in opposition to seriousness. Its only opposite would be non-play (Huizinga 1950).

²⁴ Anzaldúa offers a critique of Gadamer and Huizinga's notion of play with their emphasis on role-playing. In role-playing, the person who is participating in the game has a fixed conception of him or herself. Given this attitude one cannot travel across worlds. To Anzaldúa, play has nothing to do with contest or winning and losing: "...the playful attitude involves openness to surprise, openness to being a fool, openness to self-construction or reconstruction and to construction or reconstruction of the world's we inhabit playfully" (2002a, 401).

²⁵ Nietzsche introduces us to the difference between a "Yes-saying attitude" and one with a "No-saying attitude." A "Yes-saying attitude" revels in free-spiritedness. The "No-saying attitude" is born of close-mindedness. As Nietzsche writes about the requirements of free spiritedness: "Not to remain stuck to a person...Not to remain stuck to a fatherland...Not to remain stuck to some pity...Not to remain stuck to a

ambivalence alive and opens the terrain for different (im)-possibilities. The conception of play that I work with has no winners or losers. It is a complex mental process that is critical and creative in holding doubleness alive. Play to me is not simply "an activity which proceeds within certain limits of time and space, in a visible order, according to rules freely accepted, and outside the sphere of necessity or material utility" (Huizinga 1950, 10). To me, play is never over. It does not play itself to an end. To restrict play to a limitation in time and space or define it accordingly greatly overlooks its continuous movement through its ability to keep tension alive. When being playful we have not abandoned ourselves to nor are we fixed in any particular world. Play is a productive openness.²⁶

Thus to re-state my conception of "fictive images": 1) They work beyond the opposition of the real and rational, human and animal, or dead and living. They maintain tensions. 2) It is play that holds the tensions and ambivalence alive and provides the buoyancy in such imaginings.

Earlier I stated that the fictive images that I use for this dissertation are cartoons, animals, and ghosts. Now, after explaining my conception of fictive images, I can further specify my choice of fictive images for this dissertation. I consider Art Spiegelman's cartoon images "fictive," not fictional, as they are grounded in grim reality, de-construct it, and provide visions for reformulations. Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize Special Award for his comic book on

science...Not to remain stuck to your own virtues..." (1989, 52)--the ecstasis outside of oneself and standing out beyond good and evil. "Golden laughter" would necessitate these very requirements.

²⁶ Kathy Ferguson (1993) emphasizes the need of holding incompatibilities together with her emphasis on irony as a political strategy for feminists. Irony is a way to keep oneself within a situation that resists resolution in order to act politically without pretending that resolution has come. To Ferguson, irony is not a substitute for other forms of political struggle, but a vehicle for enabling political actions that resist the twin dangers of paralysis and totalization (1993, 31). By giving doubt and partiality a place of honor in democratic theory, Ferguson would bring them in conversation with hope and certainty, not drive them under-ground (1993, 32).

the holocaust titled *Maus*. The comic book or graphic novel won him critical acclaim for his creative use of the comic medium to broach sensitive issues and memories. The novel depicts the struggles of Spiegelman's father to survive the holocaust as a Polish Jew. Drawn through conversations with his father, the book recounts the efforts of a family to work through the traumatic memories of war. Spiegelman used animals to represent different nationalities and races in *Maus*. The Jews were represented as mice, the Germans as cats, the Poles as pigs, the Americans as dogs etc. Spiegelman used this fictional trope for representation to elucidate with creative clarity the real relational dynamic during the war where the Jews were seen by the Nazis as vermin. It also showcased the enormous resourcefulness shown by the Jews during the Holocaust where the Nazis were unable to completely wipe the Jews out. Spiegelman uses the same medium to represent his working through the trauma of 9/11, in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* (2004). Cartoons, animals, and ghosts are used by Spiegelman to stage the horrific play of 9/11, its politics.

I will elaborate on Spiegelman's use of cartoons, animals, and ghosts in successive chapters of this dissertation. Here, I emphasize its fictive nature, its non-compliance with the proper protocol of representation. Spiegelman uses animal images to depict himself in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* through the medium of cartoons, haunted by the twin towers of the World Trade Center. In contradiction to normalized frames of representation, Spiegelman presents a counter-visualization of 9/11 and its effects. These images transgress staid binaries of man/animal, dead/alive, serious/non-serious and endeavor not to reveal "truth," but showcase the boundaries of truth by playing with its borders. Moreover, these images don't reconcile themselves to artistic realism by portraying stable beings cocooned in their escape from the

present. Instead, Spiegelman's images frame constant becomings, movement beyond controlled, bounded beings framed by the intelligibility lending legitimacy of the present. *In The Shadow Of No Towers* is not a genteel commemorative album of consoling thoughts. Cryptic, angry, and imaginatively playful, Spiegelman's images exemplify the inadequacy of our political vocabulary, its myopic streamlining of our possibilities for thought and action. As fictive images, Spiegelman's work defies a thought-police which lends credence to only a single story or image. Composed of fragmented thoughts and multiple stories, Spiegelman's visual politics extols us to think between and beyond lines and frames.

Even though Spiegelman's images are "fictive" and of important potential, are they feminist? Do they merit value to be the explanatory pillar for a dissertation on the feminist democratic imagination? I do a feminist reading of Spiegelman, using feminist theoretical insights and exploratory strategies. I hope to demonstrate in this dissertation that Spiegelman's images are of value to feminist theorizations for transformative politics after 9/11. Spiegelman does not explicitly characterize himself as a feminist cartoonist.²⁷ But, he makes no claims to be a "polite cartoonist" and vehemently opposes the use of the cartoon form as simple "emblematisations and essentializations of situations" (Spiegelman 2006, 23). He aims to be

²⁷ However Art Spiegelman's contribution to feminist cartooning cannot be slighted. Spiegelman's long and central role in the underground artistic movement from which a wide variety of contemporary comics derive their heritage, has served as a source of inspiration for feminist cartoonists such as in the *Wimmen's Comix* movement. For most of the history of comics, women have been excluded from significant roles in its production, and very few of its products were even aimed at a female audience. Not until the underground comix did women work widely and openly in comics form, and it was in response to the perceived sexism in the early underground movement that women began to use comics to speak their minds. The "comix" form emphasized by Spiegelman looks at comic art as hybrid art, not accountable to the stylistic patterns and rules of mainstream art (I discuss this in the next chapter). Feminist cartoonists have found inspirational this new way of looking at the world through a medium that did not remain in the past, tied to conventional ways of drawing women and her interests. Joseph Witek argues that the brilliance of Art Spiegelman's work stems not from the artist's transcendence of the comics medium but from a deep understanding of comics traditions and conventions and a fearless reimagining of the medium's possibilities (2004, 40).

hard-hitting, jolting, rather than descriptive. With *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, as with *Maus*, he is marked by his audacity. "I didn't realize I was breaking so many taboos when I was doing *Maus*," he said (Gussow 2003). Speaking about taboos turned him to *The New Yorker*, where for several years he was a regular contributor and consistently courted controversy. In the middle of the Crown Heights racial conflict in 1993, he drew a New Yorker cover of a Hassidic man kissing a black woman. When Good Friday fell on April 15 in 1995, he commemorated the day with a cover of an Easter bunny crucified by tax forms (Gussow 2003). If feminism upholds the spirit of defiance, and conviction to over-turn societal stipulations, Spiegelman is a feminist.²⁸

However, I use him for my project, not because I esteem him as a feminist, but, by looking at the potential of his work to provide a prism to re-visualize feminist politics in the contemporary world. So am I proposing that we be placidly content with the idea that a "white man" has the solution for our problems? Instead of answering the question with a binary yes/no, I would urge us to de-construct this question, its investments; it's shutting down of a field of possibilities without exploring potentials. I endeavor to explore various becomings emanating from unexplored niches, not at the expense of a naive stance towards power politics. A movement

²⁸ In an interview with Roger Sabin in 1989, Spiegelman was asked about women being interested in comics going by the "masculine" nature of the subject matter of most comics. Spiegelman answers: "...there are more women beginning to do comics. For a while in the States, that was appearing as 'women's comics,' which I always thought was kind of deadly, sort of like baskets by the blind; it doesn't have to be a good basket, but isn't it amazing that they can make a basket at all? I hated seeing that. What's much more interesting to me is seeing women who make good comics and happen to be women, and that just mixes itself up with the other half of the population that makes comics....Since 90 percent of the male cartoonists, or more, stink, it makes sense that 90 percent of the women cartoonists would stink, except that only left you with one or two really decent women cartoonists. That's beginning to change. The next issue of RAW, the one that we're just working on now, that will be out...A large chunk of the issue is by artists who happen to be women" (In Witek 2007, 118). Spiegelman's feminism is certainly not a celebration of women for its own sake, a self-defeating idolatry. Rather his feminism urges us to ask questions about the mechanics of the comic industry, and urges a movement towards equality by merit and skill rather than through gender credentials alone.

towards different becomings has to be exploratory by re-conceptualizing power inventively, not see it encased within prejudices already barricading spheres of action and possibilities.

Women began to use political cartooning as a strategy during the suffrage movement (Bolton 2008). Working with a medium considered aggressive and unladylike, women approached the right to vote (also considered unladylike and associated with masculinity). Cartoons have been used in the feminist movement in its different phases, displaying the different urgencies and situational contexts faced by women.²⁹ In our contemporary post 9/11 world, woman cartoonists have depicted through cartoons the continuing oppressed predicament of women. Figure 2 is a cartoon by Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Ann Telnaes. Telnaes emphasizes that "Politics has always been an area where women are not as well represented as men. So if we don't want decisions being made by some politicians who doesn't have a clue about the realities of our lives, we had better get involved and make ourselves heard through elected office, activism, and art" (quoted in Bolton 2008, 22). Thus, through her chosen art of cartooning Telnaes depicts gender dynamics in post-election Afghanistan of 2005 (See Figure 2).

²⁹ See Tickner, Lisa (1988) *The spectacle of women: imagery of the suffrage campaign, 1907-14*; Atkinson, Diane (1997) *Funny girls: cartooning for equality*; Robbins, Trina (2001) *The great women cartoonist*; Clark, Anne Biller (2001) *My dear Mrs. Ames: a study of suffragist cartoonist Blanche Ames*; Donnelly (2005) *Funny Ladies: The New Yorker's Greatest Women Cartoonists and their Cartoons*. I don't empathize with an understanding of the feminist movement in terms of different waves which rigidly partition one period from another. Issues and influences between and through the "waves" mesh in messy splendor, though yes, I do acknowledge that certain issues do dominate a certain temporal location.

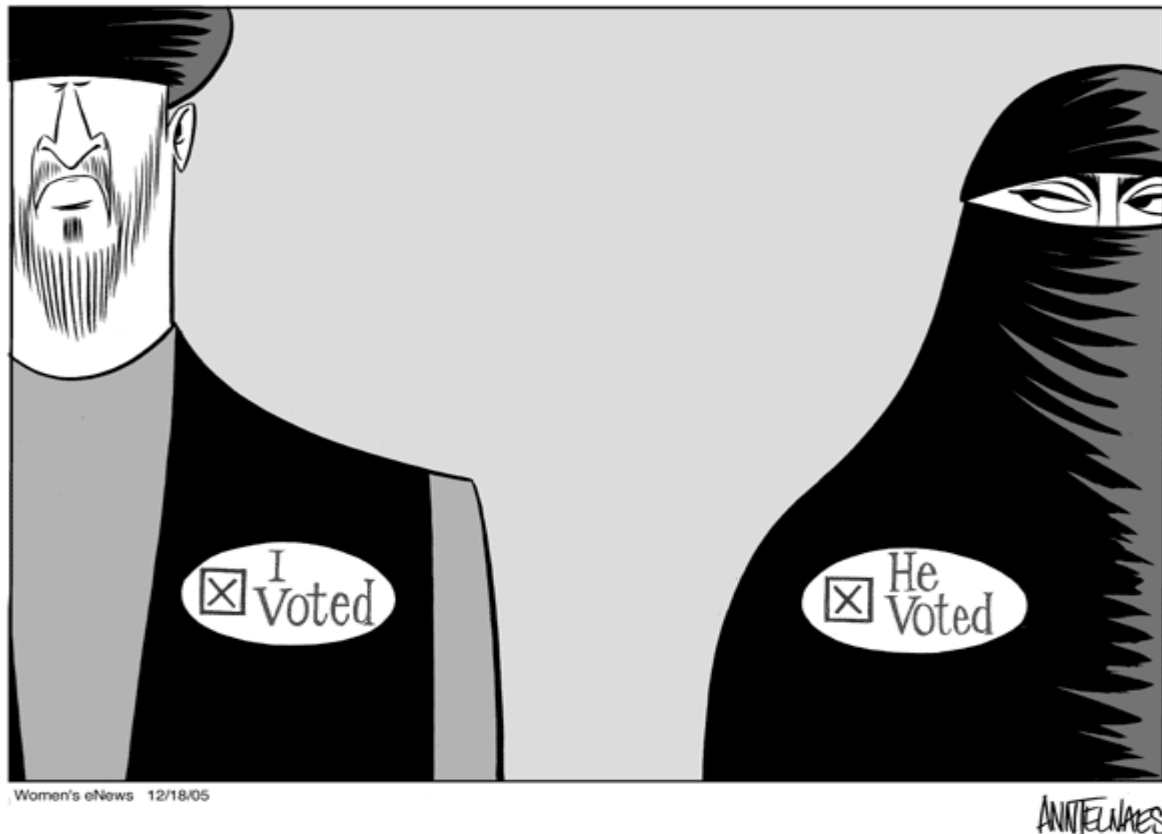


Figure 2³⁰

Figure 2 portrays a man and a woman in post-election Afghanistan. After the fall of the Taliban, the new constitution in Afghanistan formulated under US auspices grants equal rights to men and women. The NATO countries emphasized that the liberation of women in Afghanistan was equally important as the liberation of the country from the Taliban. However, Telnaes through her cartoon questions the established equality as much needs to be done to make the situation truly equal. While the man actively votes, the woman still lives under his vote. "He Voted" reads the text on the woman's body. Her eyes pierce through her black veiled figure and search for meaning. On the other hand, the man stands confident for "He Voted" for both of them.

³⁰ Source: Women's eNews, 12/18/05
(<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/context/commentoon>).

Feminist cartoons like Figure 2 work actively to represent society's power dynamics, and as Telnaes had emphasized, her work reflects the different reality of a woman's life.

However, Feminist cartoons are certainly not interchangeable with women cartoonists. Liza Donnelly, a New Yorker cartoonist was asked whether she was carrying the torch for women's cartooning. Liza Donnelly answered: "I am not fond of the term women's cartooning. I am supportive of women who draw cartoons, and am supportive of cartoons that deal with issues that concern women, expose sexism with humor, etc. But I don't want to ghettoize women, or myself. I am a cartoonist. Not a woman cartoonist. I do want people to notice that women have not been in this business very much, and I would want them to think about that. And not all women are the same, of course, so one has to be careful" (Interview with Bob Eckstein, 2009). Yes, like Liza Donnelly, other women cartoonists like Signe Wilkinson of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, and Ann Telnaes do not consider themselves to be a prophet for the women's movement (Bolton 2008). But this does not deter their adherence to feminism or their work with gender politics through their chosen art form of cartooning. Further, Liza Donnelly rightly points out that we do need to reckon with the fact that cartooning has been male dominated. Benjamin Franklin who drew the "Join or Die" cartoon to encourage the colonies to band together was a man. So were Thomas Nast in the 19th century and Herblock in the 20th century. Art Spiegelman is a man as well. However, as Liza Donnelly points out it is equally important to be supportive of cartoons that deal with issues that concern women. Art Spiegelman's cartoons, I argue, have a rich reservoir of strategies for feminist democratic politics. And finally, Liza Donnelly draws our attention to the fact that not all women are the same. The women's movement has oftentimes been criticized for exclusions based on class, race, sexuality, and age. Spiegelman himself an

"other" through his Jewish identity could help us work through a politics that consolidates itself by creating "others." In this dissertation, I will argue that Spiegelman is an extremely useful ally for the feminist movement. Spiegelman's cartoons carry invaluable insight for feminist politics in the post 9/11 world.

Foils and Catalysts: situating the theory

This dissertation is inspired by post modernism as a theoretical current in feminist political theory. While the modern (whether Marxism, Liberalism, or Radical feminism) tended towards universal truth claims, the post-modern challenge to grand narratives of emancipation insists on the historical and cultural specificity of truth claims. Against modern certainty we now have post-modern play which seeks to unsettle all our normative assumptions. It uses theory not to safeguard "truth," but to strategically use it in the task of democratic transformation. For me the spirit of post-modernism is most analogous to play. A kind of laughter that is inherently irreverent of any "reality." A laughter that rings out through totalizations and keeps tensions open—a de-totalizing impulse that de-centers and de-constructs. The buoyancy that "open(s) up the field of possibility...without dictating which kind of possibilities ought to be realized" (Butler 1999, viii). Play is the post-modern spirit to "...keep oneself within a situation that resists resolution in order to act politically without pretending that resolution has come" (Ferguson 1993, 31). Post-modernism is serious play. It emphasizes the (im)possibility of politics and a constant movement beyond static categorical assertions.

My use of the "category" post-modern might be problematic for many. There has been extreme misuse of the term "post-modernism" where it has meant anything from deconstruction

to Foucauldian analysis, Lacanian psychoanalysis, cultural studies or Rorty's conversationalism. Thus the term has encompassed all of contemporary political theory, notwithstanding the major disjunctions between Foucauldians and Derrideans or Lacanian psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. Lyotard called the post-modern an "incredulity towards metanarratives" but he doesn't stand as representative of post-modernism as a whole. However, coining a term doesn't mean to coalesce all its disparities into a univocal standpoint. It is for analytical convenience that I use the term post-modern recognizing that to install the term is to make it "occupy one position within a binary, and so to affirm a logic of non-contradiction over and against some more generative scheme" (Butler in Benhabib et.al. 1995, 38). However, we must do two things simultaneously : "we must realize that we are drawing road maps and that without road maps we are bound to get lost, and we must recognize that road maps *are* road maps and that we can't drive *on* them but *with* them (and that we *still* might get lost) (Olsen 1990, 33).

This dissertation draws on post-modern democratic theory and feminist theory to substantiate its claims, primarily the works of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Judith Butler, William Connolly, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, and Wendy Brown. To me, these theorists provide tremendous inspiration and fuel to re-think feminist democratic politics. Not all these theorists identify themselves as feminist (most of them cringe from identity of any sort), and condemn a feminism which builds itself up through an exclusionary "we." These theorists are united in their deconstruction of phallogentrism and endeavor to question the construction of what constitutes a "livable life" (Butler 2004). All the theorists cited above are categorizable as post-modern, though there are considerable differences between Derrida's and Deleuze's post-modernism, or Butler and Haraway. Deleuze found his

inspiration in the lineage constitutive of Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche, and Bergson. With the exception of Nietzsche, the other figures are rarely discussed by Derrida. Both Derrida and Deleuze are involved in a relationship with Heidegger, but follow very different trajectories stylistically and intellectually. Despite the differences, there are similarities too. For Deleuze, philosophy is not meant for accurate representation, but for invention, creation of "a new earth and people that do not yet exist" (quoted in Patton 2003, 15). In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida endorses a form of critique which is future oriented, inventive, "open to the absolute future of what is coming" (Derrida 1994, 90). Thus to Derrida and Deleuze, thinking and theory should not only destabilize and deconstruct established institutions and conventions, but also aspire to be inventive and consequential.

In a similar vein, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway hold different disciplinary and stylistic allegiances. While Haraway's work is dominantly grounded in her knowledge of the history of the sciences and biology, Butler owes her disciplinary baggage to political philosophy, rhetorics, and literature. Haraway's writing exemplifies her illegitimate subversion of values and identities, her playful mode of doing feminist theory: "I consider dog writing to be a branch of feminist theory, or the other way around" (2003, 3). Haraway considers irony to be a major component of her theory, where "irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true. Irony is about humor and serious play" (1991, 149). Haraway's cyborg is very much the "fictive image" of such irony. It is machine and organism, private and public, nature and culture, human and animal, physical and non-physical. This is a dream "not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia" (1991, 181). Butler's work in comparison

is prosaically serious where she contemplates subversion through different "undoings" which underline the tenuousness of all constructions. Butler's emphasis on play, stresses parodic inversion where "the parodic repetition of gender exposes as well the illusion of gender identity as an intractable depth and inner substance" (1999, 187). Both Haraway and Butler emphasize an ethical stance composed of being attentive to otherness. Butler maintains that giving an account of oneself is always haunted, partial, opaque, and in this affirmation of partial transparency there lies an indispensable resource for ethics, the possibility for acknowledging a relationality to others (2005, 40). In a similar vein, Haraway, discusses patterns of relationality, "lively knotting that ties together the world," "cosmopolitics" as the basis for ethics in this century (2008, 83).³¹

With their differences and similarities, these theorists help me see feminism, democracy, the State, contemporary politics, imaginations, and re-imaginings. This mode of theorization provides the impetus to move towards different becomings. William Connolly draws attention to the "politics of becoming" which provides energy to political struggles. The "politics of becoming" as distinct from a static conception of being emphasizes fluidity and movement and proclaims no purity in politics. In its messy irresoluteness lies its energy. Connolly, Butler, and Haraway embrace deconstruction theory indebted to Derrida. A political theory wedded to deconstruction opposes an ontologically given opposition between fiction and reality which is best described by the Derridean notion of "undecidability." This "undecidability" operates in the realm of "hauntology." Derrida describes the logic of haunting as "hauntology" (1994, 10). This

³¹ Haraway (2008) draws her notion of cosmopolitics from Isabelle Stenger. Stenger's proposal draws from feminist communitarian anarchism which seeks to stop the rush to consensus or dogmatism, and attentiveness to the articulations of diverse beings.

logic would be larger and more powerful than an ontology which only subscribes to a thinking of Being (Derrida 1994, 10). Is not this "undecidability" the very possibility of politics, an incessant enlargement of the very domain of politics?³²

A "hauntology" emphasizes the "impossibility" of politics. "Impossibility" does not connote the closing down of politics but a stubborn refusal to acknowledge any closure, a constant striving. This openness to a "future-to-come l'avenir" marks the potential of the "impossibility" of a given politics (Derrida and Caputo 1997). Deconstruction does not set its sights on justice as the goal with a parametric horizon of foreseeability. To Derrida, the "possible" means the foreseeable and the plannable, what he calls the "future present," "the sort of thing role models and strategic planning help us bring about" (Derrida and Caputo 1997, 133). Thus to Derrida the word "possible" does not go far enough, is not affirmative enough. The im-possible on the other hand, is that which exceeds the possible: "the impossible is not a simple logical contradiction, like x and not- x , but the tension, the paralysis, the aporia, of having to push against and beyond the limits of the horizon" (1997,133).

How do we work with the notion of im-possibility in politics? Butler, Haraway, and Derrida are variously criticized for having no political goal or for not having an explicit political project. Richard Rorty puts the challenge to Derrida in the following terms:

Deconstruction is marginal to politics...If you want to do some political work, deconstruction texts are not a very efficient way to set about it. Getting rid of phallogocentrism, metaphysics and all that, is an admirable long-term cultural goal, but there is still a difference between such goals and the relatively short-term goals served by political deliberation and decision...As a citizen of a

³² I do recognize that a working democracy requires direction, that in a way democratic possibilities require decisions. I don't see decision making and "undecidability" as working in opposition. The former needs to recognize the latter in order to be democratic. It is essential to keep the productive tension alive.

democratic state, I do not think that metaphysics-bashing is—except in the very long term—of much use (in Mouffe *Deconstruction and Pragmatism* 1996, 44-46).

I would answer Rorty's critique with Bennington who points out that "one cannot simply demand of deconstruction that it present its ethical and political titles without presupposing that one already knows what ethics and politics are, whereas that is just what we are trying to interrogate here, laughing at the edifying naiveté informing such a demand" (Bennington 1993, 46).³³ To re-instate the question: Is there no "real" political relevance to deconstruction? What is the distinction between "real" and "unreal" politics? With deconstruction are we simply working in an idealistic or utopian mode and thus without materiality? Are the mental and the material two opposed spheres of politics? What are our investments in keeping to such a binary? I argue that the mental and the material are not distinguishable, in that materialism actively constructs the "intelligibility of the material." Nor are deconstruction and materialism separable. As Derrida seeks to explain deconstruction with a Marxist narrative: "Deconstruction has never had any sense of interest, in my view at least, except as a radicalization, which is also to say in the tradition of a certain Marxism, in a certain 'spirit of Marxism'" (1994, 92). I emphasize that the dichotomies between the mental and the material, the utopian and the real" are simply fictional. These are useful fictions. But they serve the interests of maintaining the status-quo, of regulating and fixing coherent norms. These categorizations do not move. My fictive images point to the irrelevance of such dichotomies in understanding democratic politics. The force of the fictive lies in its potential to see the world otherwise. Wedded to utopian, materialist,

³³ Bennington (1993) discusses reactions to Derrida's writings which often miss the argument and become reductive in specific ways. "Rorty, for example, had got it all wrong, precisely because he didn't want Derrida to be doing philosophy at all, but just to be telling stories. Others too had a silly idea of the literary as liberating and liberated, or else tried to pull Derrida into quarrels about other things, calling him anti-foundationalist or fallibilist, sometimes even skeptic or relativist" (Bennington 1993, 12).

deconstructive ways of knowing, fictive images are a mode of visualizing (im)possibilities that have been rendered unintelligible by dominant ways of perceiving the world. As Rosi Braidotti writes, "political fictions may be more effective, here and now, than theoretical systems" (1994, 4).

The feminist democratic imagination: an ethic of possibility.

My study of fictive images (cartoons, animals, and ghosts) constitutes a response to the trauma of 9/11, the urgency of moving beyond categories to fathom the event itself. By rendering the present indeterminate and irresolute but richly suggestive of different possibilities, ghosts, animals, and cartoons haunt us in any pursuit of stringent definitions and propel us towards vital, creative, open-endedness. In their shadowy blurring of the serious, human, real or reasonable, cartoons, animals and ghosts articulate the dynamics of a feminist democratic imagination, the impossibility of a final reconciliation.

My research on fictive bodies and the feminist democratic imagination engages with a feminist ethic in several ways. It tackles the problematics of identity in a novel way. It questions what is "real" by playing on the tenuousness of all constructions. Following Butler, I emphasize that the "deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated" (1999, 189). Engaging with cartoons, animals, and ghosts helps in this very endeavor. If identities are not fixed, then feminist politics cannot be satisfied with a fixed foundation to its struggles. The fictive bodies, configure, de-configure, and re-configure reality to provide an expanding zone for different articulations. Like Butler, I seek to probe: "What other local strategies for engaging the

"unnatural" might lead to the denaturalization of gender as such?" (Butler 1999, 190). By focusing on visual images, my project tackles the construction of the (gendered) body in a novel way. We live in a world of images, some inherently oppressive. It is by playing with these images, deconstructing them, that we can start fathoming the complexities at hand and envisioning possibilities otherwise. The ethic of possibility buttressed by a democratic imagination that seeks to see the world otherwise is an invaluable theoretical fuel for feminisms' emancipatory projects on the gender imaged body which seek to unravel its many constraints.

My study of fictive bodies is premised on the search for possibilities for feminist theory and politics. Fictive images work beyond codings, breaking through the parametric delimitations of the present which we thought were written in stone (or steel). Indeed, "feminist inquiry is about understanding how things work, who is in the action, what might be possible, and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable to and love each other less violently" (Haraway 2003, 7).

Overview of Arguments:

In the next chapter titled "Cartooning 9/11: Art Spiegelman's Visual Politics," I study 9/11 through the medium of cartoons. I study various responses to 9/11 in the world of cartooning before examining Art Spiegelman's comic book on 9/11. I explore Art Spiegelman's craft of cartooning as the art of undoing identity. Through this endeavor, I question the categories through which we bracket and sequester ourselves, our art, and our politics. I examine Spiegelman's style of cartooning in the use of image and text as well as in specific images of animals and ghosts. I emphasize that these features in his work illustrate his play with

identity, the process of becoming "undone." If postmodernism implies genre meltdown, Spiegelman's comics free themselves from art in the conventional sense. Spiegelman's comics are imbued with the post-modern spirit in content and form. Spiegelman visually draws in the reader into a mode of critical questioning where frames do not comfortably fit in together according to our rules of reading, rules of intelligibility, and rules of the world. Spiegelman's picture (de)building, questions our world building.

From a study of Spiegelman's style of cartooning, I turn next to his use of specific animal images to depict his working through of the trauma of 9/11. Spiegelman's use of animal imagery to depict the holocaust has received a lot of attention. I contend that his use of animal imagery to depict post 9/11 politics is no less radical, of no less potential in showcasing the nuances in the post 9/11 world In the third chapter titled "Becoming-animal and Deconstructing Animality: A Feminist Exploration" I read Deleuze's "becoming-animal" in Spiegelman's animal images and work through its use for feminist politics. In this chapter, first, I examine the persistent use of the animal in our theorizations about man and his politics, from Aristotle to the present. The animal is present as comparison, even when absent otherwise. Consumed by anthropocentric politics, the animal is present in our theorizations to make man more visible. Post-modern theorists like Deleuze have worked on this exclusion of the animal and proposed the politics of "becoming animal" as a theoretical prism to act differently. Yet, feminists such as Alice Jardine (1985) and Luce Irigaray (1985) have been apprehensive about the anarchical dictates they perceive in Deleuze's theory, Deleuze's implicit masculine framework and ask whether we can use Deleuze's "becoming-animal" in feminist politics? I contend that we can successfully use Deleuze's theoretical insights into feminist politics by drawing upon

Spiegelman's animal images. Spiegelman's animal images help me to draw out my argument about an authoritarian State vested in the binary thinking of man/animal. By playing with this distinction, as exemplified by Spiegelman, we can formulate the ethos for effective feminist transnational politics which pushes at the limits of boundaries.

The next chapter titled "Specter-ular Democracy" seeks to converse with the ghosts of 9/11, the burning twin towers that refuse to die. Thereupon, I examine spectral politics as showcased by Art Spiegelman in his graphic novel on 9/11, the use of the burning twin towers to think through the events of that September day. Spectral politics, I argue, equip us with the tools needed to unhinge ourselves from the violence of the present by un-securing us from its grips. Spiegelman's work represents one possible way to begin imagining the politics of un-security and its implications for democracy. In this chapter, I first examine the problem of security and its manifestation in the present times through the declaration of a state of exception. I articulate this problematic via the theorists Foucault and Agamben. I seek a solution to this problem through spectral politics as theorized by Derrida and imaged by Art Spiegelman. In conclusion, I lay out my conception of "specter-ular democracy" which converses with specters, not behind secured walls but by willing to be unsettled and un-secured. I attest critical, future oriented, democratic potentials to haunting in resistance to a 9/11 Leviathan State.

In conclusion I spell out my conception of specter-ular democracy, its feminist agenda to work through the present, not by a mirroring of violence. My conception of specter-ular democracy is democratic politics conscious of its unfinished nature which is in constant conversation with specters. It privileges the ocular as a response to an age which uses visuals to

create subjects in panic and fear, de-politicizing subjects through visual theatrics.³⁴ Specter-cular democracy engages with the visual very differently. Here, visuals are used to show the fictive nature of reality, as well as their social construction. It thus engages not with the manifestly seen, but, with what is unseen and haunts the real, i.e., ghosts. It acknowledges the political potency of specters produced in and through the workings of normal (normative) visibility. Also, specter-cular democracy is spectacular, expansive, and grandiose. Democracy is looked upon as a constant yearning through an expansion of the possibilities inherent in political mechanisms. Instead of piercing our eyes out with the twin towers and blinding us (as shown in Fig.1), specter-cular democracy urges us to see the specters of the twin towers. In working with this haunting, we may be able to forge a democratic post 9/11 world.

³⁴ Vision has been studied for its complicity with the political order, its use as an instrument for control and surveillance (See Martin Jay (1994), Jonathan Crary (1990), Susan Buck-Morss (1991). Learning from the insights gathered through these studies and their trepidations on the hegemony in vision, I work on the possibility in vision as counter-hegemonic democratic politics. Susan Buck-Morss (1991) writes about Benjamin's critique of modernity under late capitalism dominated by dream-images and commodified visual fetishes. To Benjamin, modernity was distinctively (and dangerously) ocularcentric. However, as Buck-Morss points out, Benjamin's appeal to his time was also through vision, soliciting our capacity to see the world of our making. Likewise (and more modestly), I emphasize that changing how we see the world can be instrumental in changing our world. Specter-cular democracy is an endeavor in that direction when through visual haunting we un-bind ourselves from complicity with the present order.

Chapter 2

Cartooning 9/11: Art Spiegelman's Visual Politics

Introduction:

The Muhammad cartoon controversy that swept the world in 2006 was arguably the second major event after September 11, 2001 that brought "Muslims" as a group of political actors to the forefront of international politics. It seemed surprising that an art form which is often considered trivial and non-serious could incite political reactions in all parts of the world. I won't state that the event warrants that we take cartoons more seriously (and thus doubly disregard its complicated working) but I do emphasize that this art form has surprisingly vibrant political potentials. What better way to study a democratic response to 9/11 than through an art form which caused such furor in a post-9/11 world?

In this chapter, I credit cartoons with "serious" political potentials by studying the work of a "serious" political cartoonist. I explore Art Spiegelman's craft of cartooning as the art of undoing identity. Through this endeavor, I question categories through which we bracket and sequester ourselves, our art forms and our politics. This exploration is particularly resonant in our post 9/11 world of heightened security concerns. In contrast to the "patriotic" political discourse of heightened national identity, I emphasize the paradoxical task of un-doing ourselves as a more robust democratic response to 9/11. In pursuit of this objective, I first describe responses to 9/11 in the world of cartoons, followed by an analytical study of what cartoons denote. After stating my definition of cartoons, I move to a discussion of Judith Butler's emphasis on the undoing of identity as a response to 9/11. Next, I study the craft of cartooning as the art of undoing identity in Spiegelman's comic on 9/11. I concentrate on

examining his style of cartooning in the use of image and text as well as in specific images of animals and ghosts. In conclusion, I draw out that Spiegelman's craft of cartooning can provide us with a valuable prism to examine identity formations. Perhaps, his mode of undoing ourselves is a way to a democratic future.

Responses to 9/11:

The events of September 11, 2001 had far reaching effects on the direction of US domestic and foreign policy. A quick array of tangible policy measures followed in its wake which sanctioned greater State intervention in our lives. Cartoonists all over the world responded to 9/11 in different ways. But, for cartoonists everywhere 9/11 dominated their images for a long time thereafter (Mark Long 2006). Donna Hoffman and Alison Howard (2007) divide their study of 9/11 cartoons into two time periods. In the first period from September 11, 2001 to December 31st, 2004, their research shows that the images of 9/11 were primarily used in non-political ways. According to their research, cartoonists in this time period predominantly sought to memorialize the event through the themes of WWII references, patriotism, and remembrances of heroes and victims (2007, 271). Cartoonists such as Benson and Parker used the patriotic symbol of the Statue of Liberty, Uncle Sam, and/or an eagle with smoking twin towers or ground zero. Other cartoonists in the first time period represented images of ground zero that included a tribute to the heroes and victims. The authors note a few aberrations from this initial trend of sentimentalizing the event such as the cartoon drawn by Mark Marland which appeared five months after the attack. Marland's cartoon likened the President to a terrorist attacking the twin towers of social security (In Hoffman and Howard 2007, 273).

In the second phase Hoffman and Howard notice a shift (2005 to July 31, 2006) but still lament the lack of free usage of this powerful medium to criticize official policy. They opine that there were a few more cartoons of the President than in the previous time period, but perhaps not as many as one might expect given the growing unpopularity of the President, the War on Terror, and the War in Iraq during this time (2007, 273). Hoffman and Howard notice the under usage of 9/11 images for the purpose of hard-hitting social and political commentary by most political cartoonists. They emphasize, "Few cartoonists have relied on these images for social and political commentary, but yet these images are an important visual representation of a pivotal event in American social and political history" (2007, 273). Hoffman and Howard's study notes the non-political usage of the medium of cartoons, the waste of a powerful channel of political critique. The shift that they discern in 2005 does not restore their negative judgment on the ineffectual use of cartoons in our politics after 9/11.

Different from a comment on the quantitative and qualitative usage of cartoons, Mark Long (2007) draws our attention to the specific attitude infusing them. In his study of 9/11 editorial cartoons, Mark Long (2007) discerns the predominant tone of anti-Americanism. In his engaging comparison of editorial cartoons in Spain and the US after 9/11, Long makes a distinction between anti-Americanism, and anti-America cartoons. He cautions us to use these labels with care as anti-Americanism understood as persistent critique of US society and politics or US foreign policy could constitute the very essence of patriotism today. In a way the criticisms strengthen our conception of democracy by pointing to deviations from its idealized conception or purported democracy's often laughable repercussions. Long notes differences in perspective between Spanish and American political cartoonists as to what the post 9/11 world

means, and the implications of the conduct of the US post 9/11. Despite the differences, the meeting point for the different cartoonists "is a critical engagement of the US and its policies, and a challenging of received truths and accepted, convenient discourses" (Long 2007, 283). Figure 3 below (from a Spanish editorial cartoon) depicts discomfort at the Americanization of the world. Here we see an Afghan man's hair being cut in the style of Mickey Mouse's ears. The text in the cartoon reads "the citizens of Kabul enthusiastically embrace Western culture" (Long 2007, 283).

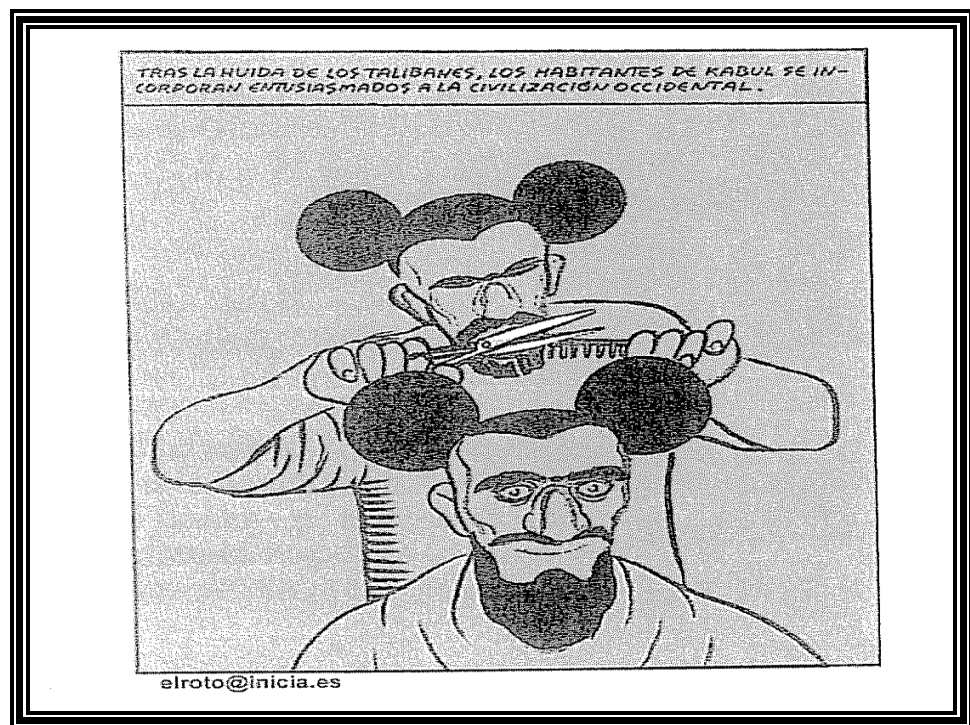


Figure 3³⁵

Cartoonist Chip Bok (2002) emphasizes that political cartooning has a new purpose after 9/11. Wider issues such as questions of life and death predominate in the interrogation of issues like America's role as super power or the American use of weapons of mass destruction as a defense of the invasion of Iraq. To Bok, cartoonists can be divided into two categories: hard

³⁵ Source: Long 2007, 284.

hitting or funny (2002, 7). He writes, "I'm solidly in the hard-hitting camp, except that I think it's all so damned funny. Until Sep.11, that is" (2002, 7). To Bok, political cartoonists moved through their initial reaction to 9/11 replete with weeping Statues of Liberty and comparisons to Pearl Harbor. Cartoons thereafter engaged in lively visual debate resonant to the true spirit of democratic life. Yes, the statue of liberty was used, but not as a moralizing strategy (Please see Figure 4). In Figure 4, Liberty stands in surveillance, eyes wide open, the Terrorist Bill in hand, and the text reads "I'll be watching you." Here the Statue of Liberty stands antithetical to its name, and purpose.

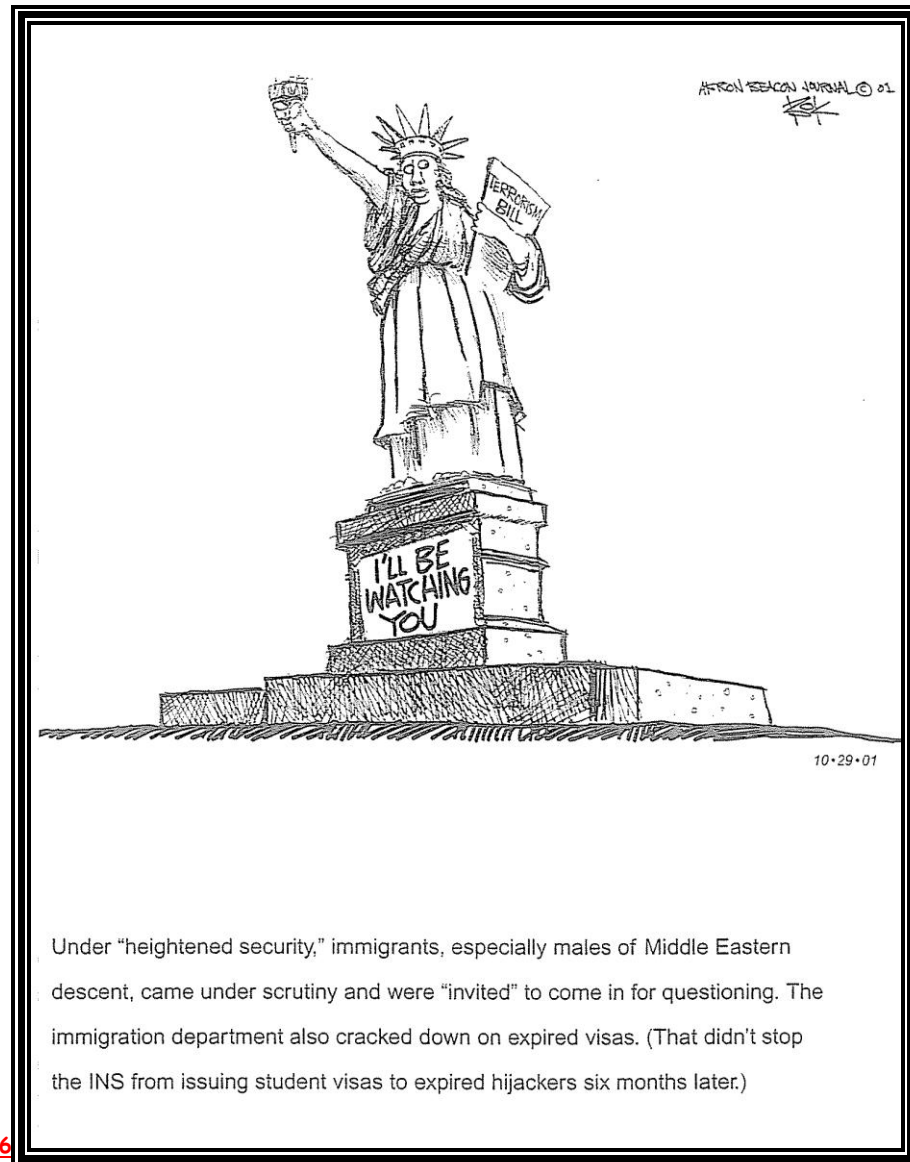


Figure 4³⁶

In "Drawn Into 9/11, But Where Have all the Superheroes Gone?" Terry Kading (2006) argues that comics in the super-hero genre reflect our technological and scientific advancements as well as reflect our insecurities and concerns. With the events of Sep 11, 2001, Kading examines super-hero comic narratives and emphasizes that more than ever before we have been drawn into the superhero narrative. However, Kading notes an important distinction

³⁶ Source: Bok 2002, 41.

between pre- 9/11 and post-9/11 superhero comics. Now we see less of the buoyant “triumphalism” that characterized superhero comics before 9/11. No longer do comics present a univocal victory of the “good” over the “evil,” but seek to portray the insecurities and dilemmas of a world in perpetual anxiety.

In a world of heightened censorship after 9/11, cartoons responded to official policies with varying degrees of alarm, anxiety, and danger. However, the cartoonists' adept craft of visual wit allowed them to showcase issues which a solely verbal or text-based dialogue in mainstream media often side-stepped out of respect or fear of public sanction. Humor can be politically potent and strategic. As Hoffman's and Howard's study pointed out, cartoonists increasingly became more daring and provocative, moving from descriptions of the event to critical questionings. Some cartoons became more controversial than others. The Mike Marland cartoon which placed Bush in the role of a terrorist prompted a White House statement about the cartoon, moved CNN to devote a portion of a show to its discussion, prompted the editor to apologize for running the images and also caused the artist to destroy the original image (Hoffman and Howard 2007, 272). So rules of censorship have also applied to cartoons though it would be fair to state that humor carries with it its own lee-way as questions of political correctness are more malleable in a medium that is inherently playful. Cartoons can thus be both hard-hitting and funny.

In this section I have provided a brief overview of cartoons in response to 9/11, their political usage, efficacy, tone, and temperament. In the cartoons discussed so far, we see them reflecting the post 9/11 political scenario, whether its patronizing and moralizing tendency, or its proclivity to critique. Many cartoons provide a critique of the present, such as Figure 3 and

Figure 4, which show Afghan men cutting their hair in mickey mouse style, and the statue of liberty standing as the epitome of surveillance rather than liberty. These cartoons helped to deconstruct politics after 9/11, offering insight into political maneuverings. They show that cartoons can move beyond a simple descriptive commentary on events towards engagement with politics. Do cartoons have the potential of framing the present, and possibly undoing it? I will explore this potential of cartoons in my discussion of Art Spiegelman's work on 9/11. First, and next, we need to explore more fully, this medium itself. What is a cartoon? What is it that distinguishes this media of conveying information?

What is a Cartoon?

There is no consensus in defining cartoons or explaining their mode of operation. Perhaps this disagreement does justice to a cartoon as a multifaceted phenomenon. Different commentators emphasize particular aspects of cartoon art in their endeavor to describe or define this unique art form. The planes of similarities and differences among these commentators draw our attention to different nuances of this art form; a particular nuance becomes more important than others at a particular time in relation to a particular image. No generalizable definition is possible as any univocal observation is immediately countered with dissenting viewpoints. All the definitions and counter definitions add to our puzzled rapture with the art of cartooning.

To begin with the cartoon takes different formats: There are single panel cartoons, newspaper cartoon strips, editorial cartoons, cartoon short stories, graphic novels etc.³⁷ To Robert C. Harvey the word "cartoon" embraces all these media. To Harvey the word "cartoon" is the generic term for "comics."³⁸ Harvey traces the modern usage of the word cartoon to London in the 1840s. It was first emphasized in the modern sense in reference to *Punch*, the London humor magazine. Initially, *Punch* called its humorous drawings "pencilings," eventually moving to the term "cartoon" to describe any full page satirical drawing. To Harvey, by the time Americans launched their version of *Punch* in the 1800s, the word "cartoon" was on its way to being widely used (1996, 24).

In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud (1994) offers a more temporal definition of comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (9). Drawing upon the influential critic Will Eisner who uses the term "sequential art" to refer to comics, to McCloud, cartooning is a way of drawing (and a way of seeing) (1994, 31).³⁹ Succinctly, McCloud defines cartooning as "amplification through simplification." By simplifying an image or focusing on specific details, a cartoonist augments meaning: "By stripping down an image to its essential 'meaning,' an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realist art can't" (McCloud 1994, 30).

³⁷ Richard Kyle coined the term "graphic novel" in 1964 out of dissatisfaction with the word comic novel (in Harvey 1996, 20).

³⁸ Cartoon is a relatively old word; cartoonist is wholly modern. The word cartoon comes from the Italian cartone, meaning "card." Italian painters and designers drew their designs on cards before transferring them to their chosen medium (Harvey 1996, 24).

³⁹ In *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985), Will Eisner provides a guidebook to the principles and practices of the comic art form. Eisner examines comics as a form of reading that looks at the interplay between image and text, timing or duration as an integral component of comics as sequential art, framing as a part of the creative process in drawing comics, and the relationship between a writer and an artist in the comic art form which harmonizes the talents of the artist and writer in this unique art form. Scott McCloud draws on Eisner's landmark study to build up his own definition of comics and cartooning.

In his examination of comics and cartooning McCloud emphasizes sequencing (form) and simplified images (style) as being essential components of cartooning. Harvey adds another dimension to McCloud's definition by emphasizing the "blending" of verbal and visual content (1996, 19). To Harvey, "McCloud's definition relies too heavily upon the pictorial character of comics and not enough upon the verbal ingredient. Comics uniquely blend the two" (1996, 19). The words add to the meaning of pictures and vice-versa. Harvey adds the qualifier that his description of cartooning is not leak-proof. "Comics...are sometimes four -legged and sometimes two-legged and sometimes fly and sometimes don't" (1996, 20). According to Harvey, the visual element crucial to cartooning is narrative breakdown or the sequencing of images. The verbal element is the speech balloons. The speech balloons infuse life into the images. The verbal and the visual in cartooning act as continuations of each other. To Harvey, this is unique (1996, 21). As speech balloons breathe life into the comics, the successive displaying of the images, gives that life duration by infusing the time element. A cartoonist uses and manipulates time by skillfully sequencing the images.

Robert Harvey in *The Art of the Comic Book*, emphasizes that the litmus test of good comic art is its proficiency in blending the visual and the verbal: "But when words and pictures blend in mutual dependence to tell a story and thereby convey a meaning that neither the verbal nor the visual can achieve alone without the other then the storyteller is using to the fullest the resources the medium offers him" (1996, 4). David Carrier carries Harvey's analysis forward and describes comics as a "composite art" which seamlessly combine both the verbal and visual elements (2000). He situates his own conception of comics at variance from Kunzle who looks at comics as a hybrid form, both verbal and pictorial. However to Kunzle this hybridity in comics is

dominated by its pictorial element. Carrier denies the domination of the pictorial and posits a harmonious combination of the verbal and pictorial. Thus commentators disagree over whether the comic art form can be reduced to the battle between image and text. Further they query whether words police image or pictures destabilize words? Or they ask whether, comics are a unique art form that propels a unique combination of image into text and text into image?

I draw upon Will Eisner to define comics as sequential narrative that deploys both verbal and visual means for heightened effect. Cartooning is the craft of drawing comics, the style that defines this medium of narration. It is the craft that distinguishes the medium of comics from others like film making.⁴⁰ Cartoons magnify the message in a comic by emphasizing and playing with fundamental traits in image display. To me "play" is an essential element in cartooning which descriptions of this craft have vastly under-played in describing its other intrinsic qualities. A unique weapon in the hands of a cartoonist is the ability to play with image, text and the combination of the two. It is by the medium of play that the subversion of text by image and image by text is accomplished. Moreover, by "play," I do not mean that the cartoonist trivializes but rather that by simplifying, magnifying, and exaggerating the cartoonist opens up a more complex web of meaning than would be possible by adhering to realistic drawing. Uniquely, the simplification and magnification operate in tandem, as partners in a witty crime. Thus there is

⁴⁰ Robert Harvey in a chapter in his book titled *The Art of the Comic Book* differentiates cartooning from film making ("Only in the comics: Why cartooning is not the same as film making"). Yes, he does acknowledge that both are related and the two media have helped each other through their separate histories but they are not the same. To Harvey, each requires a different quality of engagement from its viewers. Films use sound for various dramatic effects. Comics seek to achieve this effect by purely visual means (1994, 176). Another difference being that the images on film move while the images in a comic are static. Comics and film use time differently. While films use motion to depict time, comic use space to depict action (1994, 176). Harvey sees cartooning and film making as different with capacities peculiar to it alone (1994, 190).

not only an inter-play between image and text but crucially a play with image and text that uniquely defines cartoon artistry.

Thus cartoons accomplish what Nietzsche suggested in the *Twilight of the Idols*, a "sounding out" of the idols with the "tuning fork" of critical language. The proper strategy is not to attempt to destroy idols or sacrosanct images, but to play upon them. This would not break the images but it would break their silence, make them speak and resonate and "transform their hollowness into an echo chamber for human thought" (Mitchell 2005, 27). By playing with these images, we lose neither a perspective of their origins nor an assessment of its present. In fact, play enables us to push even further, beyond the present. This is what makes it playful. Cartoons demonstrate the visual play with/of images.

In the previous section about cartoons on 9/11, I emphasized that the content of cartoons is often radical. Here I have explored the radical potential of the style of cartooning. Both the style and content of cartooning mark out the subversive potential of this art form. I will explore the subversive potential of this art form with reference to Art Spiegelman's cartoons on 9/11. I contend that in Spiegelman's work the craft of cartooning works to undo rigid identity thinking that characterized the post 9/11 landscape. To substantiate this claim, I next examine the politics of undoing identity followed by an exploration of how Art Spiegelman's cartoons on 9/11 have focused on a practice of undoing identity.

Undoing of identity as a response to 9/11:

The events of 9/11 were followed by a political response that sought to consolidate political and social identities. The collapse of the twin towers was used to justify a politics that

reinforced national loyalties and emphasized a civilizational difference between the east and the west. Hegemonic politics offered by official government spokespersons and the media not only consolidated macro boundaries but also micro individual centered identities. US official policies after 9/11 sought to barricade the country from further attacks, a barricading not only of the 'homeland' but also its subjects. It responded to violence with violence. Surely, "it is time to allow an intellectual field to develop in which histories might be felt in their nuances and complexity, and accountability understood in separation from cries of revenge" (Butler 2004, 23).

In response feminist critic Judith Butler (2004; 2005) emphasizes the "undoing" of identity as a more appropriate response to 9/11. This kind of politics has greater livability as its aim, seeking to "undo" the norms that create violence. Butler's "undoing" starts with the question of the human, of who counts as the human, who can be a political-social subject? "...the related question of whose lives count as lives, and with a question that has preoccupied many of us for years: what makes for a grievable life?" (2004, 18). Butler's emphasis on the need for "undoings" seeks to move beyond the orbit of violence by disentangling the normative tentacles that encapsulate us and inhibit our inherent relationality to others. Butler inspires us to respond to the trauma of 9/11, not by more privatization and isolation but by understanding "the constitutive sociality of the self, a basis for thinking a political community of a complex order" (2004, 19). Thus Butler's emphasis on "undoings" would not undo us from others but instead emphasize emphatic inter-connections and mutuality. But this necessitates undoing our normative cages which exacerbate violence towards the other. Butler insists that dispossession and disorientation has a certain ethical potency when it is done from a disposition of relationality,

thereby initiating modes of becoming that "in becoming otherwise exceeds the norm, reworks the norm, and makes us see how realities to which we thought we were confined are not written in stone" (Butler 2004, 29). Undoings emphasize the potential buoyancy of the self where we reach out beyond our scripted selves and initiate ontological ek-stasis. Becoming undone means shedding barriers in/to the self which distance humans from relational identification with others. It is a simplification of the self, not by reducing it, but rather by augmenting a fuller conception of person-hood.

Undoing identity does not mean undermining one's sense of personhood by restricting one's capacity to live a livable life. What it does seek to inaugurate is something "good" (Butler 2004, 1). Becoming undone can function in a "bad" way when it suffocates life and disables rather than enables life: "Other times the experience of a normative restriction becoming undone can undo a prior conception of who one is only to inaugurate a relatively newer one that has greater livability as its aim" (Butler 2004, 1). Butler's emphasis on "undoings" is the basis for her conception of ethics. As she writes, "To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish, to be sure, but also a chance—to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself elsewhere, and so to vacate the self-sufficient "I" as a kind of possession. If we speak and try to give an account from this place, we will not be irresponsible, or, if we are, we will surely be forgiven" (2005, 136). Becoming "undone" suspends the demand for total coherence, for a rigidly contained self identity and thus counters a violence that imposes a dictated coherence to the world. Becoming "undone" disorients our complacent sense of self and moves us beyond a static conception of "I" towards a dynamic dis-orientation and thus re-orientation. Butler explains this notion of being "undone" with reference to ecstasy.

To be "ex-static" means, literally, to be outside oneself and this can have several meanings: to be transported beyond oneself by a passion, but also to be "beside oneself" with rage or grief" (2004, 20). What kind of politics can be composed of those who are beside themselves?

The language of rights would not speak well to such people. In that language we present ourselves as bounded beings, distant and recognizable. No doubt we need that language for legal protection but that does not exhaust who we are. We need to recognize another language, another image that can visualize a tearing away from ourselves, that which binds us to others, undoes us. An event such as 9/11, a moment of sheer grief contains the possibility of apprehending a mode of dispossession that is fundamental to who one is. This does not dispute the fact of my bodily autonomy but it does qualify that by emphasizing the fundamental sociality of embodied life. Corporeal vulnerability provides the point of identification with suffering itself. The one with whom I identify is not me, and that "not being me" is the condition of identification. This is the vital difference between identity and identification (J. Rose in Butler 2004, 129). The experience of identification hinged on corporeal vulnerability enables us to move beyond a narrow rendering of identity, of "us" and "them," "I" and "you." Maybe emphasizing corporeal vulnerability and identification is the key to such an endeavor. What kind of politics would best reflect an undoing? What political craft could best showcase its mechanisms?

Today more than ever before, we live in a world of images and visual politics. These images whether as spectacle, sign or symbol dominate our political imagination. In the initial campaign of the war against Iraq, the US government advertised its military feats as an overwhelming visual phenomenon. We were not only producing an aesthetic dimension to war but also exploiting visual aesthetics as part of war strategy itself (Butler 2004a). The New York

Times and other news outlets decorated its front pages on a regular basis with bombs bursting above the streets and homes of Baghdad. Of course in this context, the repeatedly articulated image of the glowing World Trade center before its destruction took on a life of its own. So what do the twin towers want? What kind of visual politics could respond effectively to the events of 9/11, not by simply describing it but also provocatively make us question the event and ourselves? Could the "lowly" craft of cartooning be credited with such a political potential?

Spiegelman's response:

Art Spiegelman responds to 9/11 through his chosen medium, by cartooning it in his *In The Shadow Of No Towers*. Spiegelman is the son of two holocaust survivors and in his seemingly irreverent graphic novel, *Maus*, Spiegelman succeeded in rendering the horrors of the concentration camps through the use of the comics medium, a form usually associated with "the very unserious, unsacred world of Loonytoons" (Gordon in Versluys 2006, 980). Published in two parts, *Maus* subverted the traditional use of comics to tell a tragic tale, portraying Jews as mice and Nazis as cats. Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for *Maus*, the first time a comic novel had won the prestigious award. Even before, in 1980, Spiegelman co-founded RAW, a large format graphic magazine that featured strips by underground comic artists such as Chris Ware, Mark Beyer, and Dan Clowes. In his contribution for RAW (subtitled Open Wounds from the Cutting Edge of Commix), Spiegelman experimented with drawing and narrative styles, producing strips that helped create an avant-garde of comic art (Siegal 2005). Robert Harvey writes on Spiegelman: "Art Spiegelman is a thinking cartoonist. His creations were invariably intellectualized, carefully designed to exploit the resources of the medium (1994, 237). *Maus*

demonstrated without doubt that cartooning can tell "serious stories with serious purposes" (Harvey 1994, 245).

In The Shadow of No Towers continues Spiegelman's work on serious stories through an apparently unserious medium. Spiegelman writes about the rationale for his project on 9/11:

I had anticipated that the shadows of the towers might fade while I was slowly sorting through my grief and putting it into boxes. I hadn't anticipated that the hijackings of September 11 would themselves be hijacked by the Bush cabal that reduced it all to a war recruitment poster. At first, Ground Zero had marked a Year Zero as well. ...When the government began to move into full dystopian Big Brother mode and hurtle America into a colonialist adventure in Iraq—while doing very little to make America genuinely safer beyond confiscating nail clippers at airports—all the rage I'd suppressed after the 2000 election, all the paranoia I'd barely managed to squelch immediately after 9/11, returned with a vengeance. New traumas began competing with still fresh wounds and the nature of my project began to mature (Spiegelman 2004, unpaginated).

What is crucial to the shaping of his comic book on 9/11 is that Spiegelman witnessed the collapse of the Twin Towers. The collapsing towers left an indelible imprint on his mind, "unhinging him" from his daily activities, reiterating the lesson learnt from his parents, Auschwitz survivors, of always keeping his bags packed (Spiegelman 2004 unpaginated).

David Hadju writes, 'Spiegelman clearly sees Sep. 11 as his holocaust (or the nearest thing his generation will have to personal experience with anything remotely correlative), and in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* [he]makes explicit parallels between the events without diminishing the incomparable evil of the death camps" (quoted in Versluys 2006, 980). In all respects, the death camps and the terrorist attacks are separate and irreducible historical events. However, Spiegelman does read 9/11 through the Holocaust. The Holocaust is the

foundation for his 9/11 interpretation. *In The Shadow Of No Towers* echoes with the past. The flyleaf, a reprint of the Sept. 11, 1901 front page of *The World* (printed in New York) reports: "President's Wound Reopened; Slight Change For Worse." This report from 1901 is about the shooting of William McKinley. The report literally is about how surgeons had to remove several stitches due to the presence of a fragment of McKinley's coat carried into the wound by the bullet. Spiegelman uses this report not to tell us about the specific conditions of McKinley's bullet wound, but, to show us how time repeats itself, shocks keep festering, and wounds never heal. Spiegelman superimposes a picture of the burning twin towers on this report from Sept. 11 1901. Another panel shows Spiegelman smoking furiously and trying to describe 9/11: "I remember my father trying to describe what the smoke in Auschwitz smelled like. The closest he got was telling me it was 'indescribable.' That's exactly what the air in lower Manhattan smelled like after Sept. 11!" (2004, 3). For Spiegelman, trauma piles on trauma. The towers burn inside Spiegelman and fuel his urge to make us see the repetition of history. Versluys succinctly notes that seeing 9/11 as a holocaust-analogue, "colors Spiegelman's urge to testify; it accounts for the dramatic and dynamic form of the tale and, ultimately, for his fierce partisanship and political commitments" (2006, 982).

Clearly any image of 9/11, of commemorating it, would not be on celebration or triumph. As Andreas Huyssen writes analogously of Holocaust representations and monuments, "In contrast to the tradition of the legitimizing, identity-nurturing monument, the Holocaust monument must be considered, rather, as a kind of counter monument" (In Young 1994, 15) Can Spiegelman's cartoons be seen as such a counter image? One that seeks to move out of the cycle of violence embedded in the event. As a variation on Adorno, who, rightfully, was wary of the

effects of aestheticizing the unspeakable suffering of the victims, it has been claimed that to build a monument to the Holocaust was itself a barbaric proposition. No monument after Auschwitz. As Huyssen points out, these critiques focus on the monument as "object" as "permanent reality in stone" (1994, 150). They do not consider that in the absence of tombstones to the victims, representation and monuments can function as a substitute site of mourning and remembrance. Indeed representation could be what Kafka wanted literature to be when he said that the book might be the ax for the frozen sea within us (Huyssen in Young 1994, 17). We need representations, images and counter-images to keep the sea from freezing. In a frozen sea the past would simply be the past. The politics of 9/11 memory, even where they speak of the past, must be the future. As we use the past to anchor our identities, events such as these demand a re-visioning.

No representation breaks away from its origin. Thus no image of 9/11 or ways of working through it can exist apart from its origin. It is useful to invoke what Walter Benjamin called a "dialectical image." It goes before us as a figure of our future, threatens to come after us as an image of what could replace us, and takes us back to the question of our own origins as creatures made "in the image" of an invisible force. Where do these images take us?

Cartooning seemed a way for Spiegelman to come to terms with the ephemeral nature of existence after 9/11. He recalls being "reminded how ephemeral even skyscrapers and democratic institutions are": "When a monument—like two 110 story towers that were meant to last as long as the Pyramids—becomes ephemeral, one's daily life, the passing moment, takes on a more monumental quality" (Spiegelman in an interview with Nina Siegal 2005). But does cartooning or a simplified depiction of such an awesome event distort the magnitude of 9/11?

Does it trivialize it as well as the trauma of people who experienced the event? How does Spiegelman's response constitute a "political" reaction to the event? How does he deploy the cartoon to promote democratic politics?

Spiegelman's cartoons and the undoing of identity:

In this section I seek to answer the above questions. Here I turn specifically to Spiegelman's cartoons. I concentrate on examining his style of cartooning in the use of image and text as well as in specific images of animals and ghosts. Also, I draw attention to his play with matter, his materialism that pulls in the reader towards a specific experience with the content of his comic book. I emphasize that these features in his work illustrate his play with identity, the process of becoming "undone."

a) Spiegelman's style: the use of image and text

Spiegelman's work is considered by many to be unclassifiable (Blume 1995; Levanthal 1995). It disturbs the division between high and low culture, fact and fiction by treating serious subjects with "lowly" means. Below is an exchange between Spiegelman and Harvey Blume (1995) which clearly elucidates the temper behind his work.

AS: I had an entertaining moment with the New York Times Book Review when MAUS was given a spot as a bestseller in the fiction category. I wrote a letter saying that David Duke would be quite happy to read that what happened to my father was fiction. I said I realized MAUS presented problems in taxonomy but I thought it belonged in the nonfiction list. They published the letter and moved MAUS to nonfiction. But it turns out there was a debate among the editors. The funniest line transmitted back to me was one editor saying, let's ring Spiegelman's doorbell. If a giant mouse answers, we'll put MAUS in nonfiction.

H: What about this moment of the loss of innocence draws you?

AS: It's always what interests me; it's what exists between categories. It is when something is at the point of meeting something else but hasn't melted

into it. The example I keep going back to is Seurat. I always like Seurat's paintings. Depending on where you stand you see either dots or people in a park. But it's not just a field of dots and it's not just people in a park. It's a point of discovery because there are no easy categories. It's true for Seurat, and it's true for this particular moment of the zeitgeist that takes place in the '20s, and it's true for comics becoming literature as they lose their central function as things that sell newspapers, let's say.

H: So breakdown of genre is the moment of possible discovery.

AS: It's not just a breakdown of genre; very often it's a breakdown of values. Genre is just the superficial manifestation.

H: People get used to looking at genre for guarantees. Fiction is fiction; nonfiction is nonfiction. When those sorts of distinctions weaken, it can be unnerving.

AS: And that's the terrifying moment that can lead to revelation. Nonfiction associates itself with the exterior world and fiction presumably deals with sensibility. There's a point where those things do and must meet. In Seurat, you have a post-Impressionist moment where the question is what is a picture? Is the rectangle a window or is it a canvas? Different values, different world views are implied in each answer. Not just a matter of style, not just a matter of craft. And there's a move eventually through Seurat to a certain kind of field abstraction. Whatever value I find in totally non-representational painting or in totally representational painting, the moment of collision is the one where I get the biggest charge. It's also true at the end of the '20s, before the '30s set in. That particular curdled innocence of the '20s is still central to me; and if there's a place where The Wild Party still remains relevant in today's world it has to do with something I can't fully articulate; it has to do with that particular collision, the collision between the world that rhymes and the world that doesn't.

Maus presented problems in classification. It was originally listed as belonging to the fiction category, but Spiegelman emphasized that it should belong to non-fiction. Indeed, as Spiegelman discusses in his interview with Harvey Blume, the editors had a hard time picturing a mouse-human as "real" and non-fictional. For Spiegelman, the real-ness of the Holocaust would be dishonored by categorizing *Maus* as fictional. Spiegelman's *Maus* created havoc on the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. Harvey Blume emphasized that blurring the distinction between fiction and non-fiction can be unnerving. To Spiegelman, "that's the

terrifying moment that can lead to revelation." In the collision between categories, much like Seurat's paintings, Spiegelman finds the "biggest charge," the inarticulate moment of sheer creativity that necessitates bringing together different worlds, different sensibilities, fact, and fiction. To re-emphasize, what interests Spiegelman is what "exists between categories," "the collision between the world that rhymes and the world that doesn't." Significantly it is this temper that colors his style of cartooning. His way of working through the trauma of 9/11 seeks to walk this path, back and forth, between a world that makes sense and the world that doesn't. Often the world that makes sense is the world of cartooned caricature, of mice and vultures, of ghosts and fires. The "real" world provides little explanation. To effectively portray his political commentary on the real world, Spiegelman uses complicated and defamiliarizing techniques. Rather than a consistent tale, the ten giant cartoon pages—displaying a wide variety of styles—present themselves as a collage.

According to Spiegelman's introduction to *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, the enormous size of the two-page spread color newsprint plates fits a narrative involving "oversized skyscrapers and outsized events" (2004, unpaginated). Beyond that, the loud colors with a generous use of the color red, the darkly bordered panels, the asymmetrical panel placements, the change in layout of every page, the superimposition of panels suggesting a random pile-up of material—all have the effect of giving urgency to the tale, the disbelief, panic and disillusionment with a world that is supposedly in rhyme.⁴¹ *In The Shadow Of No Towers* is not a sequential narrative in graphic form, as *Maus* is. Instead, the author—who appears in person in the story and thus functions as narrator-protagonist—has conveyed his impressions in a series

⁴¹ See Versluys (2006) for an excellent discussion on Spiegelman's mimetic representation of trauma.

of ten large outsize (9.5 by 14 inches), brightly colored pages, which consist of irregularly spread panels. About half of the material deals with the actions of Spiegelman and his immediate family on that bright September morning. The other half consists of a savage satire on the doings of the Bush administration up until August 31, 2003. The ten pages are preceded by a two-page prose introduction, in which the author explains the circumstances in which the comic series came to be composed. The second half of the book contains a cameo history of newspaper comics in the US, illustrated by reprints of original cartoon strips and plates. Spiegelman introduces this section in prose explaining why old newspaper comics served as his solace after 9/11.

A cartoon human Spiegelman follows soon after a mouse Spiegelman. A black and white color scheme is super-imposed with a brightly colored cartoon. Realistic images are preceded and anteceded by fictional caricatures. Image sequencing in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* does not follow a consistent pattern either in layout or in the content of the images themselves. Spiegelman plays with sequencing and content, juxtaposing different styles of image making in quick succession. This strategy undermines a categorical coherence for "a" systematic picture (world) building. The author's disorientation after the events of 9/11 is effectively portrayed in his style of presentation.

Rather than the word "comics" to describe his work, Spiegelman prefers the word "com-mix." Spiegelman emphasizes that the very word comics "brings to mind the notion that they have to be funny...humor is not an intrinsic component of the medium. Rather than comics, I prefer the word com-mix, to mix together, because to talk about comics is to talk about mixing together words and pictures to tell a story" (In Young 1998, 672). Spiegelman explains, "the

strength of commix lies in its synthetic ability to approximate a 'mental language' that is closer to actual human thought than either words or pictures alone" (In Young 1998, 672). James Young explains that unlike a linear historical narrative, this unique mixture of words and images generates a triangulation of meaning—a kind of three dimensional narrative—in the movement between words, images, and the reader's eye (Young 1998, 672).

Much earlier, in his 1977 publication of *Breakdowns*, Spiegelman sought to answer the question, "How to tell the story of a narrative's breakdown in broken-down narrative?" (In Young 1998, 673). In *Breakdowns* Spiegelman combined images and narratives without offering any direction as to whether they should be read side to side, top to bottom, image to narrative, or narrative to image (1998,673). In *The Shadow Of No Towers*, Spiegelman follows the same strategy in combining words and images to explain the (need for) breakdown of narrative after 9/11 (see next image). Figure 5 illustrates Spiegelman's complex juxtaposition of images and frames. A spherical frame highlights the anxiety in a post 9/11 world, surrounded by squared frames of the burning twin towers. The text blends with frame placements and tells us about the fear driven post 9/11 world which anticipates catastrophe at every junction. The irregular frames and images showcase the tension driven atmosphere of unavoidable calamity.



Figure 5⁴²

Working with raptures and breakdowns that showcase irregularity and non-linearity, many comics are postmodern art. Adam Gopnik has suggested that comics in the twentieth century have served as a “metalanguage of modernism, a fixed point of reference outside modern paintings to which artists could refer in order to make puns and ironic jokes” (Young 1998, 675). James Young elaborates that as a mirror and caricature of styles in modern art, the

⁴² Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

"comics have at once catalogued and mocked modern art with its own high seriousness, making them the postmodern art par excellence (1998, 675). The medium of comics have always raised and dismissed issues of decorum as part of its *raison d'être*. If post modernism implies genre meltdown, Spiegelman's comics free themselves from having to be art in the conventional sense. Spiegelman's comics are imbued with the post-modern spirit not only in content but also in form. Indeed, Spiegelman's comics live up to the deconstructive spirit in more ways than one.

The relationship between the words and pictures in a comic book, rather than being the collision of dialectical opposites...is more akin to Derrida's concept of "differance." Since it is impossible to "see" both pictures and words simultaneously, the presence of the one necessitates the absence of the other creating a continual unresolvable play off between the two textual forms. In addition, signification and stable meaning is continually deferred as the eye, instead of scanning left to right in even, linear patterns, jumps between words and pictures, spiraling zig-zagging and often interrupting the entire process to re-scan the information in a new way. Rather than two "stable" texts (words and pictures) juxtaposed, the comic book is a form of self-inflicted "double-writing," collapsing traditional strategies for reading word and picture texts. (Schmitt in J. Maggio 2007, 238)

In this section I have explored why Spiegelman's style of cartooning can best be described as post-modern. It seeks to move beyond linearity towards a stylistic characterization of ruptures and breakdowns. If post-modernism can best be described as "incredulity towards meta-narrative" (Jameson), we see Spiegelman visually drawing in the reader to a mode of critical questioning when frames do not comfortably fit in together according to our rules of reading, rules of intelligibility and rules of the world. Spiegelman's picture (de)building, questions our world building. I continue this exploration in the next section where I examine Spiegelman's animal cartoons.

b) Animal cartoons:

Harvey opines that *Maus* gets its most conspicuous visual novelty from its use of images of talking animals.⁴³ There were varied objections to Spiegelman's use of animals to depict Jews as mice and the Nazis as cats. This imagery was seen to confirm racial stereotypes and was considered offensive by many. Spiegelman's use of animal images has been a subject of much controversy and discussed by many of his commentators (James Young, Joseph Witek, John Leventhal, Edward Shannon etc.⁴⁴). I explore the subversive potential of Spiegelman's use of animal images in the next chapter. Here, I emphasize that the animal images used by Spiegelman are "cartoon" animal images. In *In The Shadow Of No Towers* Spiegelman uses cartoon mouse images of himself to depict his working through with 9/11.

Ian Johnston (2001) coins the word "schematic" to refer to Spiegelman's animal cartoons. They are different from naturalistic depictions and are "schematic" for Spiegelman makes no attempt to depict them as real or life-like. As I discussed before, cartoons magnify through simplifications and the use of schematic images enables a stripping down for maximum effect. McCloud (1994) argues that the simpler and more schematic images enable this stripping down for maximum effect. McCloud points out that the simpler an image, the easier it is for us

⁴³ Robert Harvey (1994) points out that *Maus* is not the only book about World War II experience to employ talking animals to represent the nationalities involved. *The Best Is Dead*, a French graphic novel by Calvo and Dancette (1944), presents the Germans as wolves, the French as squirrels and rabbits, the Russians as polar bears, the Americans as buffalo and so forth.

⁴⁴ To Joan Gordon the depiction of nationalities as animals "is the most problematic aspect" of the book because they support ethnic stereotypes and tend to oversimplify political issues (Gordon 1987, 84). However, to others such as Edward Shannon the cat-and-mouse game not only provides an effective metaphor for Nazi-Jewish relations, it also subverts the comic tradition of the funny animal (Shannon 1986, 7). Or as Joseph Witek points out, "there is something almost magical, or at least mysterious, about the effect of a narrative that uses animals instead of human characters. The animals seem to open a generic space into a precivilized innocence in which human behavior is stripped down to a few essential qualities, and irrelevancies drop away" (1989, 112).

to identify with it. By using simplified animal images, Spiegelman draws us inside the image. Images that are realistic do not elicit viewer identification in the same way as when we treat the image objectively and assess its merits.

For example, consider the simplest form of a human face, a circle, with dots representing the eyes a simple line representing the mouth, no more. Such a picture makes no pretence towards objectivity, towards representing anyone particular. And so anyone viewing this face can, in effect, see himself in it. There is no particular detail to disqualify such a subjective identification. As soon as I begin to put in particular details (e.g., hair, glasses, a moustache or beard, and so on), I am changing the effect of the picture. I am, in a sense, increasingly objectifying it, pushing it further and further away from the general viewer in a direction which leads, ultimately, to a photographic representation of a particular person, objectively realized—someone who is clearly not an image the reader can immediately identify with (by contrast, such an identification is explicitly denied by the otherness of the naturalistically rendered face) (Johnston 2001, 7).

I see the mouse cartoon working in two ways, simultaneously and in tandem. The cartoon images by the very nature of their operation draw the viewer in, enthusing identification. The simplified animal images confirm that we can identify without being showcased within normalizing frames. Spiegelman's animal images are inspired by the need to move beyond given frames and stereotypes. To me, they provide the propellant to move beyond the borders of the given, static, and defined as "human." Both because they are cartoons and because they use animal images, Spiegelman's animal cartoons work towards an undoing of identity for the reader in response to the artist's impulse. The use of animal cartoons invites the reader to think through the present in terms other than strictly caged identities. By "becoming-animal" Spiegelman paves the way for emphatic inter-connections when normal frames prove grossly insufficient to respond with an adequate vocabulary.

In the use of animal cartoons, we see no paralysis, no stopping short with fear even though the images depict the fearful stagnation and halt of normal life processes. In the recognition of this itself, one initiates the process of becoming undone in anticipation of a different version of the self who can deal with the reality. This process is most graphically illustrated in Spiegelman's work in the picture of the falling bodies (see next Figure). In Figure 6, the person is depicted as falling down from the towers, in the way people actually did on 9/11. The person shown is Spiegelman himself. But, the figure is recognizable only up to a point. At the bottom of the picture Spiegelman offers a figure caricatured out of recognition. This figure could be anyone—a universal face, a human, animal, or a homeless New Yorker who has landed on the streets of New York in another sense. This caricatured figure is not dead like the other 9/11 victims, but neither is it fully alive, living as dead to "us." Figure 6 exemplifies the process of identification and of becoming undone in relation to others. It is important to emphasize that this is not a closure or erasure. This visual display of despair and suffering, of death, is surrounded by an intricate creative playfulness, which in mobilizing various intertexts prevents closure and a constant re-play of Spiegelman's nightmare (See Versluys 2006, 996).

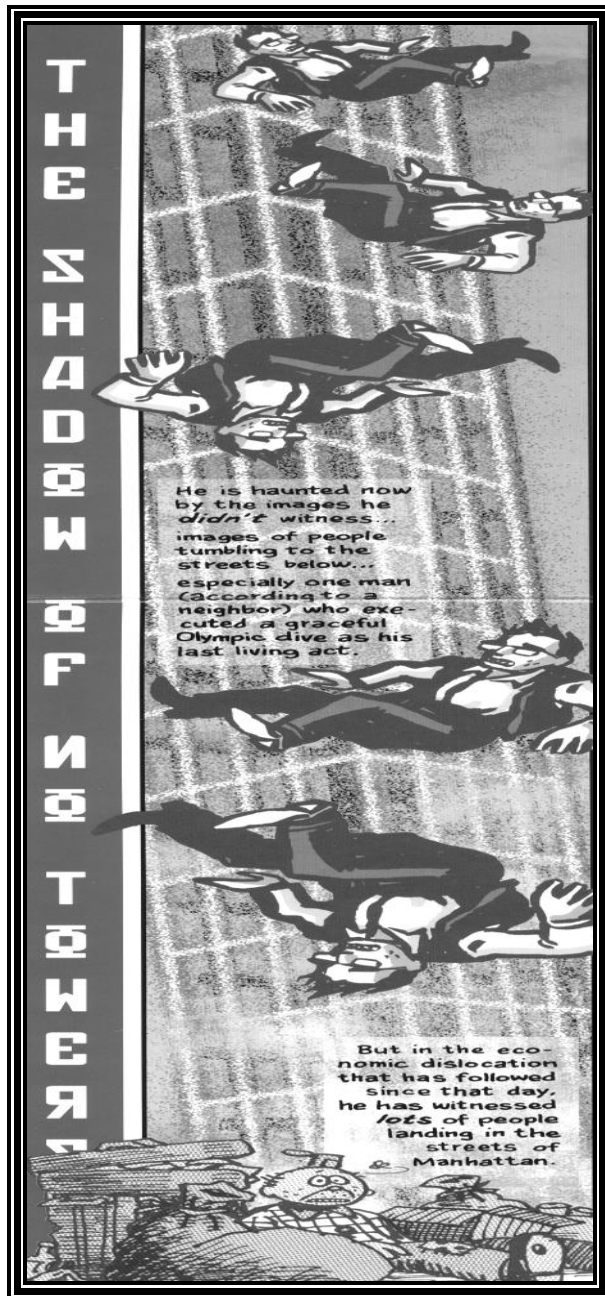


Figure 6⁴⁵

Becoming undone refers to the ec-static character of our existence as essential to the possibility of persisting as human. This refers to being "besides oneself" in grief or rage.

⁴⁵ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 6.

Normal frames do not suffice in this process. This questions the fundamental premise of all identity reasoning. In fact, becoming undone plays with identity; it emphasizes the tenuousness of our identities. In an image to depict the anniversary of 9/11 in 2004, Spiegelman depicts a large congregation of people, some with mouse faces, and others as recognizable cartoon characters. All the figures are however unrecognizable as identifiable humans with set identities. In playing with images, Spiegelman plays with identity. The craft of cartooning becomes the art of undoing identity.

Spiegelman's craft underlines our corporeal vulnerability. He narrows down on blood shot eyes, distorted human-animal faces, bodies flying through the air, faces with snakes crawling out through them etc. He brings to the forefront our corporeal beings, recognizable through identification rather than static identity categories. In fact, I emphasize that Spiegelman's craft of cartooning becomes the art of undoing identity through his focus on the simplified, abstracted, imaged, distorted body that persists through unrelenting trauma by conscious and unconscious subtraction of identities that do not permit change, that persist through a certain mode of violence themselves. Emphasis on the body does not mean that we recognize ourselves as only bounded beings (human and thus not-animal), for the primary others who are past for me not only live on in the fiber of the boundary that contains me, but they also haunt the way I am, as it were, periodically undone and open to becoming unbounded.

c) Ghost cartoons:

Spiegelman's experience of trauma is symbolized by the central image in the volume: the image of the ghostly north tower. The image of the tower figures on each and every page of the book. In an interview with Kenneth Terrell, Spiegelman indicates how he was obsessed by the

image of the burning tower, how it would not let him go (In Versluys 2006, 991). He is possessed by it to such an extent that it comes to exist in a sort of eternal present. On the very first page of the book the glowing image of the tower frames the entire length of the right side of the page and part of the left side. Thus the horizontality of the other narrative panels is offset and overshadowed by the ghost tower on each side. Its dominant position on each page shows that several months after the event, the author is incessantly reenacting the collapse in his mind. Spiegelman sees the image of the ghost towers from different perspectives and distances. The tower is never allowed to keep its physical integrity and to stand tall. The ever shifting view of the towers seems to indicate how transient physical soundness (even made of steel) can be (Versluys 2006). Thus 9/11 becomes a moment when the normal order collapses, instability takes over the solidity of steel, the mind is faced with the incomprehensible and everything is uncanny and surreal (Versluys 2006, 994).

Spiegelman's fidelity to the image of the ghost towers shapes his working with the trauma of the event. On one page he reports that he "is trapped reliving the traumas of Sept. 11, 2001" (2004, 4), while on another he seems to address President Bush directly and exclaims: "leave me alone, Damn it! I'm just trying to comfortably relive my September 11 trauma but you keep interrupting" (2004, 5). The image of the glowing ghost towers refuses to be integrated into the order of things.

One conspicuous feature of the narrative's purposely hybrid and non-normalizing format is the surprising introduction of cartoon characters, most of them dating from the early days of newspaper comics. As Spiegelman writes, "Right after 9/11/01, while waiting for some other terrorist shoe to drop, many found comfort in poetry. Others searched for solace in old

newspaper comics...That they were made with so much skill and verve but never intended to last past the day they appeared in the newspaper gave them poignancy; they were just right for an end-of-the-world moment" (2004, 10). Spiegelman uses these cartoon figures from past comic books skillfully to deliver his own message. But these old cartoon characters have a deeper significance in addition to providing stylistic guidelines. Spiegelman writes, "The only cultural artifacts that could get past my defenses to flood my eyes and brain with something other than images of burning towers were old comic strips; vital, unpretentious ephemera from the optimistic dawn of the 20th century" (2004, 2) Introducing characters from the 'Katzenjammer Kids,' "Happy Hooligan," "Bringing Up Father," "Little Nemo," and "Krazy Kat" has a number of implications. Spiegelman uses McCay's representation of architectural structures in his "Little Nemo In Slumberland" (see next Figure) to reflect not only on comics pages as being architectural structures ("...the narrative rows of panels are like stories of a building" Spiegelman 2004, 12) but also in his own drawings of New York in the wake of 9/11 (see Figures juxtaposed below). Spiegelman weaves in his own message deftly by displaying the works of other cartoonists.

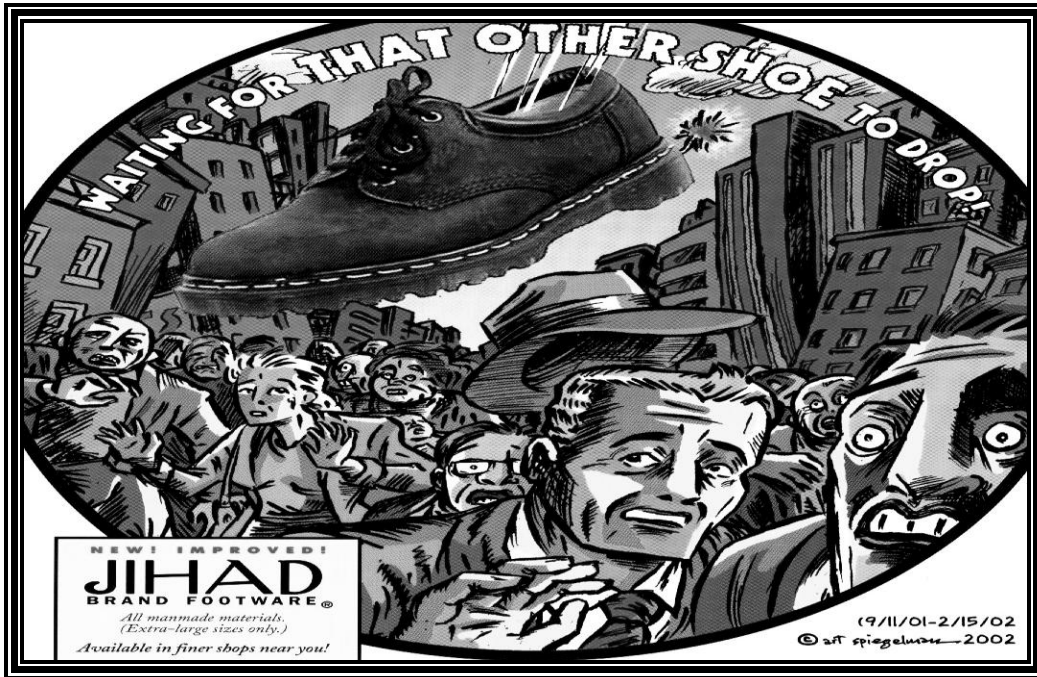


Fig. 7⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1 and Plate VI (*Little Nemo In Slumberland*).

He ends his book with Krazy Kat.

One silent page from 1936 shows Krazy caterwauling in the ever-shifting desert-scape of Coconino County. Kat is joined by Kop for a duet, then by Mrs. Kwak Wak for a trio. A forlorn note tumbles into the panel and, after conferring, they all realize that they have no choice but to join Ignatz in his cell for a quartet. This is deep stuff, and after the attack it hit me like a ton of bricks: it proposed that since every Eden has its snake, one must somehow learn to live in harmony with that snake! I'm still working on it (Spiegelman, 2004, 12).

The use of these old cartoon characters has a unique effect. Along with the image of the north towers they are the "ghosts" in Spiegelman's visual testimony. They throw the whole narrative into a tailspin. Time becomes no consideration or maybe time repeats itself. Using these earlier cartoon characters accounts for a major disruption in the flow of the already raw edged, undulating narrative. In an interview Spiegelman was questioned about the inclusion of archival broad sheets from classic comic strips as many found the shift from his own narrative to the strips "jarring" (Siegel 2005). Spiegelman responded by emphasizing that his book needed the old comic strips because otherwise this would be just a "subjective part of a subjective meltdown." He finds a timeless quality in these comics, where even when they are in the past, they speak to the present.

For example, I found a page with the help of friends that we called "Abdullah Hooligan the Arrogant Clown." Happy Hooligan pretended to be Abdullah, an Arab chief, riding a camel. Abdullah keeps turning around to wave to his nephews, and every time he turns around he whacks the camel. Finally, the camel gets understandably pissed off, and he tosses him in to a tower of acrobats. That's a comic strip that could've been written by Susan Sontag if she had a sense of humor and was able to draw. It's essentially the same argument that got her excoriated in *The New Yorker* when she said that you've got to look at how we've dealt with the middle East to understand how we've created an environment that's gone so far off the deep end (Spiegelman in an interview with Nina Siegel 2005).

The use of old cartoons breaks the horizon of expectation both temporally and stylistically: temporally, because they go back a century, and stylistically because they suddenly introduce humor into a tragic context (Versluys 2006, 991). The tone of the narrative changes dramatically from the middle of the book. Now we see lighter colored pages, a more frivolous, lighter kind of humor. This stands in sharp contrast to the rough, serious political satire that colors the tone of the book in the start. The introduction of these old cartoon characters are reminders of the fact that the expression of chaos allows no direct approach. Most importantly, they are the means through which the author manages to operate in the area where, in the words of Derrida, "language and...concept come up against their limits" (quoted in Versluys 2006, 991). They urge us to let go, to comprehend more fully the borders in which we work by showcasing the borders before.

The use of these ghost images, whether that of the old cartoon characters or the glowing twin towers break the narrative and emphasize that there is no single coherent story. The interruption of the narrative indicates the failure to narrate fully. Butler sees in the inability to narrate a threat, the death of a subject: "But this death, if it is a death, is only the death of a certain kind of subject, one that was never possible to begin with, the death of a fantasy of impossible mastery, and so a loss of what one never had. In other words, it is a necessary grief" (2005, 65). Butler emphasizes that the purpose of theory in the post 9/11 world is not to celebrate incoherence and non-narrativizability but only to point out that our "incoherence establishes the way in which we are constructed in relationality: implicated, beholden, derived, sustained by a social world that is beyond us and before us" (2005, 64).

Using the past to tell the story of the present does have novel implications for identity politics. It underlines the process of our becoming fixable entities, showcases its history and urges us to question its rationale. Why do we choose to become who we are? Why have we developed in this mode which invites violence? Always has. The use of "ghosts" provokes this questioning, underlines the spirit of agonism and contestation at play in the book. Most of the early cartoon characters were born in the newspaper offices of Park Row near the site where the Twin Towers would stand and fall (Versluys 2006, 991). Hence the re-appearance of the classic comic rowdies is also an exhibition of our avid high spirits, our capacity to rebel. They embody the tenacity to face the worst hardships, our openness to becoming undone, and our chance of coming into being anew.

d) Spiegelman's materialism:

Spiegelman's play with identity actively engages materially with the reader. First, and rudimentarily, *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, is a book, hard bound, heavy, solidly material. This is not internet cartooning or a mode of cartooning where we cannot touch the subject matter in front of us. Yes, we can touch the screen of our computers, but internet cartoons scarcely have the advantage of being able to highlight images with techniques other than visual contrivances. Spiegelman's book project engages the reader through hybrid means. The comic book consists of thick pages like a children's book. The very thick pages make it impossible to turn the pages quickly, to simply fast-forward. The reader has to turn the pages slowly, labor to read, labor to engage holistically with the matter. Also, the paper texture varies at different points. It is glossy on some pages, rough to touch on others. For example, the towers on the front page are

printed on shiny paper, smooth and slippery to touch. The elusiveness of supposed steel-solid permanence is tangibly demonstrated.

Spiegelman uses different paper textures to make certain images stand out, such as the glowing bones of the twin towers. The glowing bones are not normalized, not printed on matte paper. The use of different textures is visual and tactile. Spiegelman's post modern comic book does not divorce the body, but involves it in different ways.⁴⁷ Earlier, I discussed "un-doings" that the comic images, of animals and ghosts. Here, I emphasize that Spiegelman's comic book on 9/11 questions the body by engaging it fully, by visual means and through touch, with the issue at hand. He involves our corporeality in his cartooning, by caricatures of the inert, static body (thus the becoming animal), and through a technique that Laura Marks (2004) calls "haptic visuality" or "touching with the eyes." Marks arrived at the concept by working through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "smooth space" or the immediate environment, whether sand or snow.

⁴⁷ Post modernism is variously criticized for its neglect of the actual body. To David McNally and a host of others there is "something curiously attenuated about the post-modern body" (2001, 2). Even though post-modern discourse is not bereft of body-talk (there are performative bodies, cyborg bodies, desiring bodies etc.) they have no blood, bones, muscles or nerves—they are simply the "body as text" that is constructed through discourse (2001, 2). For these theorists the materiality of the body is missing in abstract theorizations. For example in Susan Bordo's discussion of Butler's performative bodies, she sees the absence of "concrete bodies" in space and time. Even the cyborg which is "polyvocal" and "speaks in tongues" is no body at all: "What sort of body is it that is free to change its shape and location at will, that can become anyone and travel anywhere? If the body is a metaphor for our locatedness in space and time and thus for the finitude of human perception and knowledge, then the post-modern body is no body at all" (Bordo 2003, 229).

To me these critiques seem misdirected as I keep asking myself whether post-modernism restricts us from asking a different set of questions. Haraway does not immaterialize the body with her assertion that "...at this point in history, we don't quite know what the body is; we don't even know where it begins and where it ends" (Haraway 1991). Nor is embodiment less central to Butler's theory of performativity. By ascribing a concrete "body" to post-modern theory these critiques lament the lack of a "body" in post-modern theory. Sadly they miss the "spirit" behind post-modern inquiry. To claim that discourse is formative is not to claim that "it" constitutes us. I assert that here there is no denial of the body, but there is an inquiry into the ways in which it is framed, implicated with social meaning, and made an object of study. What is problematic is when the body or biology is made the ontology of life and people categorized "as" bodies rather than "having" bodies.

"Smooth space" is lived intimately, touched and felt. Marks writes, "Haptic visuality sees the world as though it were touching it: close, unknowable, appearing to exist on the surface of the image" (2004, 2). Haptic visuality is based on an understanding of vision as embodied and material. Haptic visuality is distinct from optical visuality. Optical visuality sees objects as distant and distinct, maintaining a clear distinction between figure and ground (Marks 2004, 2).

I use Marks's concept of "haptic visuality" to understand Spiegelman's material use of the craft of cartooning. His cartooning is intimate, personal, memory-based not only in the personal anguish articulated through the images, but also by his use of embodied visuality to ground his cartooning firmly within the audience's hands. As Marks points out, haptic visuality should not be celebrated for itself, for bringing the body back to vision, but rather, this mode of seeing in order to have a radical potential should be motivated by something radical: "If there is a return to the precious knowledge of the body and the senses, what is that knowledge to be used for?" (Marks 2004, 2). In this chapter I have argued that Spiegelman uses this knowledge to undo us, showcase our relationality to others and our surroundings. His images, style of cartooning, extol us to bridge distances by feeling the event before our eyes. Spiegelman uses the knowledge of the body to ground its materiality in responsiveness to others and ourselves, not in singular role- playing. His "smooth space" is 9/11 and he makes the reader touch it through his brilliant craft. The corporeal identification provoked through Spiegelman's material cartooning urges the audience into the cartoonist's frame. "I" touch and am touched, static identity cannot read the haptic images.

In the first section I described studies of cartooning in response to 9/11. We saw that critical responses to 9/11 through the craft of cartooning have questioned our demarcations between good and bad (Terry Kading), moved beyond moralizing symbols that teach us to be more patriotic (Chip Bok) and provided a critical perspective on the implications of US foreign policy (Mark Long). After a study of Spiegelman's cartoons, I can fairly state that his cartoons contain these features and more. They focus on an individual working through 9/11 and moves from critical questioning, to a frustration with answers, towards a visualization of change. Spiegelman urges us towards a re-framing of ourselves and our political world, not only through the content of his cartoons, but also by inspiring the audience's mode of experiencing the content. Spiegelman's cartoons push the reader to question a sacrosanct "I." The cartoons emphasize that we can no longer hold on to a politics so insistently rooted in identity. Trying to do so keeps us within the cycle of violence. When our politics is anchored in our identities, we can no longer argue, whatever is contentious is sequestered in the sacrosanct realm of the self. If we are interested in arresting cycles of violence to produce less violent outcomes, we need to apprehend violence at many different levels. In this chapter, I emphasize that Art Spiegelman's craft of cartooning can provide us with a valuable prism to examine identity formations. His craft of cartooning with its hybrid use of image and text, and embodied visuality, unsettles and displaces. The animal images showcase the self's total disintegration under the trauma. The disintegration becomes the requisite to work with the present. Interestingly, not being human, not having a "real" identity provides the answer for Spiegelman. The "ghosts" are the incessant problematizer, the refusal to accept the status-quo of the present. It demands change and re-configuration. Ironically, Death urges us to be ec-static. The ghosts indicate the failure to

narrate fully, the need for non-narrativizability as a ethical imperative: "Perhaps most importantly, we must recognize that ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human" (Butler 2005, 136).

On the book cover the shiny black towers have printed upon them at the height at which the planes impacted, a narrow panel in color, which shows how a goat bearing the head of Osama bin Laden kicks the rear ends of the cartoon characters—the animal cartoons, ghost tower cartoon, and the old cartoon characters (See Figure 8 next).⁴⁸ This provides the kick-start to re-think contemporary identity politics. Consequently, the back cover of the book figures the same goat in a similar kicking bodily stance. However, here we do not see the shiny black tower. Instead, the figures of the cartoon characters are printed on shiny black paper, like the picture of the twin towers on the front cover. These bodies resonate through the shadow of no towers. Through his art of cartooning, Spiegelman speaks to the politics of 9/11 and urges us to ask: What does it mean to take responsibility? How should we act in the shadow of no towers?

⁴⁸ Versluys (2006, 999) provides an excellent description and analysis of Spiegelman's book cover.

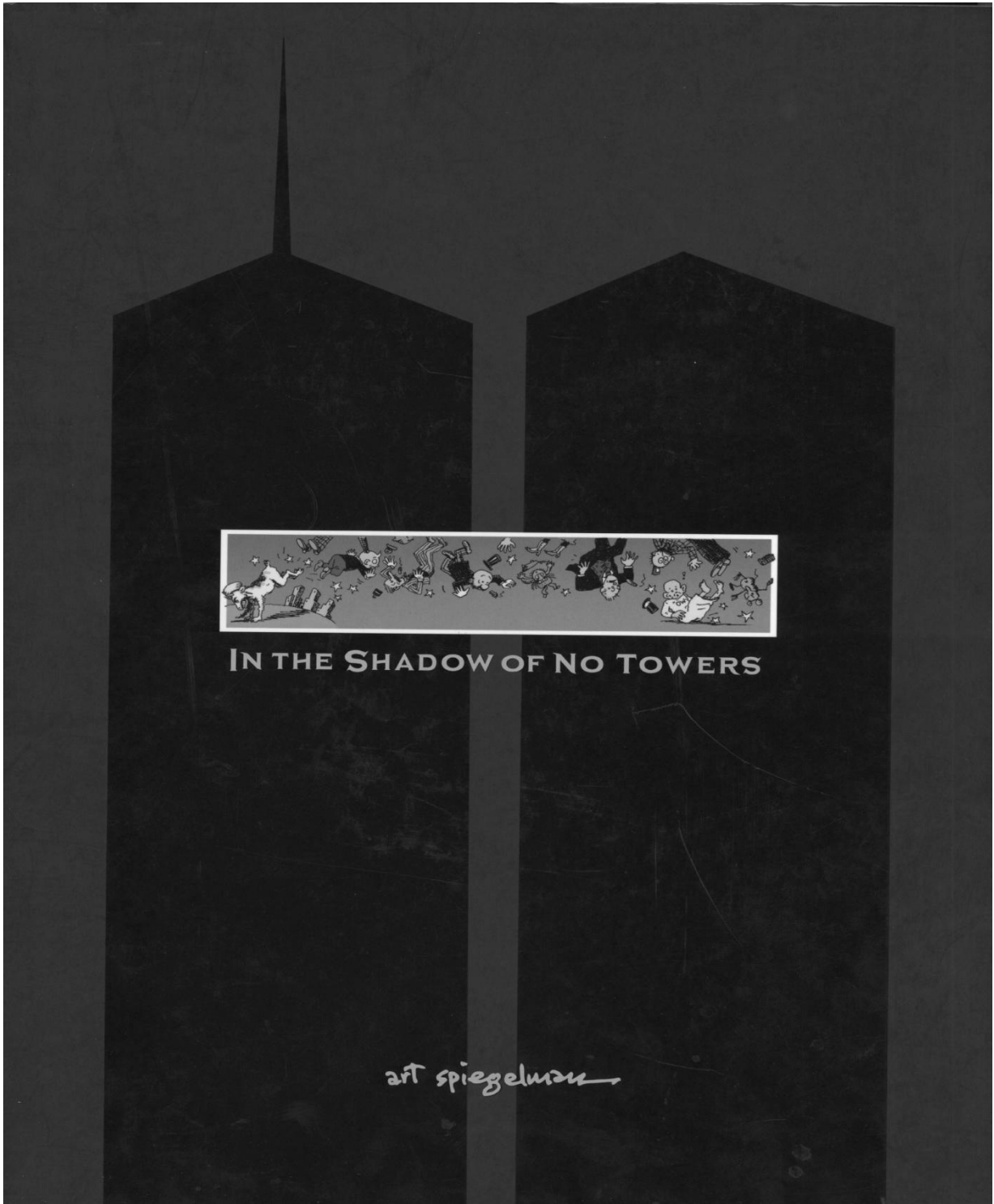


Figure 8⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Source: Spiegelman 2004, front cover.

Chapter 3

Becoming Animal and Deconstructing Animality: A Feminist Exploration

Building alliances is at the forefront of the feminist imagination in the contemporary world. The building of alliances among women gained increasing urgency after 9/11. The Bush administration justified the attack on Afghanistan by portraying helpless Afghan women intimidated and violated by Afghan men. "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women," Bush said after the 2001 invasion, adding that thanks to America, women were "no longer imprisoned in their homes."⁵⁰ The purpose of saving Afghan women was to morally validate the actions of the American regime. American women responded to the plight of the Afghan women in different ways. Some women who lost their husbands on 9/11 have dedicated themselves to helping women a world away who suffered the same fate during the U.S.-led bombing of Afghanistan. Others critique and rally against the "war against women" before 9/11, and the plight of Afghan women as urban "collateral damage" and refugees after. We discern a strong unifying desire after 9/11 to come together as women, network, and strategize for change.⁵¹

Feminist transnational politics gained increased momentum after 9/11, fuelled by urgencies such as the plight of Afghan women. Border-crossing became a pre-requisite for effective feminist politics, not only in terms of crossing tangible geographical borders, but also

⁵⁰ Significantly, as Nira Yuval Davis points out, there was constant mention of the west insisting on multiethnic participation in this government as a precondition for democracy in Afghanistan. However, there was virtually no mention that the women of Afghanistan should participate in the political processes from which they had been excluded (2001, 1).

⁵¹ See Sunita Mehta (2002), *Women for Afghan women: shattering myths and claiming the future*.

in recognizing the commonality in women's predicaments due to war, and the singularity of every woman's experience fashioned by her situational context. A border-crossing feminist politics after 9/11 has to contend with borders on multiple levels. 9/11 reinforced old and erected new binaries of "us" and "them." Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilization" doctrine to represent the state of the world in the post-ideological Cold War period, gathered increasing resonance in the post 9/11 world exemplified by official pronouncements of "us" and the "terrorists."⁵² Binaries of "us" and "them" become increasingly suspect and subject to critique with increasing understanding of systemic patriarchy and local conditions. The binary of "us" and "them," not only contains "us," but contains the "other" within parameters which patrol the borders of our politics and exacerbate violence towards the "other." Any kind of transformative politics would have to contend with these binaries, especially in the contemporary world after 9/11 which begs us to move beyond the cycle of violence and death. This chapter is guided by the impulse to loosen binaries and let go of boundaries. It seeks to theorize a transformative politics that will unsettle "us" and reduce our complicity with violence.⁵³ Our political subjectivity is constructed through binary schemas (man/animal, man/woman, west/islam, civilized/uncivilized etc.). These binary schemas are a vital part of our social-political imagination, helping to consolidate who "we" are. A comprehensive border-crossing politics with an aim to forge alliances has to contend with

⁵² Nira Yuval Davis (2001) notes that war is a time for absolute thinking (i.e., good and evil, us and them). The pressure to conform to binary oppositions increases during war time. Davis emphasizes that since 9/11 a "clash of civilization" narrative of the relationship between the west and islam has occupied centre stage constructing the world as unbridgeable blocks. She notes that 2001 was designated by the UN as the year of "Dialogue among Civilizations." This was initiated by President Khatami of Iran who wanted the UN to promote a counter-ideology to Huntington's thesis. Davis notes that the notion of the dialogue promoted by the UN and Iran does not challenge the reified notion of "civilization" as a bounded and homogenous entity. Instead, she suggests, we need a dialogic political culture which respects differences among people and enables us to "establish the shared elements of emancipation within every living, human value system" (2001, 3). Thus to Davis we need a "dialogical civilization" (2001, 3).

⁵³ I situate "us" as people residing in the USA regardless of passport status.

binaries, deconstruct them. Perhaps, starting with a fundamental, elemental binary, that of man/animal will help us comprehend the politics of binaries.

Feminists need to examine the binary of man/animal for its fundamental design in defining "man" and his political sphere. It is surprising that feminist critiques of patriarchal politics have not really paid sufficient attention to studying the very definitional status of "man as a political animal" in unraveling man's politics. Successful feminist transnational alliances that effectively transgress man's state and politics have to pay attention to its very definitional set-up (i.e., man as different from animals). In this chapter I study and seek to undo the binary of man/animal that defines us in contrast to the animal. I argue that this binary of man/animal has vast repercussions for our thinking of "man" and his possibilities for action. Not only does it define man but it also defines his "State." A problematization of this binary will help us move towards more effective transnational politics. In pursuit of this aim, I read Gilles Deleuze's "becoming animal" in Art Spiegelman's animal images to draw out the implications for feminist democratic politics. In this endeavor, I work with images. This helps me to frame the issue (man/animal) within a visual frame that shows us not only its constructed/framed nature, but also a capacity to transform it. Art Spiegelman's work helps us visualize the binary of man/animal and its undoing, while Deleuze provides the theoretical fuel to understand this re-visualization.

In the first section, I examine the construction of man and the State via the distinction between man and animal. I draw on selected political theorists to substantiate my argument on the exclusion of the animal, the "other". I argue that the liberal mode of theorization is grossly insufficient to serve the needs of feminist transnational politics today. I emphasize Deleuze's "becoming animal" as providing the theoretical energy for vibrant transnational feminist politics.

Next, I examine some models of feminist transnational politics and apprehensions about using Deleuze for feminist ends. My third section provides a brief overview of Deleuze's theory and underlines its use in being able to formulate a feminist response to 9/11. Next, I seek to illustrate Deleuze's "becoming animal" in Art Spiegelman's animal images in his graphic novel *In The Shadow Of No Towers*. Here I explore how the politics of "becoming animal" enables Spiegelman to respond to the politics of the present. In conclusion, I study the practical implication of Deleuzian politics that melts everything solid into a flow of energies. I affirm the necessity of embracing such a politics not as a form of escape from the world and brutal power relations but as a way of confronting power realities without mirroring its "states of injury." Indeed, a vivacious confrontation.

The Political Animal and Animal Politics:

...if the caesura between the human and the animal passes first of all within man, then it is the very question of man and of "humanism"—that must be posed in a new way. In our culture, man has always been thought of as the articulation and conjunction of a body and a soul, of a living thing and a logos, of a natural (or animal) element...Perhaps not only theology and philosophy but also politics, ethics and jurisprudence are drawn and suspended in the difference between man and animal (Agamben 2004, 16-22).

Politics and the political man have long been conceptualized in association with the animal.

The animal is the central figure of comparison for man and his politics throughout the western political tradition.⁵⁴ The animal has simultaneously been included and excluded from the proper

⁵⁴ The animal is dominantly present in eastern theorizations as well. Eg. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* written at the end of the 4th Century B.C. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is centrally about politics and statecraft. Politics and statecraft is explained through man's relationship to plants and animals.

sphere of politics, while man's political nature has been simultaneously buttressed and frayed in relation to the animal. Simultaneously included and excluded, the animal continues to be profoundly present and absent from politics. The animal is included and present as an evaluative figure-head, invisible otherwise. In this section, I examine the systematic inclusion and exclusion of the animal in political theory through a brief examination of the political use of the animal in the works of some of our major theorists. Beginning with the most widely used definition of man as a political animal in Aristotle's theorization we explicitly discern the double-edged dualism of man/animal that casts its shadow over centuries of political theorization.

Animals in the Aristotelian schema get unique attention. In Aristotle's *Politics*, two essential and interconnected theses are emphasized (1) the Polis is a natural institution (2) man is by nature a political animal and it is his natural destiny to live in the Polis. Man is an animal with language who can realize himself only in the Polis. He who cannot live in the Polis nor has no need to, is either a beast or a god. Speech by nature belongs to man and sets him apart from animals. Speech enables men to live with justice in the polis, an attribute exclusive to human beings as political animals.⁵⁵ Significantly, man is a "political animal." This description of man

⁵⁵ In the *Politics* Aristotle writes, "It is also clear why a human being is more of a political animal than a bee or any other gregarious animal. Nature makes nothing pointlessly, as we say, and no animal has speech [logos: λόγος] except a human being. A voice [phonus: φωνή] is a signifier of what is pleasant or painful, which is why it is also possessed by the other animals (for their nature goes this far: they not only perceive what is pleasant or painful but signify it to each other). But speech is for making clear what is beneficial or harmful, and hence also what is just or unjust. For it is peculiar to human beings, in comparison to the other animals, that they alone have perception of what is good or bad, just or unjust, and the rest. And it is community in these that makes a household and a city-state" (1998, 4). Here Aristotle emphasizes that speech belonging to man as a political animal enables a political life which finds its fruition in the Polis. Moreover, speech peculiar to the political animal is to be distinguished from mere voice which is shared by all animals. In *The History of Animals*, Aristotle distinguishes between voice, sound, and speech. Sounds are noises that animals' bodies make: flies, bees, grasshoppers make sounds by moving their body parts. Voices, in contrast, are a kind of sound made through the pushing of air through a "pharynx"—so in order to have a voice, one must have lungs, in the very least and a larynx. Speech, the last step in the hierarchy of

emphasizes his natural destiny to live in the Polis as an integral part of it. It is by nature that men are political animals. The Polis emerges from the natural association of man and woman, then household, then villages and communities, and finally the Polis. Moreover, although, in point of time, the individual is prior to the Polis, in point of order and importance, the Polis is prior to the individual. Man is a political animal and thus the Polis represents the whole of which the individual is just a part and the whole is necessarily prior to the part. Being a political animal images man's participation in the life of the Polis. From the foundations of western political thought we see the animal establishing what man is and can be. Both his basic nature and his life aspirations are conjoined with that of the animal to dictate what he should or should not do.⁵⁶

Political theorists' most memorable comparisons are made in association with the animal. Machiavelli writing during the Italian renaissance advises the ruler to be as powerful as possible. He must be both a lion and a fox—a lion flashing in physical strength and a fox with excellence in cunning. Machiavelli further asserts that there are two ways to fight: one with a respect for rules and the other with no holds barred. "Men alone fight in the first fashion, and

potentially communicative noises, is defined as the articulation of voice by the tongue: "Speech is the direction of the voice by the tongue; the vowels are uttered by the voice and the larynx, the mutes by the tongue and the lips; speech is made up of these: wherefore, no animals can speak that have not a tongue, nor if their tongue is confined" (*History of Animals* 1897, 94). Speech is specific to only man—the mammal, even though Aristotle does acknowledge that birds can make articulate utterances as well as teach one another to use their voices: while "viviparous quadrupeds utter different voices; none can speak—for this is the characteristic of man, for all that have language [speech] have a voice, but not all that have a voice have also a language [speech]" (1897, 96). Thus, speech is voice that is articulated through the use of human lips and tongue.

⁵⁶ Aristotle does not club all "animals" together. He notes their heterogeneity. Aristotle writes, "domestic animals are by nature better than wild ones, and it is better for all of them to be ruled by human beings, since this will secure their safety" (1998, 8). To Aristotle, some animals are wild, others are domesticated, some produce eggs, while others give birth (1998, 114). But why animals? Why not trees or cloud or rain? What is it about animals that are so inherently fascinating and dictate comparison at all points in the Aristotelian scheme?

animals fight in the second" (1994, 54). Machiavelli emphasizes that in order to win, one must be prepared to break rules and be more of an animal. As he writes:

A ruler, in particular, needs to know how to be both an animal and a man. The classical writers, without saying it explicitly, taught rulers to behave like this. They describe how Achilles, and many other rulers in ancient times were given to Chiron the centaur to be raised, so he could bring them up as he thought best. What they intended to convey, with this story of rulers' being educated by someone who was half beast and half man, was that it is necessary for a ruler to know when to act like an animal and when like a man; and if he relies on just one or the other mode of behavior he cannot hope to survive (Machiavelli 1994, 54).

To Machiavelli, a successful ruler should take his model from animals and know best when to "make good use of beastly qualities" (1994, 54). Getting power and maintaining power require the Prince to be animal and man; and know when to use the qualities of each to his advantage. In the Machiavellian paradigm, the beast stands as the exemplification of force conducive to acquiring power.⁵⁷

The difference between man and animal is one of the central images of political theorization through-out the historical formulation of its key conception of the social and political man.⁵⁸ In Hobbes's political thought, often viewed in the context of the legacy left by

⁵⁷ Miguel E. Vatter (2000) explores Machiavelli's political theory as a condition of modernity and modernity's emphasis on power politics without inhibitions of morality. For Machiavelli, politics exists in the absence of those absolute moral standards that are called upon to legitimate the domination of man over man. Vatter argues that for Machiavelli, animality understood as a condition of human freedom transcends the sphere of "good life" found in ancient philosophy. Instead, in Machiavelli, the "political animal" operates in the realm of free life (as opposed to good life) (2000, 285). As a consequence animality is revealed as a form which is "beyond good or evil" (2000, 285).

⁵⁸ Rene Descartes as the progenitor of modern philosophy argued that animals are automata and their behavior could be explained in purely mechanistic terms. Descartes denied that animals could be thinking, self-conscious beings equal to us at all. In *A Discourse on Method*, Descartes tells us that cleverly designed automata can successfully mimic nearly all our actions. We could design a machine to resemble a man or beast. Men have the ability to respond creatively through language which indicates the presence of a soul associated with the normal human body. To Descartes this proves that "...not only that the brutes have less

Machiavelli, we view how civil society is an alternative to the war of all against all that characterizes the state of nature. In tune with a Machiavellian temperament, Hobbes depicts men as cruel, fighting, aggressive creatures who need the state for their own protection. Again, continuing in the emphasis traceable from Aristotle, the question of the man, animal and State are integrally connected. Referring directly to Aristotle's account of man and animal, Hobbes tells us in his *Leviathan* that man and animal are different because men are continually in competition for honor and dignity, which animals are not, and therefore there arises among men war and the need for a common power. Hobbes writes, "...the agreement of these creatures is natural; that of men is by covenant only, which is artificial; and therefore, it is no wonder if there be somewhat else required (besides covenant) to make their agreement constant and lasting, which is a common power to keep them in awe, and to direct their actions to the common benefit" (Hobbes 1994, 109). Thus to Hobbes, animals do not need the State, while men, because they are different from animals need the State for their common benefit. Further, Hobbes emphasizes that while animals can communicate; only humans have speech. In *De Homine*, Hobbes writes, "...that we can command and understand commands is a benefit of speech and truly the greatest. For without this there would be no society among men, no peace, and consequently no disciplines; but first savagery, then solitude, and for dwellings, caves. For though among certain animals there are seeming politics, these are not of sufficiently great moment for living well" (In Clarke and Linzey 1990, 19). The emphasis on language has a fundamental political significance.

reason than man, but that they have none at all: for we see that very little is required to enable a person to speak; and since a certain inequality of capacity is observable among animals of the same species, as well as among men, and since some are more capable of being instructed than others it is incredible that the most perfect ape or parrot of its species, should not in this be equal to the most stupid infant of its kind, or at least to one that was crack-brained, unless the soul of brutes were of a nature wholly different from ours" (1912, 45). Descartes's views reiterate and emphasize the difference between man and brute through the use of reason and language.

Here we return to a re-iteration of the Aristotelian dictum that only humans with language are political animals, *zoon politikon*. Among other animals there may be "seeming politics," not conducive to "living well."

Writing about the Hobbsian (and the broader liberal tradition seen in others such as John Locke) tradition, Benjamin Barber talks about liberal democracy as the "politics of zookeeping."

The uninspired and uninspiring but "realistic" image of man as a creature of need, living alone by nature but fated to live in the company of his fellows by enlightened self-interest combines with the cynical image of government as a provisional instrument of power servicing these creatures to suggest a general view of politics as zookeeping. Liberal democratic imagery seems to have been fashioned in a menagerie. It teems with beasts and critters of every description: sovereign lions, princely lions and foxes, bleating sheep and poor reptiles, ruthless pigs and ruling whales, sly polecats, clever coyotes, ornery wolves (often in sheep's clothing), and, finally, in Alexander Hamilton's formidable image, all mankind itself was but one great Beast (Barber 1984, 20).

To Barber, in liberalism man is characterized as the selfish egoistic animal that needs the State to survive. The State keeps men in bounds so that they cease "becoming animal" and maintain their political integrity. Not being animal, let's man remain man. However, he needs to be properly tamed in order to retain his ontological status as man. Thus Barber characterizes liberal democracy as the "politics of zookeeping" where civil society is an alternative to the "jungle" in the state of nature (1984, 20). This "zookeeping" has obvious restrictive and definitive implications in fashioning man and his State. To Barber, this mode of political conceptualization is characteristic of "thin" democracy, exclusively individualistic and for private ends. Here liberal democracy never leads far from Ambrose Bierce's cynical definition of politics as "the conduct of public affairs for private advantage" (Barber 1984, 4). In

Hobbes's theory men enter into the State in order to protect themselves from the ravages of the state of nature. The State formed through the contract is a public body for private advantage. Men transfer whatever liberty and power they were enjoying in the state of nature with the hope of getting from the State their permanent peace, safety and protection.

It is important to note how the question of the animal is typically connected to the viability of the State coterminous with the distinction between man and animal. As if maintaining the State requires keeping to the distinction between man and animal. We do see the re-iteration of the Aristotelian conception of the political animal resonating through centuries of "progressive" thought. This continuity differentiates between man and animal through the use of language, recognizes man's animal traits for which he needs the State to keep him in bounds (and thus political), and places the animal outside the sphere of the State. In contemporary liberalism, when John Rawls discusses whether animals are outside the scope of a proper theory of justice, he concludes with only a slight qualification that "it is wrong to be cruel to animals and [that] the destruction of a whole species can be a great evil, 'but' it does not seem possible to extend the contract doctrine so as to include them in a natural way" (1972, 512). To Rawls, it is the task of metaphysics to work out a view of the world suited for this purpose, "How far justice as fairness will have to be revised to fit into this larger theory it is impossible to say" (1972, 504-512). Thus moral persons are entitled to equal justice. Justice is for moral persons. To be a moral person you cannot be an animal. Only a "moral person" can live in a State.

Rawls qualifies his claims in his later work (*Political Liberalism*) where he examines whether the political value of justice could respond to all fundamental questions, "we may ask whether Justice can be extended to our relations to animals and the order of nature" (1996,

245). Rawls examines utilitarian values such as furthering the good of ourselves by sustaining the natural order, to foster species of animals and plants for the sake of medical knowledge etc. However, Rawls recognizes the inadequacy of a "...narrowly anthropocentric point of view, whereas human beings should assume a certain stewardship toward nature and give weight to an altogether different family of values" (1996, 246). But even after opening up this channel to probe the limitations of his conception of Justice, Rawls still concludes that "the status of the natural world and our proper relation to it is not a constitutional essential or a basic question of Justice" (1996, 246).⁵⁹ Alas, Political Justice still patrols the borders despite the overture of truce.

Thus we see how the political relies on the animal but at the same time excludes them.⁶⁰ Post-modernism has drawn our attention towards seeing the invisible, unseen, and ignored. In defiance against modernity's singular narrative, post-modernism showcases the multiple narratives, the nuances to intelligible narrative building, the politics of ontology. In his assessment of Heideggerian metaphysics, Derrida problematizes the ontological exclusion of the

⁵⁹ In *Animal Liberation* (1975), Peter Singer writes against specieism and holds the interests of all beings capable of suffering to be worthy of moral consideration. Others, like Tom Regan (2001) move further to argue that not only should animals be granted moral consideration, but, in fact animals deserve moral equality. Regan's position is aligned with that of animal rights activists who argue that animals deserve justice, equality, and rights. The issue of rights for animals is a heavily contested terrain. Against Regan's argument, Carl Cohen (2001) argues that rights are a human concept and should not be confused with our obligation to treat animals humanely. Thus to Cohen the capacity to suffer pain does not grant animals equal rights, but instead underlines our obligation towards treating them better.

⁶⁰ Agamben theorizes the various legal and political "mechanics of exclusion" in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998). Taking his lead from Foucault's analysis of biopolitics, Agamben probes with breadth and intensity the covert or implicit presence of an idea of biopolitics in the history of traditional political theory. He argues that from the earliest treatises of political theory, notably in Aristotle's notion of man as a political animal, and throughout the history of Western thinking about sovereignty (whether of the king or the State), a notion of sovereignty as power over "life" is implicit. Agamben posits *homo sacer* rather than *homo sapiens*, at the origin of the political, but this origin is still characterized by the foundational law-making act of the exclusion of the natural (animal).

animal from ontology.⁶¹ He emphasizes that "the distinction between the animal (which has no or is not a Dasein) and man has nowhere been more radical nor more rigorous than in Heidegger. "The animal will never be either a subject or a Dasein" (Derrida 1991, 105). To Derrida, the animal inhabits the "excluded middle" between the "world-forming" man and the inanimate thing "without world." "The animal has the world in the mode of not having" premised precariously between "thing" and "human" (Derrida 1991, 50). The animals inhabit a world negatively, a world which is not a world. Derrida working through Heidegger's animal world characterized by having and not-having a world, reflects on the animal as "poor in world" destined to pass the world unmourned. Without language, the animal has no death. The animal attests to the limits of language and the construction of the human subject in association with the "other".⁶² What kind of human political subject do we thus construct? Speaking with Derrida, what we construct is easy "calculability." Derrida considers the subject to be a principle of calculability for the purpose of the "...political (and even, indeed, for the current concept of democracy, which is less

⁶¹ For Heidegger, language establishes the difference between humans and animals. Language is a fundamental condition of being and establishes the ontological dimensions of a things being-ness. Without language and thus without ontological being-ness, an animal is without world. Heidegger in "The Origin of the Work of Art" writes about the animal's lack of world: "A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked. The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings, of the things that are" (1971, 45).

⁶² Derrida emphasizes the question of the animal raises multiple questions for the human subject. He writes, "One doesn't need to be an expert to foresee that they involve thinking about what is meant by living, speaking, dying, being and world as in being-n-the-world or being toward the world, or being-with, being-before, being-behind, being-after, being and following. Being followed or being following, there where *I am*, in one way or another, but unimpeachably, *near* what they call the animal" (2002, 372 original emphasis). On finding himself embarrassed because he was naked before the gaze of his cat, Derrida incessantly questions the construction of the animal, and the self in relation to the animal: "The animal in general, what is it? What does that mean? Who is it? . . . what is said in the name of the animal when one appeals to the name of the animal, that is what needs to be exposed, in all its nudity, in the nudity or destitution of whoever, opening the page of an autobiography, says, 'here I am.' "but as *for* me, who am I (following)?" (2002, 416 original emphasis).

clear, less homogenous, and less of a given than we believe or claim to believe, and which no doubt needs to be rethought, radicalized, and considered as a thing of the future), in the question of legal and human rights and in morality" (1991, 108). It is not that we don't need some calculation but "still calculation is calculation." How do we move out of the regime of calculability premised on divisions and unequal equations? How do we harmonize rather than divide?⁶³

I emphasize that understanding the man/animal connection/division would help us to understand our political calculation and propel movement out of "thin democracy" which is "...at best a politics of static interest, never a politics of transformation; a politics of bargaining and exchange, never a politics of invention and creation; and a politics that conceives of women and men at their worst (in order to protect them from themselves), never at their potential best (to help them become better than they are)" (Barber 1984, 24-25). Only a democracy that understands and questions the borders upon which it is constructed can hope to move beyond borders. Understanding the man/animal binary would also help us pursue a democratic transnational politics which would not be a project of exporting democracy around the globe.

In this section I have emphasized the central political imaginary through centuries of political theorization, the man/animal binary. I argue that this binary, central to ancient thought, and liberalism, contains man within borders, defines him as a bounded entity with a proper sphere of action within the State, itself a bounded enterprise. It is never a question of the animal, the "other" to man. The "other" is used as a tool, a currency, to codify a system of values

⁶³The first step would be to deconstruct our calculations by speaking of the "incalculable" and the "undecidable": "And if I speak so often of the incalculable and the undecidable it is not out of a simple predilection for play nor in order to neutralize decision: on the contrary, I believe there is no responsibility, no ethico-political decision, that must not pass through the proofs of the incalculable or the undecidable. Otherwise everything would be reducible to calculation, program, causality, and at best, 'hypothetical imperative'" (Derrida 1991, 108).

deemed right for good politics. "Good" politics, or codified politics, I argue, with Barber and Derrida, is a politics drained of vitality or capacity for transformation. The animal images the codification of politics. We have to discern the violence implicit in such codification which functions on multiple levels. The "other" used to define "us" is considered expendable, never actually present; their death is not "real." This mode of rationalizing man's actions spills over to the weaker part in all our binaries, whether that of man/woman, first world/third world, culture/nature, white/non-white etc. I look at the animal for its help in helping us discern the violence in any binary postulation for as Alice Walker recognized, "we are all one lesson" (quoted in Adams 1994, 71). I do recognize the problem in conflating all oppression into one tidy category, but I emphasize that recognizing similarities does not always involve coalescing differences into homogeneity, but instead, may in fact, bring out the play of systemic politics with deftness and skill.

Understanding the systemic politics in any binary postulation has to reckon with the dominant power hierarchy where the dominant stands in relative superiority to the weak (i.e., man/animal, man/woman), and encodes each part of the divide with stereotypical attributes. Moreover, while the dominant's (i.e., man's) access to state-power is unquestionable, the weaker part of the divide is often interchangeable. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's 18th century critic Thomas Taylor argued that if Wollstonecraft's reasoning for women's rights were correct, then "brutes" would have rights too (in Singer 1975, 6). The "other" in binary formulations easily collapse into each other and help to maintain the status-quo. A politics geared towards changing the status-quo, such as feminism, has to work with binaries and move beyond them. Next, I seek to theorize on a possible reconstitution of the present, a possible movement out of binary

thinking. I use Gilles Deleuze's "becoming animal" for this purpose. Deleuze's "becoming animal" moves us beyond the paradigm of man/animal, makes us question the borders of such delineation and presents the vision of an affirmative reformulation of the present. "Becoming animal" is the de-territorialization of the boundaries between the human and animal, an undoing which de-centers man's definition of himself in opposition and against the animal. It is thus an un-humaning of man with the potential to make politics all the more humane. Deleuze and Guattari write, "Becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not 'really' become an animal any more than the animal 'really' becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than itself" (1987, 238). The Other dissolves into a series of non-dualistic and non-oppositional entities. Building itself up on alliances rather than schisms it provokes incessant questioning of the divisions which plague modern sensibility. By interrogating our bordered articulations (both tangible and intangible, within and without) Deleuze provokes a rearticulation of subjectivity as intensive multiplicity. Such a provocation will be of immense value to a feminist politics thriving to challenge borders of separation and violence.

Feminism, the question of the animal, and feminist democratic politics today:

The status of women and animals are intrinsically linked. Carol Adams and Josephine

Danovan write:

It could be argued that theorizing about animals is inevitable for feminism. Historically, the ideological justification for women's alleged inferiority has been made by appropriating them to animals: from Aristotle on, women's bodies have been seen to intrude upon their rationality. Since rationality has been construed by most Western theorists as the defining requirement for membership in the

moral community, women—along with nonwhite men and animals—were long excluded. Until the twentieth century this “animality” precluded women’s being granted the rights of public citizenship (1995, 1).

Indeed, when Aristotle differentiates between man and animal on the basis of language, he also speaks of men and women as differing in their *logos*.⁶⁴ Woman to Aristotle, is the “deformed male,” and does not have the *logos* to be a member of the Polis.⁶⁵ Likewise, in Hobbes’s theoretical postulations, “The artificial man, a creation of ‘the word’ of men united, thus renders itself free from the necessary but difficult dealings with both women and nature” (Gatens 1991, 80). Writing about the characteristics and implications of Hobbes’s contract theory, Moira Gatens emphasizes that the artificial man created through the social contract takes himself as the model for politics (1991). Man is the model, his reason is Reason, his body is the human body, and his morality formulates our system of ethics (Gatens 1991, 83). Gatens writes that there have been primarily two strategies to silence those who speak with another voice, reason, or another ethic. The first is to “animalise” the speaker, the second, to reduce her to her “sex” (Gatens 1991, 83). Women who step outside their designated borders in the political sphere are frequently abused with terms like vixen, bitch, harpy etc; terms that make it clear that if she attempts to speak from the political body, her speech is not recognized as *human* speech. When

⁶⁴ In *On the Generation of Animals* Aristotle writes, “Now male and female differ in respect of their *logos*, in that the power or faculty possessed by the one differs from that possessed by the other; but they differ also in bodily sense, in respect of certain physical parts. They differ in their *logos*, because the male is that which has the power to generate in another, while the female is that which can generate in itself, i.e., it is that out of which the generated offspring, which is present in the generator, comes into being...A woman is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of inability of a sort” (In Mahowald 1994, 23-24).

⁶⁵ In the *Politics*, Aristotle emphasizes that while women do not have authority in their rationality and thus warranty being excluded from the Polis (1998, 14).

Mary Wollstonecraft addressed the issue of women's political rights, Walpole called her a "hyena in petticoats" (Gatens 1991, 83). Feminists assert that women are not like animals but are distinctly human. Liberal feminists have affirmed women's rationality in opposition to the association of women with animality. Liberal feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft have stressed that women are intellects and have rational minds—like men and unlike animals (Adams 1995, 2).

Women and animal are linked as the "other."⁶⁶ Donna Haraway rightly emphasized that gender, race, and animality are intertwined concepts that discursively construct one another (1989). The need to theorize on animals arises not because of women's close proximity to the animal (as in performing animal functions like reproduction or even in the "sexual politics of meat"⁶⁷) but in the urgent need to formulate a feminist response to 9/11. All species discourse is patriarchal and problematization of the animal Other becomes important in the context of the political climate which "animalizes" itself to deal with the Other animals. Feminism's commitment to understanding gender constructions, needs to work through animality and gender as complex and interdependent. Indeed as Lynda Birke writes, "politics that ignore other oppressions cannot be liberatory politics for anyone" (2002, 1).⁶⁸ It is in response to questions of life and death

⁶⁶ A number of feminists have written about how sexism and speciesism are intertwined (See Adams 1990, 1994; Collard with Contrucci 1989).

⁶⁷ Carol J. Adams begins her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990) by describing a picture in the British Library of Henry VIII eating steak and kidney pie surrounded by his wives, each with a fruit or vegetable. Adams uses this illustration to emphasize the association of meat with gender. Real men eat meat! Adams explores the many ways in which meat eating symbolizes masculine power over women and nature. In fact, meat symbolizes conquering nature associated with suppressing women, and other colonized groups. For example, Harriet Ritvo (1987) describing game hunting by European colonialists in Africa and Asia in the 19th century notes how the dead wild animals, horns, hides, mounted heads and stuffed bodies symbolized the British suppression of the natives, and clearly alluded to the masculine, heroic side of imperialism (1987, 248).

⁶⁸ Lynda Birke in her article titled "Intimate Familiarities? Feminism and Human-Animal Studies" emphasizes the need for a dialogue between these two branches of study. Both are relative newcomers to the academy, growing out of political movements of the 1970s. Birke writes, "We all share in making and

that are on the center stage since 9/11 that feminist attention to the question of the animal gathers increasing urgency. It may provide a powerful weapon of analysis, critique, transgression and transformation of a politics that is based on a fundamental binary separation of "us" from "them."

We recall Benjamin Barber's description of "thin democracy" exemplified by liberalism as the "politics of zoo-keeping." The "politics of zoo-keeping" maintains its people in firmly locked cages, managed by the people's custodian in order to protect people from themselves. The animal "other" haunts the tradition of "thin democracy." The act of other-ing is further mobilized under the global war against terror carried out by an even more thin democratic state. A feminist response to 9/11 has to converse with the animal "other" in order to prevent a mimetic reproduction of the status-quo where "we" remain firmly caged from "them" (and ourselves). Feminist transnational politics is characterized by its politics of endeavoring to reach out beyond and through borders. Feminist transnational politics has gained increasing visibility after 9/11 (Hawksworth 2008; Hawthorne 2003). Feminists in the US have felt an increasing urgency to reach out to women all over the world under situations of violence and war. Working with feminist insights that emphasize the interconnected matrix of oppressions, I argue that a vibrant transnational politics which moves through and beyond borders of separation needs to grapple with the fundamental binary that structures politics and the State (man/animal) to understand and transgress exclusions that fortify politics as the maintenance of the status-quo. Alliances and solidarity (often under American auspices) have been on the forefront of politics in today's world.

remaking the world. We all share in co-creating our situatedness. Perhaps, indeed, we all need theories based on intimate familiarities" (2002, 3).

Many Feminists emphasize a different mode of alliances than one based on a re-iteration of the status-quo where distances remain unbridgeable and established on either side of binary divisions.

Chandra Mohanty's "solidarity model" resonates strongly in the world after 9/11 where she asks us to think again about "mutuality and coimplications" by understanding the "historical and experiential specificities and differences of women's lives as well as the historical and experiential connections between women from different national, racial, and cultural communities" (2003, 558). She implores us to think differently by rejecting binary models of developed and under-developed, first world and third world and engaging in a more nuanced understanding of distance and connections by tugging at the borders which divide us into self-contained groups. Eloquently Mohanty writes, "...the borders here are not really fixed. Our minds must be as ready to move as capital is, to trace its paths and to imagine alternative destinations" (2003, 565). To Mohanty, solidarity models premised on an "explorer" or "tourist" mentality operated within the divisions of "us" and "others" and would be of disservice to feminist transnational politics. Only a model based on understanding differences and connections by respecting multiple levels of experience and subjectivity would resonate with our present needs.

Feminist political theorists Iris Young and Jodi Dean seek to move beyond a stringent liberal deliberative model to promote alliances and communicate through differences. Jodi Dean (1996) calls for "reflexive solidarity," Iris Young (2000) for "communicative democracy." Iris Young studies the norms for inclusive democratic communication under structural conditions of inequality and difference. Moving beyond norms of deliberation that stipulate orderly dispassionate articulation, Young asks us to acknowledge greeting, rhetoric and narrative that

address more inclusive deliberative practices (2000). Jodi Dean heralds a solidarity that "requires us to get messy" by being premised on conflicts and disagreements (1996). Dean's "reflective solidarity" refers to a "mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship." The mutual expectation is premised on a communicatively generated "we." Dean endeavors to open up a model of communication where "the other is considered a member despite of, indeed because of her difference" (1996, 30). This model of solidarity seems to speak to difference and provide a "bridge between identity and universality" (1996, 30). These models and modes of inclusive solidarity do represent important political advances and offer sophisticated insights to a vibrant transnational politics that acknowledges and speaks to/with differences. But what solidifications are we cementing by positing communication as the sole basis of our alliances? Communicative democracy is based on the foundational premise that man is an animal with language (Aristotle et.al). A sole focus on this paradigm cannot undo borders, cannot tug on boundaries when its essential assumption originates among already set binaries of man (with language), others (without language). Indeed, working with the master's tools, how do we dismantle the master's house? In other words, working with old binaries, instead of against them, one cannot hope to erect a new, more democratic ethos.

Moreover, Young's and Dean's models founded on a Habermasian model of communicative ethics privilege the communicative process in itself with little attention paid to the subject-in-process in the communication itself. Of course, we would rather talk than fight, but a sudden freezing of the frame in these communicative schemas prevents an affirmative, re-formulation of the present. As if, in talking we stop "becoming." I don't refute the need for communication, but emphasize the urge to consider "undoings" which emphasize our "ex-static" nature: ecstasy is

the face of death and turmoil. We need a more affirmative, positive project for the "subject-in-motion" that would speak to the needs of our time.

Using Deleuze to think about alliances and movement could be vibrantly productive. Rosi Braidotti points out that in the complex landscape of post-structuralist philosophies of differences, Deleuze's thought strikes "a uniquely positive note" (1996, 305). Deleuze offers more than a reflection on the contemporary configurations of power. He re-inscribes his reflection on the politics of the subject within an aesthetic and ethical framework centered on affirmation, that is to say, on the affectivity and the positivity of the subject's desires (Braidotti 1996, 305). Deleuze offers not only a deconstructive critique but also an active project of re-construction. Braidotti sees Deleuze as a very valuable traveling companion for feminist democratic theorists. To Braidotti, Deleuze proves indispensable in providing the theoretical tools to investigate our "...lives in permanent processes of transition, hybridization and nomadization, and these in-between states and stages [which] defy the established modes of theoretical representation" (2002, 2). Deleuze moves beyond theory focused on reason and logos and enables Braidotti to theorize "nomadic subjectivity" based on a non-linear and non-unitary vision of the subject speaking to the feminist transnational movement.

Braidotti engages with Deleuze's theory on multiple levels, not uncritically. She recognizes the many reservations voiced in feminist theory against Deleuze's "becoming woman."⁶⁹ Engagements with Deleuze in feminist theory have essentially been centered on his "becoming-woman" with strong reservations being voiced by many. To Alice Jardine, "becoming-

⁶⁹ Deleuze's "Becoming woman" involves the destabilization of molar or feminine identity. Becoming woman represents the dismantling of identities as the social order defines them. It is a movement beyond fixed subjectivity and binary polarizations of man and woman.

woman' becomes a new label for male self expansion, not only neutralizing women's sexual specificity, but more insidiously masking men's interest and perspectives. While clearly appreciating the possibilities of Deleuzian theory, Rosi Braidotti wonders at the consequences Deleuze's argument may have for women: "Can feminists, at this point in their history of collective struggles aimed at redefining female subjectivity, actually afford to let go of their sex-specific forms of political agency? Is the bypassing of gender in favor of dispersed polysexuality not a very masculine move?" (Braidotti 1991, 120). Recognizing the problem in Deleuze's theory does not lead Braidotti to discount its applicability for feminist politics. To her, Deleuze releases the freedom of thinking from the signifying network in which it is trapped and "...opens up hitherto unsuspected possibilities of life and action" (1991, 125). Moving beyond bureaucratic thinking it restores to thinking the creative freedom it needs in order to speak to current political conflicts and thus provides theoretical and political support for the feminist project.

Even if Deleuze's procedures and methods do not actively support a specific kind of feminist struggle around women's autonomy and self-determination, his work may help to clear the ground of metaphysical oppositions and concepts so that women can devise their own knowledges, accounts of themselves and the world (Grosz 1994, 164). Moreover, this notion of the body as a discontinuous, non-totalizable series of processes, organs, flows, energies may be of great value to feminists attempting to reconceive politics outside binaries whether that of nature/culture, mind/body, man/women or human/animal. To Elizabeth Grosz not only does Deleuze neutralize women's sexual specificity but also men's and thus "...the question of becoming itself becomes a broadly human, and indeed an even more general phenomenon, a defining

characteristic of life itself, a maneuver that desexualizes and obfuscates one of the major features of phallogentric thought—its subsumption of two sexual symmetries under a single norm” (1994, 163). I agree whole-heartedly with Grosz. It is important to understand that Deleuze’s “becoming-woman” or “becoming-animal” is not a project where one changes into woman or animal. Instead, it undoes the borders of the binary that make woman/man and man/animal in pursuit of kindling energies without binary demarcations.

The anti-Hegelian Deleuzian process of “becoming” is neither the dynamic opposition of opposites nor the unfolding of an essence in a teleologically ordained process leading to a synthesizing identity. As Deleuze and Guattari write, “Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing...Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own” (1987, 239). The Deleuzian becoming is the affirmation of the positivity of difference, meant as a multiple and constant process of transformation. Both teleological order and fixed identities are relinquished in favor of a flux of multiple becoming. Processes of becoming are not based on a stable, centralized self. They rest rather on a non-unitary, multi layered, dynamic subject. Becoming women/animal/insect is something that flows like a composition, a location that needs to be constructed together with, that is to say in the encounter with Others. As Rosi Braidotti eloquently points out, “The nomadic subject as a non-unitary entity is simultaneously hetero-defined, or outward-bound. All becomings are minoritarian, that is to say they inevitably and necessarily move into the direction of the ‘others’ of classical dualism—displacing them and re-territorializing them in the process, but always and only on a temporal basis” (2002, 119). Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the nomadic subject engages with the Other in a

constructive, symbiotic becoming and not according to a teleological model. The "becoming-animal" undoes one of the major borders of the metaphysics of the self, scrambling the distinction between human and animal. It not only engages in dialogue with the classical Other of man, but it also frees the animal from the anthropocentric gaze.

Deleuze and Guattari urge us to think beyond fixed molar terms of being "man" or "woman," either "human" or "animal," towards thinking in molecular, active terms. To conceive of individuals in this manner is to adopt a Spinozist perspective of the human body. It is to acknowledge, with him, that we (still) do not know what the human body is capable of nor the limits of what it can do (Gatens 2000, 62). In "becoming animal" the human body does not become an animal body. "Becoming animal" is not imitating an animal. However, what is the "real" and what is the "imitation"? Both are constructed practices. We fall into a false alternative when we posit a demarcation between imitation and reality: "What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 238).⁷⁰ Becoming animal is not an evolution by descent or filiations. Most importantly, "it concerns alliances" (1987, 238). Deleuze and Guattari maintain that this is not an alliance based on evolution by filiation as all filiation is imaginary. Instead they maintain that they would prefer to use the term "involution" which should not be confused with regression: "Becoming is involutory, involution is creative. To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line 'between' the terms in play and beneath assignable relations" (1987, 239).

⁷⁰ Moreover, "Becoming can and should be qualified as becoming-animal even in the absence of a term that would be the animal become. The becoming animal of the human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if, that something other it becomes is not" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 238).

Interestingly, feminist political theorists haven't paid much attention to Deleuze's "becoming animal." It is important to reiterate that a theory for women does not have to bear directly on the category "woman", articulating itself only through an analysis of sexual difference. For long the "other" to man, woman can gain valuable energy from a theorization that questions the anthropocentric gaze. To Deleuze, "becoming woman" is integrally connected to "becoming animal." "Becoming woman" shakes the masculinity of identity and becoming animal deterritorializes anthropocentric thought. Both are interlocked, both are becomings that need each other. The analysis of "becoming animal" adds another dimension to feminist examination of the "interlocking nature of oppression." Feminist realization of the "interlocking nature of oppression" needs to be extended beyond racism and sexism to specieism and other forms of oppression. "More than ever we need to understand that the struggle against oppression is more than the struggle of women against men, of blacks against whites, of the disabled against the able bodied, of workers against capitalists, or of animals (or humans on behalf of animals) against humans and so forth" (Susan Kappeler in Adams 1985, 324). Resisting oppression is more than a struggle over "difference." A struggle over "difference" keeps us within the present, echoing its voices in all our urges to fight it. It tunes itself with binaries rather than resisting its operation. I argue that working with the theoretical structure of "becoming animal" will help us undo the borders of oppression on many levels and move us towards "involved" alliances. "Becoming animal" projects a response beyond violence that operates on many levels. It may enable us to answer the question: How do we respond to 9/11 and move towards alliance, becoming neither affectively dead nor mimetically violent?

Spiegelman's response:

Art Spiegelman responds to 9/11 through his chosen medium, by cartooning it, in his *In The Shadow Of No Towers*. Earlier, in his graphic novel, *Maus*, published in two parts, he subverted the traditional use of comics to tell a tragic tale, portraying Jews as mice, Nazis as cats, Poles as pigs etc. In *In The Shadow of No Towers*, Spiegelman resumes the guise he wore in his earlier Holocaust-narrative *Maus*. Taking his epigraph from Hitler, "the Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human," Spiegelman drew the characters in *Maus* as anthropomorphized animals.

Spiegelman's use of animal images in *Maus* was not without controversy. Spiegelman's animal images in *Maus* have been subjected to both critique and appreciation. To Joan Gordon the depiction of nationalities as animals "is the most problematic aspect" of the book because they support ethnic stereotypes and tend to oversimplify political issues (Gordon 1993, 84). However, to others such as Edward Shannon the cat-and-mouse game not only provides an effective metaphor for Nazi-Jewish relations, it also subverts the comic tradition of the funny animal (Shannon 1995, 7). Or as Joseph Witek points out, "there is something almost magical, or at least mysterious, about the effect of a narrative that uses animals instead of human characters. The animals seem to open a generic space into a precivilized innocence in which human behavior is stripped down to a few essential qualities, and irrelevancies drop away" (1989, 112).

There is no unanimity about Spiegelman's merit in using animals to depict the Holocaust, nor is there a consensus on classifying this type of comic book. While anthropomorphised animal cartoons and comics trace their origins to beast fables and folk tales, the "talking animal" or

"funny animal" genre of comics has developed its own metaphysics (Witek 1989, 109)⁷¹. To many the term "funny animal" would seem largely inappropriate to describe *Maus*. While many remain dissatisfied with the term "talking animal" to describe *Maus*, they seek to delve further to discern how a holocaust comic book depicting nationalities as animals can be so compelling (Witek 1989, 109). Problems of categorization arise at multiple levels. "Genre" too is a problematic term. What "genre" would we be classifying *Maus* in? I suggest that Spiegelman's animal images represent a "counter-image" that plays with any rigid classificatory schema. Moreover, it is a counter-image not in the sense of being against image but in opening up images to their malleability and porous borders.

Spiegelman told an interviewer, "One of the things that was important to me in *Maus* was to make it all true" (quoted in Witek 1989, 102). It is important to note that the depiction of humans as animals makes it "all true." In an interview Spiegelman remarked:

If one draws this kind of stuff with people, it comes out wrong. And the way it comes out wrong is first of all, I've never lived through anything like that—knock on whatever is around to knock on—and it would be counterfeit try to pretend that the drawings are representations of something that's actually happening. I don't know what a German looked like who was in a specific small town doing a specific thing. My notions are born of a few scores of photographs and a couple of movies. I'm bound to do something inauthentic. (Quoted in Witek 1989, 102).

It is important to note that Spiegelman experienced 9/11, lived through it and still uses the animal images in *In The Shadow Of No Towers*. Thus the rationale for the use of animal images in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* is very different from *Maus*. In *In The Shadow Of No Towers* it is clearly not the fear of being "inauthentic."

⁷¹ I discuss the mechanics of animal cartoons in detail in the previous chapter.

Spiegelman's animal images *In The Shadow Of No Towers* take on a politics very different from *Maus*. The animal figures in *In The Shadow Of No Towers* are predominantly his own. Other humans even when they are called "Killer Apes," are seldom portrayed as animals. This is a significant departure from *Maus* with deep implications in the meaning of play in the animal images. In *In The Shadow Of No Towers* Spiegelman is portrayed with a mouse head. In *Maus* this means vulnerability, unalloyed suffering, victimization (Versluys 2006, 984). Here, *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, Spiegelman as a mouse showcases the self's multiple energies of transformation. In a frame adjacent to the one depicting the author's psychic collapse (Figure 9), the autobiographical stand-in (as a mouse) is surrounded by Osama Bin Laden and George Bush. The protagonist as a mouse feels himself to be "equally terrorized by Al-Qaeda and by his own government." What Spiegelman depicts is the self's total weariness and consequent disintegration under the trauma. But this disintegration does not subtract. It re-articulates subjectivity as an assemblage of forces and constant movement. Spiegelman shows himself clean-shaven before 9/11. He grew a beard while Afghans were shaving off theirs and finally his face changes into that of a mouse (See Figure 9). Spiegelman has to undo himself to deal with the present.



Figure 9⁷²

In Figure 9, Spiegelman engages with the binary of man and animal by tuning into a mouse. Alongside the binary of man/animal, Spiegelman plays with other binaries such as mind/body, and good/evil. The poster on the wall showcases Spiegelman's brain as residing outside his body. And, there is no difference between good and evil with both Bush and Osama bin Laden assuming threatening postures. Binary thinking collapses at this moment of trauma and all that remains is the weight of the present. The text in Figure 9 reveals that Spiegelman was

⁷² Source: Spiegelman 2004, 2.

still trying to figure out what "he actually saw" on that September day. The events of 9/11 play around Spiegelman revealing the continuity between binaries (i.e., good and evil). Meanwhile the "heartbroken narcissist" keeps looking at himself in the mirror. None of his reflections (with a beard or without) satisfy him and he changes into a mouse. Spiegelman has to undo himself as a human to deal with the present and the trauma of the past. Maybe, by undoing himself the mirror will stop reflecting the human bound in the politics of 9/11, and enable a reflection that will be more satisfying.

However, it is not that Spiegelman portrays himself at all times with a mouse head. A cartooned human Spiegelman is juxtaposed with the animal-human Spiegelman throughout the text. The human is always in the past, the animal-human in the present. As if dealing with the trauma necessitated Spiegelman "becoming animal." This is not to state that "becoming animal" is reactive, a last recourse or even a teleological end to man's problems. What it emphasizes is the need to think through the present in terms other than identity hinged on polarities, to think in terms of emphatic proximity, intensive interconnectedness. In Spiegelman's work, identity loses its relevance in being able to deal with the present. The present demands a "counter-image", different from legitimizing, identity nurturing representations. Maybe, this is what "becoming animal" looks like when one moves away from stable forms of identification towards mutual contamination of states of experience. Spiegelman is not animal, nor is he human. Indeed, "Issues of self-representation have left [him] slack-jawed." Steve Baker in an article titled "What Does Becoming Animal look like?" seeks to explore what to him is the "most perplexing question," the question of whether or not becoming animal amounts to something that might be acted on: a practice rather than mere rhetoric (in Rothfels 2002, 68). Steve Baker looks to the works of

contemporary artists who use animal imagery to test and illuminate 'becoming animal.' After a careful study Baker opines that, "The question is not so much what it is as what it does... In becoming animal, certain things happen to the human: the 'reality' of this becoming animal resides in that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become" (2002, 74).



Figure 10⁷³

⁷³ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 9.

In a complex set of images (Figure 10) Spiegelman depicts himself as evolving from a lamp-human to a shoe-human and finally to the mouse-human figure. Significantly, the mouse-human is the culmination of the process of change and represents an intricate working through with the despair and anger. Human identities (neither the lamp nor shoe) do not suffice and what is yanked out is the mouse-human. It is only this which enables working through the political complexities of the present, its incessant frustrations. The first image shows a calm Spiegelman reminiscing on his cat that just died. He rationalizes the adoption of a new cat because it looked like the old cat. The second and successive set of images show him working through with "displacements", political manipulations less benign than his personal rationale for a new cat (e.g., "remember how we demolished Iraq instead of Al-Qaeda," or how "New York's appropriate anxiety about the toxins released into our air on 9/11 is displaced by our !@%^ Mayor passing a law against smoking in bars!" [Spiegelman 2004, 9]). Understanding these "displacements" makes Spiegelman displaced, his hand becomes his head, his head moved to his hands, his shoe becomes his head. Finally, he becomes animal and ventilates his growing anger. Now we see that the picture of his dead cat framed behind his arm chair comes alive. The dead cat and the new cat become one and the same, which mouse Spiegelman hurls away. Becoming animal made Spiegelman see the dead past residing in every vestige of the present. By undoing himself he is able to truly see through the displacements.

Significantly in Figure 10, mouse Spiegelman hurls the cat away. He had earlier justified the adoption of a new cat because his old cat died and the new cat looks like the old cat. After working through the other less benign displacements, Spiegelman cannot bear to sit with his new cat. Less and more benign become unimportant. He sees how dualistic thinking easily escalates,

and our actions spill into each other to create very serious repercussions (i.e., "how we demolished Iraq instead of Al-Qaeda"). Also, in a text box at the end of the panel, Spiegelman writes a disclaimer: "No creatures other than the Artist were abused in the creation of this strip"). Spiegelman does not abuse animals by hurling the cat away. Rather, he uses the hurling of the cat to showcase symbolically how he incorporates the politics of becoming animal by moving through appearances that keep him reified inside the vicious cycle of displacements.

The successive set of images shows that 9/11 is very much Spiegelman's holocaust. The use of the lamp cover brings to mind accusations levied against the Nazis in using Jewish skins for the purpose. The use of the shoe is also a symbolic reminder of Spiegelman's father's occupation during the war, that of a cobbler in the death camps. Collapsing holocaust symbolism with animal imagery adds multiple dimensions to the images above. Descriptions of the death camps reverberate with the language of the slaughter house: "they went like sheep to the slaughter. They died like animals. The Nazi butchers killed them'...The crime of the Third Reich, says the voice of accusation, was to treat people like animals" (Coetzee 2003, 64). Spiegelman's successive metamorphosis in the images, his attempts at undoing himself resonates strongly with Coetzee's emphasis on the "sympathetic imagination" where we don't encapsulate ourselves in our bodies as a "pea imprisoned in a shell" but instead attempt to share the being of another. To Coetzee, "...there is no extent to the limit to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination" (2003, 80). The "sympathetic imagination" necessitates being irreverent to oneself, to ones' boundaries which inhibit reaching out.

It is only when Spiegelman is irreverent not only about others, but himself, that he is able to grapple with the present. What Spiegelman depicts is a moving horizon of exchanges and becomings towards which the non-unitary subject moves, and by which he is moved in turn. Subjectivity becomes intensive, multiple and discontinuous, a process of interrelations. Spiegelman's transformation above also reminds us of Deleuze's somatic dimension. This somatic dimension is understood in vitalistic terms, freely adopted from Spinoza's *conatus*, namely, living matter yearning to become and go on becoming. In this respect, the term body/soma only makes sense in a binary opposition to the mind/psyche, and thus it is inadequate in a rhizomatic schema. What we see here is "body anarchy." Deleuze's becoming animal functions through constant mutations, affects and relations. On this point Deleuze draws on both Spinoza and Nietzsche to defend his positive view of a subject resistant to the captivating influence of social norms which are upheld by a repressive notion of the State. His subject creates havoc with the neatly formatted version of "man as rational animal." Similarly Spiegelman's images, as in the above, exemplify undoings and non-fixity.

In *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, Spiegelman also uses animal images to satirize the political situation. The figure next is not an exemplification of Deleuze's "becoming animal." "Becoming animal" defies gravity of all sorts. "Becoming animal" is a heightened awareness of oneself, not going underground, but defying all foundations. "Becoming animal" seeks to reinscribe "subversion at the heart of subjectivity" (Braidotti 2002, 145). The images below do not showcase "becoming animal" but they are a biting critique of binaries, the two party binary in this case.



Figure 11⁷⁴

The animal images *In The Shadow of No Towers* are a means to represent Spiegelman's working with the trauma of the event. In a sense, we could contend that Spiegelman's animal images are not about animals at all. Joseph Witek discerns the curious indifference to the animal nature of the characters as a distinguishing mark of the talking animal tradition in popular narratives (1989, 109). For instance in George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* that influences Spiegelman's work considerably, the giddy surrealism of the strip begins with the reversal of traditional

⁷⁴ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 5.

animal qualities; the cat loves the mouse, the dog loves the cat, and the mouse aggressively attacks the cat. Thus the "animalness" of the characters becomes vestigial or drops away entirely" (Witek 1989, 110). About *Maus*, Steve Baker further points out that "The metaphor cannot hold, and yet that metaphor is at the heart of the story and of the identities with which it is concerned. In one sense of course it is outside the story: the story is about people not animals; the animal 'masks' are a mere conceit, as the viewers' privileged glimpse of the string holding the second mask in place makes clear" (2001,148). In an interview shortly after the publication of *Maus*, Spiegelman described his characters' animal heads as being "mask like." He referred specifically to certain incidents in the graphic novel where identities were doubly masked (see next image, Figure 12), and insisted that these showed the character's animalization to be a metaphor which inevitably broke down from time to time (quoted in Baker 2001, 146).



Figure 12⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Source: Image from *Maus in Baker 1993, 147.*

Yes, *In The Shadow Of No Towers* continues with the non-animalness of the animal images. In fact, in *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, Spiegelman plays with the animal images that he inherits from *Maus* and moves further towards a politics that entails shifting identity thinking, whether that of man or animal. Here, animals become more than a metaphor for they become testimony to the dance of being, to the need for scripting the ontological choreography that Donna Haraway heralds elsewhere (2003).⁷⁶ What becomes central is the process of undoing, recomposing and shifting the grounds for the constitution of subjectivities. As Deleuze and Guattari write, "Becoming animal means precisely making the move, tracing the line of escape in all its positivity, crossing a threshold, reaching a continuum of intensities that only have value for themselves, finding a world of pure intensities, where all the forms get undone" (1975, 145). Through his animal images, Spiegelman represents a life lived and understood more intensely, of increasing one's freedom and understanding of complexities, of interrogating what lies between the boundaries of the human and animal and striving to become otherwise.

So, what kind of identity thinking does Spiegelman inspire? Is it the same kind performed by the *Guerilla Girls*? How do we differentiate between masking and undoing identity?

⁷⁶ In *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), Donna Haraway draws our attention towards understanding "significant otherness" or how we are co-constituted along with our companion species. To her the scripting of the dance of being is more than a metaphor: "bodies, human and non-human, are taken apart and put together in processes that make self-certainty and either humanist or organicist ideology bad guides to ethics and politics, much less to personal experience" (2003, 8).



The Guerilla Girls, a group of feminist artists wear gorilla masks in public, concealing their identities and focusing on issues rather than their personalities. Their objective being to expose the sexism, racism, and corruption in art, film, and pop culture. The gorilla masks here stand for a humorous subversion of stereotypes, a full throttled mockery of society. Their strategy of revealing sexism constitutes their rationale behind concealing their identities. Spiegelman's animal-humans do not conceal identity. They emphasize it even more stringently. Spiegelman emphasizes identity to reveal its lack, its inability to deal with the present with any singularity. Only in "becoming" can "it" grapple with the present. Spiegelman's project is less about articulating propositions to be met with a yes or a no, and more about generating connections and proliferating lines of inquiry in what Deleuze and Guattari have called a "rhizomatic" network of thinking: "becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding...becoming is a verb

with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing,' 'being,' 'equaling,' or 'producing'" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239).

Yes, "becoming animal" is very different from simply masking. While masking entails a play with appearance and reality and often signals politics with subversive potential, it still remains in the present, it still speaks the language of oppression (even in its endeavor to overturn it). Masking works within binaries in the very rudimentary process of putting on a mask and taking it off. In contrast, "...becoming animal lets nothing remain of the duality of a subject of enunciation and a subject of the statement; rather, it constitutes a single process, a unique method that replaces subjectivity" (1975, 36). Maybe, to speak of "differences" between masking and "becoming animal" is itself self-defeating because the politics of "becoming animal" refers to a panorama rather than a gospel of truth. Rather than in accounting for differences, "becoming animal" should be felt in its intensity. It is a map of intensity. It is an ensemble of states.

Spiegelman's use of animal images in *Maus* was to subvert ethnic stereotypes and showcase Nazi-Jewish relations as a cat-mouse game. In *In The Shadow of No Towers* Spiegelman challenges identity again with the use of animal figures. 9/11 is his holocaust and he continues with its central trope in making sense of the events of September 11. There are no "real" cats in *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, only Spiegelman himself as a mouse. The cats today are less explicit. The cat-mouse game here becomes puzzlingly insidious in a way, when the cats are our government (similar in a manner to the German Jews), and ourselves, Spiegelman himself before he becomes mouse and seeks to undo his complicity with the present status-quo. Thus in *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, Spiegelman "becomes-animal." In "becoming animal" Spiegelman

ceases to hunt "others." He undoes himself as a human (cat?) to realize fully his own potential in understanding and dealing with the present. The animal images are a counter-image; they showcase the inadequacy of normal representation. Being human, contained, does not allow him to see contained existence. Through "becoming animal," Spiegelman, messes with form, allows himself to be irreverent towards boundaries. He counters animal politics, by "becoming animal," "becoming animal" understood not as a mirror of animality but as a movement beyond mirroring, a transgression of the present.

Conclusion:

This chapter written in pursuit of vibrant feminist transnational politics has traversed the following trajectory. First, I examined the persistent use of the animal in western theorizations about man and his politics. The animal is present as comparison, absent otherwise. The invisibility of the animal works to make man more visible. Next I examined some models of feminist democratic politics and broached the possibility of using Deleuze for a feminist end. Feminists have been apprehensive about the anarchical dictates they perceive in Deleuze's theory, a masculine indulgence in Deleuze's becomings. I will address these feminist critiques now after imaging Deleuze's becoming-animal in Spiegelman's work on 9/11. Can we use Deleuze's "becoming-animal" in feminist politics?

The politics of "becoming animal" has varied implications. In terms of identity politics, is becoming-animal equally accessible to all? Only a subject who historically has achieved subjectivity and its associated rights can afford to put his/her solidity into question. As Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal stress, the vitalistic dissolution of boundaries makes sense only if it

is situated at the very heart of the Euro-phallogocentric Empire (1994). Gayatri Spivak emphasizes that "the philosophy of becoming minority is the last creative rebound of a decadent Eurocentric culture of which Deleuze is both the heir and its utmost critic" (quoted in Braidotti 1996,310). Does desacralizing the concept of human nature leave us with any political goal? What can feminists working with/in alliances in the contemporary world gather from the "politics" of becoming-animal? Or is this only a project for feminists in the developed world, a project that resonates with "first world indulgence"? There is a luxury in this kind of politics; its positive enthusiasm seems like a betrayal of more serious causes. To relay the same concern in other words, by inspiring shoring up of micro-energies such a project could gloss over unequal macro power relations which could color the endeavor itself. And, is becoming-animal about animals? The animal is still invisible, like in the other western theorists we examined in the first section.⁷⁷

Without undermining criticisms leveled against an irresponsible dissolution of boundaries, I implore us to look again at this mode of doing politics, its imaginative transgressions. Can we deny the provocative potential of "becoming animal"? When we recognize the investments in Deleuze's theory, don't we need a parallel investigation on ourselves, our investment in the critique we level at the politics of "becoming animal"? What is it about this theory, which stirs such visceral reactions? Through these questions, I don't want to validate a theory which is oppressive, but ask us to re-think our own recalcitrance to change, towards disturbing our socialized modes of thought. Yes, it is comfortable (and necessary) to keep to binary thinking,

⁷⁷ Donna Haraway (2008) writes disdainfully about Deleuze's talk of animals, his contempt for small animals and pets. Haraway writes, "I am not sure I can find in philosophy a clearer display of misogyny, fear of aging, incuriosity about animals, and horror at the ordinariness of flesh, here covered by the alibi of an anti-Oedipal and anticapitalist project" (2008, 30).

even for the "other." Indisputably, the "other" is oppressed. However, for the "other," women, animal, non-white, binary thinking also offers the place to politicize, group, solidify common interests. But, it is so necessary to also have a vision beyond, beyond the today which rests on binary thinking, towards a tomorrow which will not speak this language. Otherwise, why are we grouping, solidifying, making visible "us" as the "other?" Definitely not to stay permanently within the binary! Deleuze's politics does offer us a movement beyond binaries.

Deleuze's politics is infectious in its enthusiastic affirmation of creative potential. Not a kind of creativity that fiddles when Rome is burning but the kind that affirms life impulses in their full intensity without categorically blurring their energies. To me, this kind of politics is the politics of energy, of change. It engages with the world of structured inequality. This is not a politics that "flees the world." But, the world and its representations are "made to take flight" (Deleuze and Guattari 1975, 47). This mood of theorization injects the "magnanimous mood" that enables us to "respond generously to humans and non humans that challenge our settled identities" (Bennett 2001, 174). In "becoming animal" we transcend the limitations of the present. We don't simply re-inscribe our states of injury. This kind of politics best answers Wendy Brown's concern when she writes, "given the subjectivizing conditions of identity production in a late modern capitalist, liberal, and bureaucratic disciplinary social order, how can reiteration of these production conditions be averted in identity's purportedly emancipatory project?" (1995, 55). Wendy Brown implores us to move beyond disciplinary, subjectivizing identity politics that keep us trained into separate groups. Instead, she asks us how subjectivizing conditions can be subverted when we work with identity as an emancipatory project, which was identity's ostensible purpose. Simply adhering to communicative ethics to

define political engagements is largely inadequate as an emancipatory feminist politics. Politics then remains hinged in the past, without movement, without transgression. Moreover, it bases itself on a very limited, static view of the subject, ignoring its potentials to transform. "Becoming animal" destabilizes dominant power relations, de-territorializes majority-based identities, fuses emphatic inter-connections and energizes vitalic empowerment into subjects bent on becoming. This is the unfolding of positive difference. Its emphasis on what the body can "do" rather than what it "is" provides an important propellant for politics.

My study of Spiegelman's project and his animal-human images seeks to propose the politics of "becoming animal" as a guide for feminist politics today. I see numerous advantages from embracing such a project. First, it enables us to move beyond binaries. What becomes central is the process of undoing, recomposing and shifting the grounds of binaries which inhibit and exclude. Second, "becoming animal" elicits a response to violence without resorting to violence of any kind. It affirms and kindles energies of mutuality and co-implication. This would be an indispensable guide for building holistic alliances rather than one based on segregation and differentiation. Third, it helps us move forward from a situation where feminist politics simply reflects the status quo and unwittingly remains trapped in the phallogentric cage. This carries with it a more empowering interpretation of human subjectivity and human action.

For feminist transnational activism, embracing the politics of "becoming animal" means wanting to move beyond the power dynamics of the present. It involves a willingness to embrace the multiplicities that make us. It involves, not simply "becoming afghan", recognizing the phallogentric politics of war, but also, working with the imaginary of the animal to understand the framing of our politics. The movement from Aristotle's "man as a political animal" to

Deleuze's "becoming-animal" is a movement from the establishment of the polis, to the questioning of its rationale. Effective transnational politics has to be conversant with this theoretical context and fuel itself anew. Transgressing the man/animal binary is tantamount to transgressing our oppressive framing of politics and the State.

"Becoming animal" speaks to the displacement that we face in the contemporary world. These are times of fast-moving changes which do not wipe out the brutality of power relations. Braidotti eloquently stresses, "Unless one likes complexity one cannot feel at home in the twenty first century, transformations, metamorphoses, mutations and processes of change have in fact become familiar in the lives of most contemporary subjects" (2002,1). The world today demands "involuted" alliances which mark our mutual interconnections, contaminations, and complexities. The present necessitates a molecularization of the self, a (wo)man's land where "man is not a political animal."

Chapter 4

Specter-ular Democracy

Introduction:

The war will be won when Americans and their children will again be able to feel safe (Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense).⁷⁸

We live in a security corpus, a security Leviathan State that engulfs us all within its grip. We are surrounded on all sides by talk of security, whether it is in political, social, economic or individual contexts. The achievement of security remains an inspirational ideal, a valuable hankering which is pursued by many, in a variety of different forms. 9/11 is significant, primarily because of the blow it delivered to the sense of security in western states. Thus in my attempt to explore the politics in/after 9/11, I look at security mechanisms that define us as political subjects. Our encryption to secured, defined political roles under constant surveillance has an important visual component as shown to us by Foucault's panopticon of total surveillance. Ironically and aptly, the blow delivered to it was also an overwhelming visual phenomenon. The burning twin towers are visual politics, a traumatic spectacle. I ask: what kind of counter-visualization would propel movement beyond this burning spectacle exploited by the security State? Can Spiegelman's cartoon of the burning towers, serve as a counter-image to the central tower in the panopticon? I argue that the need for security blindfolds us, making it impossible for us to see beyond fear to the horizons of the doors which block our own freedom. What happens when the doors are blown apart? What do we do when all that is solid vaporizes into air?

⁷⁸ Quoted in Hardt and Negri 2004, 36.

Will visualization of an open-ended "hauntology," rather than to a fixed and static ontological being, enable democratic functioning after 9/11?

In this context, I explore Spiegelman's visual "hauntology" which offers a return to democratic politics in the aftermath of 9/11. Thereupon, I examine spectral politics as showcased by Art Spiegelman in his graphic novel on 9/11. Spectral politics, I argue, equips us with the tools needed to unhinge ourselves from the violence of the present. Spiegelman's work represents one possible way to begin imagining the politics of un-security in a way that might promote a democratic response to the Leviathan State. In this chapter following Foucault and Agamben, I first examine the problem of security and its manifestation in the present times through the government's declaration of a state of exception. I seek a solution to this problem through spectral politics theorized by Derrida and imaged by Art Spiegelman. In conclusion, I lay out my conception of "specter-ular democracy" which converses with specters, not behind secured walls but by willing to be unsettled and un-secured. I attest critical, future oriented, democratic potentials to haunting—a productive haunting which brings forth the ethical import of terror. As Derrida has stated "As in Hamlet, the Prince of a rotten state, everything begins by the apparition of a specter" (Derrida 1994, 4).

Security and Liberal Democracy:

"We have been fighting you because we are free men who cannot acquiesce in injustice. We want to restore security to our *umma*. Just as you violate our security, so we violate yours...You should remember that every action has a reaction." As part of a larger statement, these words voiced by Osama bin Laden were telecast the world over in October 2004. In this

statement Bin Laden claimed responsibility for the events of Sep. 11 and also projected a rationale as to why they were carried out. This statement was read as propaganda by Al Qaeda (Lawrence in Bellamy et al. 2008, 25) designed both as a message to the people of Europe and an effort to influence the outcome of US elections. Whatever its intent, this statement (and the attacks on 9/11) had the contrary effect of handing Bush a second term as pointed out by Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry (In Bellamy et al. 2008, 25). Besides the overt and hidden politics in Bin Laden's statement, I am struck by Bin Laden's appeal to security as his own *raison d'être*. Whatever their differences, both the US and its enemy seem to concur in making security the measure of all actions. The quest for security becomes the unquestionable parameter redeeming all measures that work towards its accomplishment. This supposedly univocal statement has multiple facets as "security" by itself is a contested concept. Paul D. Williams puts forward a simple definition of security as the "alleviation of threats to acquired values" (In Bellamy et al. 2008, 100). He notes that of course, different individuals and groups will hold different values, define threats in various ways, and argue about how these threats can best be lessened. I concur with Paul D. Williams definition here because of its succinct formulation of a rather disparate field, and its amenability in emphasizing that this is simply a working definition. The idea of "security" takes on different colors according to the social, political, economic urgency within which it resides.

Osama bin Laden sought to validate his actions and justified them as provoked by a lack of security. His mode of action/reaction/attack put existing paradigms of strategic security in crisis, based as it were on "the phenomenon of a networked, cell-based, religiously and ideologically motivated terrorism, not linked to territorial struggles and overwhelmingly

directed against civilian targets" (Burke in Bellany et al. 2008, 27). The new strategic context now is complex and messy, having to do with individuals and societies that are not states and where the strategic end is not clearly defined. Thus, 9/11 was premised on the quest for security, and, it clearly unhinged our ways of thinking about and pursuing security.

Today, war not only brings death but also produces and regulates the living. Concomitantly, we also see the policy shift from "defense" to "security," promoted by the US government, particularly since 9/11. The shift from defense to security has manifold implications. First, it entails a shift from a reactive (defense) attitude to an active and constructive (security) one. Second, while defense maintains distinctions (inside and outside), security obliterates the distinction between inside and outside, between the military and police. Third, whereas "defense" involves protecting oneself from external threats, "security" justifies constant martial activity, at home and abroad. The US government arrogates the right to act with the same impunity as the movements it opposes. In their article titled "The U. S. Response as Armed Struggle," Kathy Ferguson et. al. (2001) underline how the press reported that "the attackers were a soft, subtle presence in this country for many months." In response Ferguson et. al. write, "It's not hard to picture leaders of a national liberation movement saying to their supporters just what U.S. leaders are saying: our enemy is not safe anywhere, and neither are we" (2001). The need for security blurs all distinctions and becomes a gnawing, undefinable need (eg, the war against terror?). The US and its allies faced a new type of enemy: a globalized network of insurgents who ignored the laws of war and reveled in trying to cause as much fear and carnage as possible (Williams in Bellany et al. 2008, 11). Moreover, it is important to emphasize that undefinability operated on multiple levels. The enemy here was terror and

terrorism, not a definable, bounded entity. As if war was being waged on a "tactic," a mode of attack, thus clearing the ground for criminalizing a vast array of actors (state or non-state, individuals or groups) and justifying a vast assortment of actions including the invasion of Iraq.

The "war on terror," by its very undefinability becomes a global phenomenon, pervasive and indefinite. Following Thomas Hobbes's description of war, Hardt and Negri call the contemporary age a "general global state of war" (2004, 5). "So the nature of war," Thomas Hobbes explains, "consisteth not in actual fighting but in the known dispositions thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary" (Quoted in Hardt and Negri 2004, 5). That is, war increasingly shapes the official political imagination and remains the primal policy concern. Aptly, the present era is identified as an unstoppable progression towards "global civil war," marked by its adherence to a state of exception.⁷⁹ A state of exception refers to a state of emergency, whereby the sovereign can transcend the rule of law for public good. Instead of war being the state of exception, "the state of exception has become permanent and general; the exception has become the rule, pervading both foreign relations and the homeland" (Hardt and Negri 2004, 7). War is a continuation of politics by other means, but politics itself is increasingly becoming war conducted by other means. Today, politics is simply the continuation of violence.⁸⁰

Agamben writes about the political implications of a state of exception in his book titled *State of Exception* (2005). Situated on an ambiguous intersection between the legal and political and challenging the limits of both, Agamben considers theorizing this phenomenon as

⁷⁹ Agamben (2005) notes that the term "global civil war" first appeared in the 1960s in the works of Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt.

⁸⁰ Jean Baudrillard in describing the first Gulf War in 1991 wrote that it was not "the continuation of politics by other means", but "the continuation of the absence of politics by other means".

nothing less than urgent. To Agamben, the state of exception marks a threshold in which logic and praxis blur into each other and what exists is pure violence (2005, 40). Agamben refers to the continuous state of exception during Germany under Hitler's rule. He warns against a "generalization of the state of exception" through laws like the USA patriot act. Though Agamben is particularly critical of the US's response to 9/11, he points out that rule by decree has become common since World War I in all modern states. Procedures generally reserved for criminals (e.g. taking biometric information) are being used with all citizens, placing the population under permanent suspicion and surveillance: "The political body thus has become a criminal body" (2005, 53). The criminalization of the political body puts it under constant suspicion and surveillance. Without claiming a novelty to this phenomena, I want to point to the importance of understanding how war pursued with efforts to eliminate threat from the enemy involves policy measures that rigidly compartmentalize both the inside (home) and the outside(enemy). The need to eliminate threat from the outside is necessarily married to similar policy measures with the inside. There is no room for loyal opposition. Simultaneously, we cement strong distinctions and remove them,⁸¹ a practice that is testimony to the malleable manipulateness of power politics.

The need for security becomes ubiquitous and frames the ontological status of subjects which it seeks to regulate. The need for security becomes properly ontological. Instead of the demand for security to remain simply a policy measure, this need for security becomes the very basis of our beings, becomes an integral part of our political subjectivity, and eclipses political actions likewise. In acting, are we posing a threat to national security, even unconsciously? This

⁸¹ We use similar policy measures both with our own citizenry as with the outside aliens. Of course, the severity differs but the similarities cannot be ignored.

question echoes at all times. Bush's dictum that "either you're with us or with the enemy" internalizes not only into binary modes of operations (loyalty or betrayal) but also into a compulsive need to toe the line. As if resistance to government will make us unsecure. Concomitantly, the war on terror becomes the security blanket, a preventive barricade against any "unpatriotic" (or non-infantile) action.

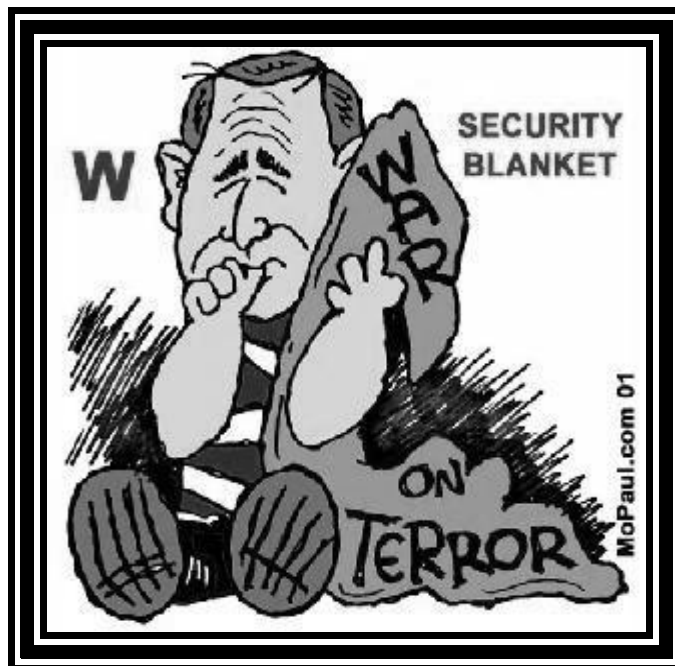


Figure 13⁸²

The urge for security serves as the basis for liberalism and its theory of State. In delineating the establishment of a State, Hobbes argues that it is the need for security (which is not available to men living in a state of nature) that motivates men to form the State.

The only way to erect such a common power as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort as that by their own industry, and by the fruits of the earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly, is to confer all their

⁸² Source: <http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/images/blbushsecurityybkanet.htm>

power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will, which is as much as to say... (Hobbes 1994, 109).

The fiction of the state of nature cannot offer men the security guaranteed by the State. The State is set up to protect men and secure their property in things and themselves. Hobbes's Leviathan State, pictured as the sovereign encompassing the bodies of his subjects, weapon in hand, stands as the traditional paradigm for security. The sovereign not only protects his subjects and territory (property) but is also poised to actively wage wars in pursuit of security. From the foundations of liberalism in 17th century thought we see the thought of security offered as a basis for the establishment of the State. This sense of security is closely tied to the spectacle of sovereignty embodied in the body of the government/ruler.⁸³ The image of the Leviathan legitimates the power of the sovereign, composed as it is of the body of subjects. This framing of governance, composed of its citizenry, also stipulates citizenship as spectatorship—the building of political legitimacy through representation.

The question of political authority and civil obedience are treated as the core of politics in Hobbes's theorization. In the interest of stability and permanence of the social order, the most important priority is absolute political sovereignty, which derives its rationale from bare reason, a price for orderly self-protection. Liberalism emanating from Hobbes clearly devises controls to political functioning i.e., citizenship presupposes acquiescent spectatorship submissive to the grandeur of state power. Eloquently on this issue, Wolin differentiates between a "power

⁸³ Davide Panagia in *The Poetics of Political Thinking* draws our attention to the frontispiece of *Leviathan*. He sees this theatocratic image as a primary indication of the building of political legitimation through "representation" (2006, 37).

imaginary" and a "constitutional imaginary" (2008, 19).⁸⁴ He sees both types of imaginary operating in Hobbes. In Hobbes, the constitutional imaginary provides the basis for the power imaginary. The individual members of society, driven by the fear of living in the state of nature agree to be ruled by an absolute sovereign in exchange for protection. Thereby the Leviathan becomes the custodian of the power imaginary as well as the final interpreter of the constitutional imaginary in the form of a permanent contract (Wolin 2008, 19). Individual security demands that power be invested in the State. Not inappropriately, apologists for America's imperialistic foreign policy emphasized Hobbes's relevance for "an anarchic world." To them, American leadership was of primal relevance against an alternative, chaotic world ("solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"). To them, security demands American leadership, and surveillance of America's citizen's was needed to keep the house in order. Before I turn to an examination of the contemporary politics of security, I examine Foucault's discussion of security as an essential component of liberal politics.

Foucault in *Security, Territory, Population*, demonstrates that the development of security accompanies the development of liberalism. To map their coterminous development, Foucault studies the applications of the technologies of power over population. Foucault studies the 18th century development of this technology by examining the technologies of security which are distinct from disciplinary techniques. Foucault argues that the gaze of surveillance in security has its own specific nuances. The development of surveillance mechanisms works alongside the "progress" of security and the development of liberalism.

⁸⁴ Wolin draws our attention to two contrasting types of imaginary, which he sees as cohabiting uneasily. The constitutional imaginary draws out the means by which power is legitimated, and accountable (e.g. popular elections). On the other hand, the power imaginary seeks constantly to expand present capabilities. It is based on the Hobbesian dynamic of human nature driven by a restless quest for power (2008, 19).

Foucault analyzes the activation and propagation of the disciplinary corpus with the establishment of mechanisms of security. As an initial analytical exploration, Foucault points out that sovereignty is exercised within the borders of a territory, discipline is exercised on the bodies of individuals, and security is exercised over a whole population (1978, 11). To Foucault, security plans a milieu. The milieu is a set of natural givens—rivers, hills etc.—and a set of artificial givens—a group of individuals, houses etc. (1978, 21). For Foucault, discipline is centripetal. It concentrates and encloses by circumscribing a space for action (1978, 45). In contrast, security is centrifugal with a constant tendency to expand: "New elements are constantly being integrated: production, psychology, behavior, the ways of doing things for producers, buyers, consumers, importers and exporters, and the world market. Security therefore involves organizing or anyway allowing the development of ever-wider circuits" (1978, 45). Foucault delineates a second major difference between discipline and security. Discipline regulates everything, allowing nothing to escape (1978, 45). It does not allow things to run their course. On the other hand, security, "lets things happen" (1978, 45). Foucault does not mean that everything is left alone, but *laissez-faire* is necessary at a certain level: allowing prices to rise, allowing scarcity to develop, and letting people go hungry so as to prevent something else happening, namely the introduction of the general scourge of scarcity.

Foucault writes, "The function of security is to rely on details that are not valued as good or evil in themselves, that are taken to be necessary, inevitable processes, as natural processes in the broad sense, and it relies on these details, which are what they are, but which are not considered to be pertinent in themselves, in order to obtain something that is considered to be pertinent in itself because situated at the level of the population" (1978, 45). The need for

security naturalizes and legitimizes the workings of reality as a technology of power. On the other hand, discipline normalizes. It normalizes by positing an optimal model which we must approximate. It operates by an initial norm-ation. In delineating the workings of discipline and security, Foucault does not isolate the working of the two by analytically differentiating between discipline and security. Instead, he seeks to situate the intricacies in the workings of technology of power over populations. Foucault's study of discipline and security are geared towards developing his concept of governmentality. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault shifts his attention to governmentality after a lucid study of the mechanisms of discipline and security. This shift portrays Foucault's concern to study both the government of the self and others. Foucault's analysis demonstrates that security becomes properly ontological for the political subject. Distinct from, and building through disciplinary mechanisms, security internalizes the disciplinary gaze of the panopticon embodied in the Government/State to the extent of making it a matter of the nature of being for the citizen body. The subject internalizes the power of surveillance which is designed to prevent transgression of any kind. From Foucault, we learn that security is a technology of power "over" populations. It encodes and scripts actors to an expected level and rationale of expectations. The building up of security is closely related to the building up of the powers of the government.

The need for security reads reality in a monological way: we will be "secured" if there is no repetition of 9/11. We will be "secured" if the terrorist is caught. We will be "secured" if we obtain rights. In effect the need for security becomes who "we" are in opposition to those who make us unsecured. The need for security enslaves us to itself. The rhetoric appealing to the need for security as a reaction to the terror unleashed by 9/11 heralds the State as the only

possible provider of this "security." The State provides a collective identity and through its mechanisms it can protect the hapless citizen. Other institutions such as the family, church, racial group, gender identification etc. do aggregate and shield actors, "but the State is the official center of self-conscious collective action" (Connolly 2002, 201). By delineating who "we" are, it effectively borders "us" from "them," home and abroad, inside and outside etc. The State is further legitimated through its democratic claim to power, a legitimacy which sanctions all policies. The State is democratic. Sadly, democracy becomes the State: "Most appeals to reasons of State are accepted as legitimate by most people most of the time because of a perception that security from external threat is essential to internal democracy, because State security is perceived to be in perpetual peril, and because outside the territory of the State the cherished life of democracy can find no institutional foot-hold" (Connolly 2002, 202). Democratically legitimated and powered by capitalism, the "security" State changes from a minimalist "night watchman" state to a highly interventionist warfare State.

The need for security as defined in relation to the State paralyzes the workings of democracy, democracy understood as a political project geared towards articulating the voices of its citizenry. I understand democracy to be necessarily an open ended project, an inspirational ideal where perfect democracy remains a goal to strive for rather than a state achieved through fair elections. The need for security becomes antithetical to democracy not only in reference to the explicit policy manifestation of the state of exception which negates democratic norms, but also in relation to the making of subjects, politically paralyzed by fear and suspicion. I am not arguing that the need for security is bad per se. I do emphasize that security creates violence, but I also recognize that the need for security can end violence by

fuelling the need for political self definition (e.g. Subaltern revolts for security in the face of historically being excluded from all vestiges of it in the form of property rights, educational rights etc.). However, it is important to understand that the desire for security seductively entices subjects into a vicious circle where the need for security does end a certain kind of violence, but it secures the field for another kind (e.g. The point emphasized by black feminism that simply securing rights for Black people does not mean that Black women are equal beneficiaries). The need for security creates closed groups where the "we" is always formed through exclusions. It is important to critically interrogate our workings within a security corpus. Perhaps, there are democratic mechanisms within the closely secured body that can unbind us by not following prescribed patterns stipulated by the body-politic.

In this section I have sought to demonstrate that the pursuit of security has become our prime political value, securing subjects by consuming them. Hobbes's leviathan helps us picture the bounded containment of political spectatorship, while Foucault's analyses pushes us towards seeing the unseen mechanisms of disciplinary-security, the "unimpeded empire of the gaze" (Foucault 1973, 39). Martin Jay argues that Foucault focused so insistently and intensely on the dangers of panopticism that he remained blind to its subversion, "For all his professed interest in resistance, Foucault may have hastily absorbed all power relations into one hegemonic ocular apparatus" (Jay 1993, 415). Jay does recognize that there is no real escape from the "empire of the gaze" into a more benign alternative, but, "why is it that wherever Foucault looked, all he could see were scopic regimes of "malveillance." (1993, 416). The question of whether Foucault's theory of power has a space for resistance has intrigued multiple theorists for the last couple of decades. Many see the question itself, as a faulty reading of Foucault,

going by his argument that "where there is power, there is resistance." I don't see Martin Jay falling within this fault line as he probes us to "see" with Foucault the all pervading-penetrating power apparatus, as well as the role "visual experience" might play in resisting insidious power. He thus urges us to pay attention to the "unseen" in Foucault's dark dangers of panopticism. Does Foucault's showcasing of invisible surveillance mechanisms have other shadows, counter-shadows that work in a different direction, shadows which can reverse the gaze? Can the burning twin towers stand in for the central tower in the Panopticon and create counter-politics? What kind of democratic spectatorship can unhinge the nexus of the power imaginary, and the constitutional imaginary which leads to an escalation of power in the hands of the State? In the next section I examine potentials within the political body which can work counter to the gaze of surveillance, un-secure political actors from the secured grips of disciplinary normation.

The Spectacle and the Specter:

The State establishes itself through complex visual mechanisms. Foucault's analysis demonstrates the establishment of the security state through intricate mechanisms that oversee the actions of its citizenry. It is not simply the symbolic paraphernalia of the State, its administrative-bureaucratic dimension that erects itself as a kind of visualized power, but the very imagination of a nation remains undeniably image based, media-ted. The nation, as Benedict Anderson has argued, is an "imagined community," a cultural construction of images and discourses, the seeable and the sayable (Anderson in Mitchell 2005, 273). An "imagined community," to Anderson, is different from an actual community because it is not (and cannot be)

based on daily recurring face-to-face interactions between its members. Instead, members hold in their minds an image of their communion.

The modern Nation State demonstrates both its secured position and its commitment to security through visual symbols. These visual symbols serve to make cohesive and enthuse identification of the populace with a common will and purpose. These visual symbols stand in front of the populace, represent them, their common interests, their nationalism. It is scarcely surprising that in times of war, these visual symbols are primary targets by opposing forces. One example, among many, would be the destruction of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad during the second gulf war. Similarly, the image of the World Trade Centre was a symbol of America, of advanced capitalism and globalization. Their designer, Yamasaki, regarded the towers as "a symbolic monument for a new millennium that was to lead to world peace through global trade" (quoted in Mitchell 2005, 13).

The destruction of the towers had little strategic military importance, the real importance was symbolic. To see the act as symbolic does not minimize the real human tragedy involved. The destruction of the towers was a media spectacle, an image of horror that has imprinted itself in the memory of the entire world.

What is the relationship between this media spectacle and the gaze of surveillance? Is there a way to shake these scopic regimes, to emerge from the political paralysis they effect? To many, "surveillance" and "spectacle" have a basic dialectical relation: "Spectacle is the ideological form of pictorial power; surveillance is its bureaucratic, managerial, and disciplinary form" (Mitchell 1994, 327). Here Mitchell re-iterates Guy Debord's classic formulation: "The spectacle is ideology par excellence" (1967). Guy Debord and his Situationist collaborators

stressed the dangers of being seduced by the spectacle of modern life, which to them was far more politically dangerous than Foucault's omnipresent surveillance. The fact that in French "spectacle" also means a theatrical presentation suggests that Debord and the Situationists were drawing on a long tradition of suspicion of theatrical illusion evident in Rousseau and before (Jay 1993, 420). Debord did not demonize vision per se but rather the social relations among people, mediated by images. To him, the spectacle was a reflection of alienated socio-economic relations, a passive consumption of ideas. As Debord writes, the spectacle "is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image" (1967, par. 34). The spectacle, to Debord was false-consciousness, inherently repressive and de-politicizing. Debord saw the "spectacle" as power imaginary, the relentless effort of the few for self-aggrandizement. Different from Foucault's descriptive and historical account of the gaze of surveillance, Debord's assessment was explicitly political—a directed polemic on the effects of being seduced by the spectacle.

Debord's hostility to spectacle found a mixed reaction among theorists of public life thereafter. In the 1980's, postmodernists like Jean Baudrillard found a way to celebrate what Debord has found so troublesome, the society of the spectacle. Baudrillard moved beyond a criticism of the spectacle to showcase the "precession of simulacra," the play of images and signs in a post-modern society. New advances in technology, networks of data flows rather than "real" bodies, the super-advancement of invisible communication and computer technology have spurred a renewed interest in the spectacle, both its de-politicizing effect and its inevitability as a social phenomenon. Besides the Sept. 11 attacks, witness the fascination of the Gulf war in 1991, the O.J. Simpson trials during 1994-6, the Clinton sex scandals, and various other media spectacles throughout the 1990s. In the context of the contemporary world today, suspicion of

the spectacle remains pervasive. For example, Henry Giroux (2006) in his book titled *Beyond the Spectacle of Terrorism* theorizes the relationship between terrorism and the development of the security state through the concept of the spectacle. To Giroux, the spectacle of terrorism undermines and limits democracy. Giroux writes, "The spectacle is neither a universal nor a transcendental force *haunting* social relations. It emerges in different forms under different social formations, and signals in different ways how cultural politics works necessarily as a pedagogical force to produce subjects willing to serve the political and economic power of dominant groups" (Giroux, emphasis mine 2006, 28). Giroux underlines the pedagogical functions of the spectacle in promoting consent, integrating populations into dominant systems of power, heightening fear, and operating as a mode of social reproduction through the educational force of the surrounding culture (2006, 28).

In analyzing the workings of the terror of the spectacle, Giroux refers to notions of the spectacle that are associated with fascist culture and late capitalism's culture of commodification. To Giroux, fascism and consumer capitalism share features of the terror of the spectacle. Both use various rites of passage, parades, pageantry, advertisements and media presentations, the terror of the spectacle offers the populace a collective sense of unity that integrates them into state power (2006, 29).

A consequence of this spectacle is that civic life is eroded and politics aestheticized through appeals to the monumental and heroic (Giroux 2006, 29). Interestingly, Giroux differentiates between the terror of the spectacle (discussed above) and the spectacle of terror. The spectacle of terrorism aims at creating a subject forged in social relations constructed around fear and terror. Importantly, the spectacle of terrorism is not simply an

expression of State and corporate power: "rather than indulging a process of depoliticization by turning consuming into the only responsibility of citizenship, the spectacle of terrorism politicizes through a theatrics of fear and shock" (2006, 30). This fear and shock legitimates the connection between terrorism and security. To Giroux, the media (in harmony with State interest) promoted a certain version of endemic danger and insecurity, consistently mobilizing the deepest impulses of people's vulnerability, while reinforcing the military, security, and surveillance functions of the State (2006, 64). Giroux affirms Agamben's argument that "security and terrorism may form a single deadly system, in which they justify and legitimate each other's actions" (2005, 64). To Giroux the spectacle of terrorism demands protection in the form of a risk free environment as the defining demand of "citizenship" and lends political legitimacy to State authoritarianism (2006, 4). Giroux does not propose that the terror of the spectacle and the spectacle of the terror are divorced from each other, they do overlap and coexist.

Giroux paints a dark picture of the politicization evoked through the spectacle of terror. The politicization immobilizes subjects, stupefies them through fear and shock. The spectacle, to Giroux works in companionship with state power in molding subjects destined to obey state dictates. In other words, I see Giroux bringing Foucault and Guy Debord's analysis together in conversation. He demonstrates the connection between "surveillance" and the "spectacle," the security state's insidious use of spectacles to mold subjects in accordance to its interest. However, even as Giroux's analysis provides an interesting synthesis of the arguments of Foucault and Debord, his picture is infiltrated with the same pessimism, the same recognition of

vicious repression without reprieve. These theorists discern the macro structure as conditioning social relations, without adequately drawing out the micro spheres of resistance.

I would begin by emphasizing that not all spectacles are the same. Nor are all acts of "terrorism" the same. Maybe, by bracketing them together we indulge in a de-politicizing theoretical reductionism where the spectacle becomes terrorism and takes on all the characteristics of a violent infringement. The fear and shock affected by such terrorism is seen as leading to de-politicization, death of the political subject. What about repeated deaths, blurred encounters, definitional seepages, where events, places, actors are not containable. The event of 9/11 was an act of terror, horror, the effects provoking acute pain and loss. The spectacle generated a vast array of emotions among both those who watched it and those whose loved ones were caught in its glowing bones. The events of 9/11 were followed by candle-light vigils the world over, individual acts of heroism, public scrutiny of US foreign policy, along with increased State authoritarianism, fear, shock, and insecurity. It is of political importance to take note of the varied political actions and reactions brought about by the spectacle itself. And, so is the need to understand the processual element in all these events and actions. The visual spectacle of the glowing twin towers needs to be put in historical context, in comparison to the image of the majestic towers before they were attacked. The politics of memory adds a distinct nuance to a situation of trauma, where no event stands only for itself, in isolation. An event or spectacle becomes significant in context, in a memory frame. The human mind is intricately and glamorously complex, and our theorizations often times fail to adequately understand or re-present its varied workings, its processual component where things don't necessarily appear and disappear, but, keep appearing, re-appearing, haunting.

There are no ghosts in Foucault, Debord, or Giroux's theorizations. Ironically, their conceptualizations attempt to make visible the "unseen" gaze of surveillance, but provide no room for the invisible sites of subversion which have no legitimacy within a bounded reality. In decoding the workings of reality, they continue to work with it, leaving no room for the un-real. It is important to theorize on the politicizations evoked through traces. Not to do so vastly undermines the events/people themselves. I am reminded of Adorno and Horkheimer who wrote a two page note, appended to *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, titled "On The Theory of Ghosts." They argued that we needed some kind of theory of ghosts as a way of understanding modernity's "wound in civilization" that treats as a major problem the reduction of individuals "to a mere sequence of instantaneous experiences which leave no trace, or rather whose trace is hated as irrational, superfluous, and overtaken" (2002,216).

While Giroux's works provide important insights and theorize important political implications of the role of the spectacle of 9/11, it nonetheless considerably undertheorizes the subversive politicization evoked through the spectacle, the re-making of subjects by un-securing them. I seek to theorize this potential by exploring the link between a spectacle and a specter. I attest critical potential to haunting by its very mode of un-securing us.

A specter is also a spectacle, but a spectacle with different potentials than theorized by Giroux. Giroux's analysis of the spectacle of terror underlined the political paralysis cemented by the spectacle, but not the un-cementing that could also be its efficacy. What critical insights would we garner by theorizing the spectacle of the specter?

Adorno and Horkheimer did not draw out the full implication of a "Theory of Ghosts." How would their analysis of the problems of the enlightenment differ if they had fully integrated a

theory of ghosts in their project? Their words that "only the conscious horror of destruction creates the correct relationship with the dead" (2002, 215) haunt me with their relevance in understanding the terrors of our time, and its ethical import in seeking to forge an active response to terror.

Could it be that analyzing haunting might lead to a more complex understanding of the generative structures and moving parts of historically embedded social formations in a way that avoids the twin pitfalls of subjectivism and positivism? Perhaps. If so, the result will not be a more tidy world, but one that might be less damaging (Gordon 1997, 19).

Analyzing haunting, speaking with ghosts, conversing with things difficult and unsettling, questioning the need for security as a primary urgency, may help us not only in understanding the world, but also ways of changing it (philosophers have only interpreted the world... what matters is to change it, Marx). The Marxist project in understanding systemic social forces and analyzing the invisible and marginalized, necessarily works with ghosts. Marx writes in his *Communist Manifesto*, "A specter is haunting Europe, the specter of communism." The need to reckon with haunting resonates through Marx's texts, also, for example, when he writes, that society has "conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange...like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world that he has called up by his spells." In Marx's texts this unseen, unknown power acts as the re-generative energy that can topple the horrors of the present. These ghosts are generated within the present (in the belly of the beast) and are endowed with ominous powers (by the beast itself). Ironically, ghosts in a Marxist schema are endowed with utopian, living energy to make systemic changes. Marx's critique of capitalism could be read as anti-visual, an admiration of capitalism's image-making (productive powers), and

an analysis of its de-humanizing tendency. However, it is important to notice the significance of the visual in Marx's theory of resistance, where a haunting is as active and laboring as the productive body it valorizes.⁸⁵

Derrida, contrary to his own anti-ocular stance does pay homage to the viability of a Marxist concept of haunting in his book titled *Specters of Marx*.⁸⁶ Derrida's writing on the specter of Marx does demonstrate his resistance to radical rejections of vision. But this does not mean Derrida privileged vision as radical politics. Rather, he sought to de-construct its meaning.⁸⁷ Has the "collapse" of 1989 spelled the death of Marxism? How will intellectuals in the Marxist tradition respond to the present global transformations? What is living and what is dead in Marxism? Derrida responds to these questions by evoking Marx's specters. Derrida points out that the most manifest thing about the Manifesto, which manifests itself in the first place, is a specter (1994, 13). This first character is as powerful as it is unreal, a simulacrum that is more politically relevant than a living presence. To Derrida there are few texts in the philosophical tradition whose lesson is more urgent today. Most importantly, "Who has ever called for the transformation to come of his own theses?" (1994,130). To Derrida, it is the presence (or the presence of absence) of Marx's specters that enable his theses amenable to transformations, so

⁸⁵ Martin Jay does not analyze the role of the visual in Marx, but in Althusser who was vary of the ideological mis-recognitions constituted by the image.

⁸⁶ Derrida's ambiguity towards vision has been much critiqued. See John McCumber, "Derrida and the closure of vision," in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. David Michael Levin (Berkeley, 1993).

⁸⁷ Derrida wrote that "it is not a matter of distinguishing here between sight and non-sight, but rather between two ways of thinking of sight and light, as well as between two conceptions of listening and voice" (quoted in Jay 1994, 514). Derrida was always attentive to traces, things that are conventionally non-visible. On photography, Derrida writes, that it always contains a trace of a thing that was once there; as a result, "it's all about the return of the departed... the spectral is the essence of photography" (quoted in Jay 1994, 521).

as to incorporate in advance, beyond any possible programming, the unpredictability of new political exigencies.

Derrida situates the relevance of Marxism today by repeatedly invoking the specter. Derrida sees the specter as a "paradoxical incorporation," "a becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other" (1994, 6). One never knows precisely what a specter is, not out of ignorance, but because this "non-object," "this non-present present," no longer belongs to knowledge, defying semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy (1994, 6). To Derrida in this non-knowingness lies much of the power of the specter. This "not-knowingness" makes it possible to flex the borders of Marxism and make it speak to the present. Marxism resides in every radical political project by haunting its projects and claims of critique or transformation. For example, Derrida asserts that deconstruction is a "radicalization of Marxism" (1994, 92). To Derrida, fidelity to the inheritance of a certain Marxist *spirit* remains a duty (1994, 87).

Derrida recognizes that he will not please the Marxists by insisting in this way on the *spirit* of Marxism, on specters that one must not chase away but keep close by, and allow to come back (1994, 87).⁸⁸ Derrida emphasizes that Marxism is central to "radical critique, namely a procedure ready to undertake its self-critique (1994, 88). This critique wants itself to be open to re-evaluations and self-reinterpretation. This kind of spirit is a "becoming- body," different

⁸⁸ Derrida was right on this point. See Terry Eagleton's critique of Derrida in *Ghostly Demarcations* where Eagleton refuses to accept that deconstruction is a radicalization of Marxism. "There is something unavoidably opportunistic about his political pact," says Eagleton, "...his sudden dramatic somersault onto a stalled bandwagon" (In Sprinker 2008, 84).

from a body of Marxist doctrine with a supposedly systemic, metaphysical, and ontological totality (to fixed concepts of labor, social class, modes of production etc.).

Derrida delineates the haunting obsession as the dominant influence on discourse today (1994, 37). At a time when the new world order speaks in the language of neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism, no disavowal has managed to rid itself of all of Marx's ghosts. To Derrida, hegemony organizes the repression and thus the confirmation of a haunting: "Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony" (1994, 37). Derrida's analysis visualizes resistance as intrinsic to hegemonic politics. Yes, in their attempts to theorize transformative politics, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek repeatedly invoke the political use of haunting in their co-written book titled *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*.

Butler writes:

My understanding of the view of hegemony established by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) is that democratic politics are constituted through exclusions that return to haunt the politics predicated upon their absence. That haunting becomes politically effective precisely in so far as the return of the excluded forces an expansion and rearticulation of the basic premises of democracy itself (2000, 11).

Despite their differences in talking through different nuances of the construction of hegemonic politics, the figure of the specter is used by all three theorists to signal a) the nature of hegemonic politics that creates specters (by silencing, killing oppressing etc.) b) possibilities in democratic politics to re-new itself anew. The use of haunting is used to signal the need for open-endedness in any democratic project. By being open to the unrealizable, unseen and invisible, a democracy can constantly become more democratic. This also refers to the importance of resurrecting classical ideologies non-dogmatically where ideologies serve as

constant streams of knowledge without being constrained by the vocabulary and terms of the present. Through the writings of Derrida and Butler et al., what we see being constantly emphasized is the need to converse with the specter. Hegemonic structures could be countered by recognizing hauntings that seep out of firmly secured coffin politics, denying both the encasement of life and what it means to do democratic politics. Democratic politics, to these theorists, needs to operate with a hauntology, rather than a static notion of ontology (Derrida 1994; Butler et.al. 2000) which does not push the limits of the knowable. The unknowingness, inherent in the very apparition of a specter, pierces our security blanket, necessitating an understanding of reality that is not predicated or patterned. By rendering the present indeterminate and irresolute but richly suggestive of different possibilities, ghosts haunt us in any pursuit of stringent definitions and propel us towards vital open-endedness. As Derrida emphasizes:

[one] should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always *there*, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet (Derrida 1994, 176).

If Specters "do not exist," if "they are not yet," then how do we work with them to grapple with political reality that exists with ferocious presence and urgency? What are the ghosts of 9/11? In pursuit of these questions, next, I examine Art Spiegelman's work with the ghosts of 9/11 to understand the political nuances of ghostly politics.

Art Spiegelman's Ghosts and Ghostly Politics:

What is a ghost? What is the *effectivity* or the *presence* of a specter, that is of what seems to remain as ineffectual, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? (Derrida 1994, 10).

Ghosts are neither living nor dead, they are neither in this world nor outside, and have a uniquely fragile, irresolute, extra-legal, and tempestuous identity. Their intangibility marks their unrealness. Moreover, ghosts cannot be stringently policed; they appear and disappear at random. Avery Gordon writes, "the ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way of course" (1997, 8). Ghosts are re-visitations. And, there are good ghosts and bad ghosts. Bad ghosts are scary who appear at inopportune moments to disconcert and frighten. Good ghosts often function as guardian angels, protecting people with all the insights gained from living in another world. These two categories don't exhaustively enumerate the different kinds of ghosts. Categorizations of ghosts are themselves ghostly, haunting any bracketing as incomplete (i. e., the good may spill into the bad and vice-versa) and unreal (i.e., reality has no vocabulary to substantially ground things that lie beyond its codings except as un-real).

Ghosts cannot be bracketed. Doing so puts them in the realm of the living or dead, past or present. Mocking our need for concrete essentializations, ghosts operate through our categorizations to question them and showcase their borders. Thus, even the enterprise of marking differences between the use of ghosts by the different theorists appears a superficial enterprise in the face of ghosts, being ghosts, haunting that shake us up, stirring us from a state of static (and apolitical) security.

Ghosts are often looked upon as fabrications of a deluded mind—a matter of weakness. Considered signs of weakness, fear, insecurity etc., rarely are they considered social agents. Art Spiegelman in his work, *In The Shadow Of No Towers*, involves ghosts as primary actors in his narration of 9/11. Casting ghosts as primary actors in a narration of 9/11 and its aftermath has unique political implications. Why use ghosts to showcase a 9/11 Leviathan (or a State using the "power imaginary" clothed in the "constitutional imaginary" of democracy to sanctify its actions at home and abroad)? How does the spectral gaze displace the Foucaultian "empire of the gaze" marked by tenacious surveillance? Do spectral visitations invoke the hope for a new kind of politics reminiscent of Marxist specters, the possibility of democratic spectatorship distinguished from passive resignation to the "State" of things?

Spiegelman witnessed the collapse of the twin towers "unmediated" through national television unlike the rest of the world. On September 11th, Spiegelman and his wife stepped out of their lower Manhattan home to see the first plane smash into the first tower. In panic they realized that their daughter, Nadja, was in the heart of the pandemonium as her school was located right next to the towers. After they managed to get Nadja from school, the couple saw the second tower collapse.

We got Nadja out a few minutes before the school decides to evacuate and made our way home on the promenade alongside the Hudson. We turned to see the North tower tremble. The core of the building seemed to have burned out, and only the shell remained--shimmering, suspended in the sky--before ever-so-slowly collapsing in on itself. Françoise shrieked "No! . . . No! . . . No! . . ." over and over again. Nadja cried out: "My school!" while I stared slack-jawed at the spectacle, not believing it real until the enormous toxic cloud of smoke that had replaced the building billowed toward us (2004, 3).

Since Sept. 11, Spiegelman has been living in the shadow of no towers. Spiegelman writes, "The pivotal image from my 9/11 morning—one that didn't get photographed or videotaped into public memory but still remains burned onto the inside of my eyelids several years after—was the image of the looming north tower's glowing bones just before it vaporized" (2004, 2). The ghost towers shape Spiegelman's response to 9/11. Spiegelman tries to make real, to understand what happened on that Sept. morning, in conversation with the ghost towers. Spiegelman searches for meaning to the events of the day in visual dialogue with the ghost towers. The "will to meaning" brought about by trauma provokes a relentless search, an incessant haunting: "...it follows that there must be a meaning to life under any conditions, even the worst conceivable ones. But how shall we explain this finding which so much contradicts the ubiquitous feeling of meaningless-ness?" (Frankl 1997, 141). The spectacle of the specter aids Spiegelman's search for meaning, amidst chaos, despondency, and meaninglessness.

The towers are ghosts because they are never imaged with photographic clarity whereby we can substantially ground them. They are ghosts, pictured as shadows, as a glowing background, as the presence of absence, or as a seething presence. To Spiegelman the image of the calamity of 9/11 is the picture of the ghost towers, sometimes in black varnish as on the cover, and otherwise as red glowing bones, placed on each and every page of his graphic novel. The acrid smell from the Holocaust looms large ("I remember my father trying to describe what the smell in Auschwitz smelled like. The closest he got was telling me it was 'indescribable.' That's exactly what the air in lower Manhattan smelled like after Sept.11" (Spiegelman 2004, 3). *Maus* lives *In The Shadow On No Towers* in the burning images of the twin towers, incessantly questioning: Is this a different kind of crematorium? Who and what burned here? Memory leaks

through from one event to another, imploring us to see the similarities, and the differences of one from the other.⁸⁹

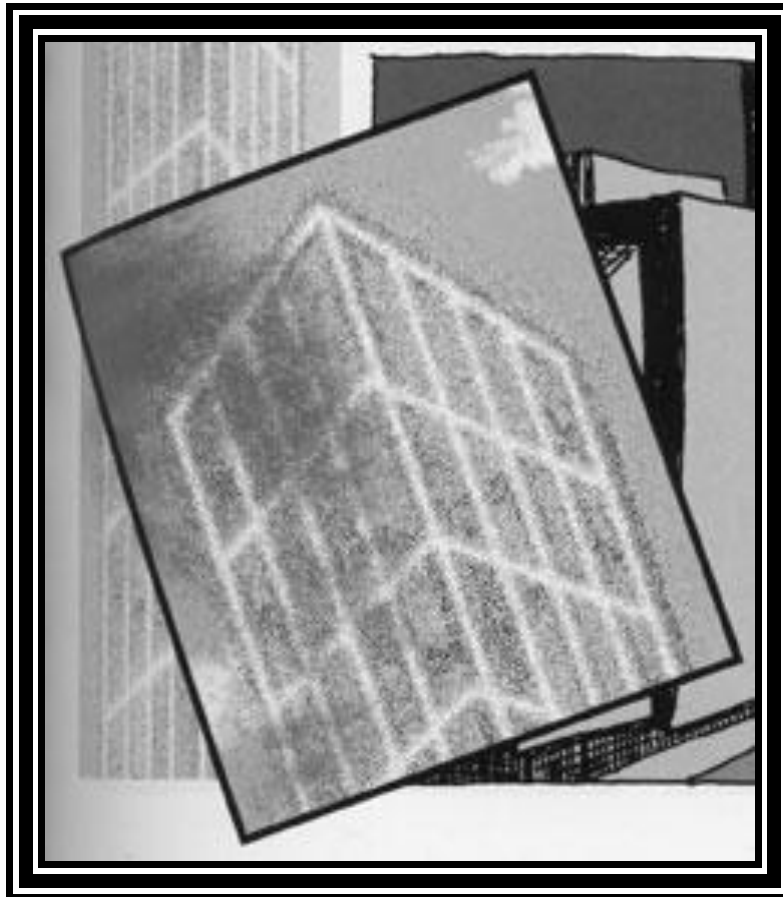


Figure 14⁹⁰

The ghost towers are used by Spiegelman to effectively dramatize his political sentiments of outrage at the present regime. To Spiegelman, "under cover of darkness" (without the presence of the glowing towers), our democracy is being stolen away from us under the guise of the need for national security.

Under cover of this darkness, this state of panic in which we are encouraged to cower, our democracy is being stolen from us, in the name of protection, of national security. Once we gloried in sunshine

⁸⁹ Anne Norton in *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (2004) sees in contemporary politics reverberations from the Holocaust and the treatment of Jews.

⁹⁰ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

laws and a freedom of information act. Now we have a government that says public documents cannot be entrusted to the people or even the people's representatives. Once we could count on law to protect our liberties. Now people are arrested and jailed in secrecy, without counsel, without recourse. Even their families do not know what has happened to them. Once we were free to criticize and ridicule a president who was merely the servant of the people. Now we are called to account for undermining the dignity of the office, for not showing respect for The Leader, no matter what he does. The more young people he sends to die, we are told, the more we must show respect for their killer, lest those dead appear to have died in vain, which means more will be sent to die. And intellectuals conspired in this destruction of freedom: the time of irony is over, they said. Henceforth we are sheep. Sheep who will not even bleat (Spiegelman in Sharpe 2005, 1).

Spiegelman exhibits explicit partisan political sentiments without clothing them in indirect guises. It is clear, he states, that democracy in America is under siege, freedom a farce, and citizens reduced to sheep who obey without bleating. His use of the ghost towers need to be understood as an integral part of his political stance, not only communicating his anxiety over the politics of the present, but also his anger and need to forge a different kind of political ethos.

Spiegelman starts his graphic novel with stark etchings of the phantom towers. They dominate the front cover in an interesting way. The Towers are superimposed with black glossy varnish on a black matte background. A panel positioned in the middle of the ghost towers (where the plane impacted) feature characters from old newspaper comics such as the *Katzenjammer Kids* and *Bringing Up Father*. The old in color is printed brightly in a vibrant green on the doubly black background (the black glowing towers and the dull black background). The old is made to contrast with the recent past. The old in color appears to be alive (as printed in color and picturing bodies in motion). The absolute living present is non-existent on the cover (except for the author's name scrawled in the bottom of the cover). The present lives in the shadow of

no towers, thereby can the past be illuminated. Thus the central panel in color is truly alive. The towers even if they belong to the past, reverberate through the present. Irreverent of time, the ghostly towers are not docile. As Derrida writes, "Furtive and untimely, the apparition of the specter does not belong to that time, it does not give time" (1994, xx). By not giving time, specters mock a linear order, a rule driven "progression." A specters "appearance" is always a "re-appearance."

As we turn the page, the first image that we counter, is another image of the ghost towers. This time they stare at us from a background configured by old newspaper print. "President's wound re-opened; Slight change for worse" reads the headline of the day on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 1901 (Spiegelman 2004, unpaginated). The ghost towers, a product of a hundred years of "progressive" time, protrude from the black and white page, bathed in blood (red ink splashed on a yellow bone structure of the towers). The Towers showcase the repetition of time, an uncanny resonance through a hundred years, a "slight change for worse." But the towers are also glittering with mischief (glinting sprinkles strewn all over its structure) in conspiracy with Emma Goldman

Emma Goldman in jail
Charged with conspiracy

Chicago, september 11, 1901. Emma Goldman was arrested at 11 o'clock this morning in a flat at No. 303 Sheffield Avenue. When confronted by the police she denied her identity, but when her name was discovered on a fountain pen she laughed and said, "I was just contemplating giving myself up." (*This excerpt is printed in very small print in the background of the image of the towers Spiegelman 2004, unpaginated*)

The Towers laugh with no rules, mocking the present for its inability to see itself caught in the vicious circle of the present. The Towers provoke a re-visioning.

The ghost towers are inherently anarchist. As Derrida writes, "A spectral asymmetry interrupts all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony" (1994, 70). Arrogantly disobeying fixed static structures, spectral politics invites us to look beyond the regimented parameters. Spectral politics works in comradeship with Emma Goldman. "If I can't dance, it's not my revolution" wrote Goldman. Standing in spectral defiance against established customs, whether that of marriage or the state, Goldman boldly pronounced her non-compliance with dictated protocol. Known as a "demonic, dynamite-eating anarchist", Goldman was jailed in 1893, 1901, 1916, 1918, 1919 and 1921, on charges ranging from inciting to riot, to advocating the use of birth control, to opposition to World War I. She was exiled by the US, Soviet Russia, Holland, and France and was denied entry into many more nations. Goldman found inspiration in the company of Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, and Henry David Thoreau. Alice Wexler ends her book on Emma Goldman with a quotation describing her life. Wexler quotes Goldman's own words about Mary Wollstonecraft, which Wexler feels appropriate to describe Goldman's life as well: "In conflict, with every institution of their time, since they will not compromise, it is inevitable that the advance guards should become alien to the very ones they wish to serve; that they should be isolated, shunned, and repudiated by the nearest and dearest of kin. Yet the tragedy every pioneer must experience is not the lack of understanding—it arises from the fact that having seen new possibilities for human advancement, the pioneers can not take root in the old, and with the new still so far off they become outcast roamers of the earth, restless seekers for the things they will never find" (Wexler 1989, 245). Goldman was very much an "outcast roamer", a "restless seeker," a spectral presence in the very age she inhabited.

Spiegelman starts his book on 9/11 by invoking Emma Goldman and the ghost towers. Both specters foreshadow the rest of the graphic narrative. I consider it important to highlight the use of Goldman by Spiegelman in companionship with the ghost towers. But it is also important to qualify that I don't see Spiegelman as an anarchist cartoonist in the reductionist caricature of what it is to be an anarchist, i.e., who extols violent tactics to overthrow government. What I do see through the pages of Spiegelman's text is the ghost towers operating a) with no rules, b) as a consistent critique of US government policies. Operating on an unsecured realm (not sanctioned by time, norms or living codes) the ghost towers meddle with reality by highlighting the borders within which it is bound together. And, by showcasing the violence that necessarily accompanies rule bound politics, rules that privilege some over others, the rules that create ghosts. The towers flout rules in their spectral reincarnation, by their very re-appearance after they were razed to the ground, thus deconstructing rule based politics. Just as planes are not bombs, democracy is not simply the constitution; rules are never enough to contain politics.

Spiegelman uses anarchy as a style of cartooning without being faithful to unwavering tenets. Spiegelman's use of Goldman's ghosts closely parallels Derrida's use of the specters of Marx, resurrecting classical Marxism in a non-essentialist way. Thus, Derrida uses the image of the specter which cannot be clearly delineated by essential, inalienable traits. Similarly, Spiegelman embarks on a parallel project resurrecting the specter of Goldman and other specters he conjures up in the image of the twin towers. To write about Marxism and Anarchism

together, or even in spectral analogy, opens up a can of worms traceable to the differences between Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin which destroyed the First International in 1864.⁹¹

The antagonisms between Marxism and Anarchism have traversed a complicated historical companionship. The specific relation between Marxism and Anarchism is not my focus in this chapter. My specters haunt any attempt at ideological specificity and dogmatism. Setting up ideological barricades is itself a hegemonic enterprise. What is a "pure" ideology? Maybe, that which functions with the rules set up by its principal protagonists. Ideologies that question rule bound enterprises cannot operate within an ontological and epistemological fixity, determined by that which it questions in the first place. Also, Spiegelman's use of Goldman is of significance to my project because of its illumination of Spiegelman's style of cartooning, his post-modern anarchism. Spiegelman uses Goldman, not as Goldman alive, but as a specter which loses its essentializing characteristics, reducible to a specific time period and context, and becomes alive to any time period and context. Anarchism thus introduces Spiegelman's post-modernism (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) of both style and content, its ethical valence in showcasing politics in motion rather than represented in finitude and closure.⁹²

Every page of Spiegelman's graphic novel engages with the ghost towers, not solely because they are printed as a border frame on each page. The first panel (See Figure 15) arranged in irregular sized frames shows a family relaxing before the TV screen on September

⁹¹ Their differences could be broadly summarized as a difference in viewpoint over the importance of economics versus politics. For Marx, politics is determined by economics. Bakunin disagrees. To Bakunin, all men, even sincere socialists, desire power. This struggle against the State was as important as struggle against capital.

⁹² Todd May (1994) argues that post-modernism is inherently anarchist because of its alternative vision of political intervention, its adherence to a micro-politics instead of macro-politics. To May, both anarchism and post-modernism consider the concentration of power as an invitation to abuse. Therefore they seek political intervention in a multiplicity of irreducible struggles.

10. The same family with their hairs on their edge is paranoidly frantic the next day as they watch the TV air the events of the day. The next frame shows the family relaxing in front of the TV, sanguine with the US flag in the background. Interestingly, their hair still stands on its edge, as if the family had been forcefully secured and made comfortable under the aegis of the flag but still living in paranoid relaxation.



Figure 15⁹³

This panel vividly represents Spiegelman's outrage on the politics of the present. He writes in the introduction to *In The Shadow of No Towers*:

What changed? Basically America entered its pre-election political season. Free debate is expected as proof of democracy in action. And though it has been an enormous relief to hear urgent issues get an airing again, I was disappointed that vigorous criticism had been staved off until it could be contained as part of our business as usual. The feelings of dislocation reflected in these No Towers pages arose in part from the lack of outcry against the outrages while they were being committed (2004, unpaginated).

⁹³ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 1.

To Spiegelman the rationale of the need for a functioning democracy was draining democracy of its true rationale. The need to resume 'business as usual,' normalcy, security, was robbing us of the ability to react democratically to the events of 9/11. Forced democracy was constraining force-ful democracy. The ghost towers are used by Spiegelman to protest against this containment. The ghost towers border regular panels cutting through their containment within fixed boundaries, showcasing how borders need to be interrogated post 9/11. Spiegelman's work provides an intriguing show (un)casing of borders. His style of cartooning uses borders and plays with them to display their political malleability.⁹⁴ Much of the work in his comic book is done between borders in the transition from one panel to another. Irregular and lacking in continuity, the passage in between plays with the reader's sense of a linear progression from event to event, border to border, time to time.

Spiegelman's critique of the present questions the passage of time in multiple ways. Not only does he showcase the repetition of time in a non-linear manner, but he also reflects on the apolitical impulse to ignore time. His involvement with time is reflected in the next image.

⁹⁴ Agamben provides an interesting study of the political malleability of borders in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998). Agamben argues that borders are no longer localized by traditional limits: "Living in the state of exception that has now become the rule has [...] meant this: our private body has now become indistinguishable from our body politic" (1998, 76). To Agamben, creating zones of indistinction is a facet of the functioning of sovereign power (eg. Guantanamo Bay) where certain forms of border-crossing are legitimated to secure the border of the political community.

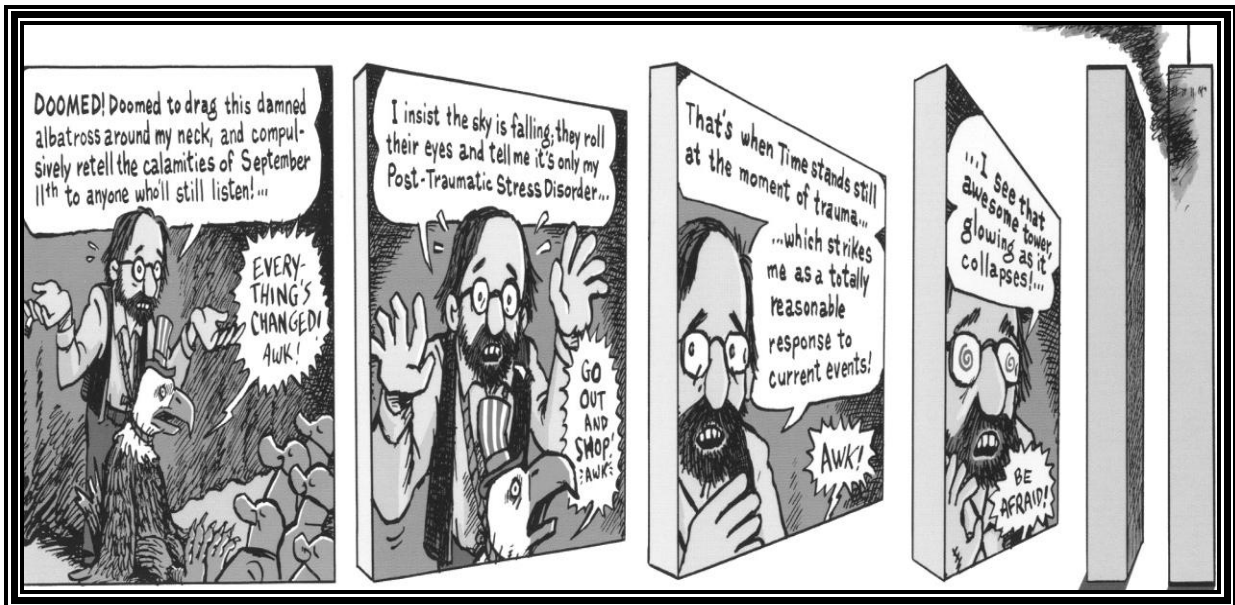


Figure 16⁹⁵

Spiegelman is shown dragging the American eagle around his neck. He exclaims, "Doomed! Doomed to drag this damned albatross around my neck, and compulsively retell the calamities of Sept. 11th to anyone who'll still listen!" (2004, 2). Like the Ancient Mariner, Spiegelman is made to take responsibility for the shooting of American democracy. In fear Spiegelman shouts in agitation. He insists that the sky is falling, but is told that this is simply his post-traumatic stress disorder (2004, 2). Meanwhile the eagle squeaks, "Go out and shop." This portrays Bush's extortion to all Americans to go out, spend money and shop in response to 9/11. To Spiegelman, time stands still at the moment of trauma. Thus he still sees the towers collapsing before his eyes. The towers haunt Spiegelman's present. Time loses its continuity and becomes disjointed from its smoothly paced progress. This is not simply a political paralysis or a stopping short with fear, but an urgent need to redress more fully the events of that Sept. day. The ghosts need to be exorcised for Spiegelman to regain his composure.

⁹⁵ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 2.

The spectacle of the specter works in a very different way for Spiegelman than was apprehended by Debord and Giroux (as discussed earlier). To Debord the spectacle was the image of capitalism, "where the commodity contemplates itself in a world which it has created" (1967, par.53). It thus was the "false consciousness of time" (1967, par. 158). In other words, to Debord, the spectacle represented a sinister time that dulled people into passive contemplation without an understanding of "real" time and thus thwarted 'real" action. Bush's call to all Americans to spend money and shop in response to 9/11 does confirm Debord's analysis, but the spectacle of the specter acts at precisely this junction to illuminate "real" time and "real" action.

A successive set of panels showcase the ghost towers as the sole image in separate boxes. The ballooned lettering in the successive boxes read:

"Leave me alone, Damn it! I'm just trying to comfortably relive my sep
11 trauma but you keep interrupting—Like that mind-numbing 2002
"anniversary" event, when you tried to wrap a flag around my head and
suffocate me!
You rob from the poor and give to your pals like a parody of Robin Hood
while distracting me with your damn oil war!
Then the recent election—OW! I've gotta shut my eyes and concentrate
to still see the glowing bones of those towers..." (Spiegelman 2004, 5)

Along with the lettering, the towers are shown writhing in pain. The dead towers prevent Spiegelman from passively accepting the status-quo of the present.

The ghost towers of 9/11 are not singular, independent ghosts. They haunt in concert with other ghosts: "The Killer apes learned nothing from the twin towers of Auschwitz and Hiroshima...And, nothing changed on 9/11. His "President" wages his war and wars on wages—same old deadly business as usual" (Spiegelman 2004, 8). For Spiegelman, the holocaust and world war II re-visit themselves through 9/11. He portrays himself with a mouse head (reminiscent of

Maus) smoking profusely in an already smoke filled environment. The ghosts of the past refuse to die in an atmosphere which constantly creates new ghosts.

Spiegelman converses with many ghosts in his graphic novel on 9/11. He uses cartoon characters from past comic strips to effectively understand the present. Spiegelman writes, "The blast that disintegrated those lower Manhattan towers also disinterred the ghosts on nearby Park Row about a century earlier. They came back to haunt one denizen of the neighborhood addled by all that's happened since" (2004, 8). Spiegelman uses cartoon characters from newspaper comic strips such as the *Katzen jammer Kids*, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, *Krazy Kat* etc. to exclaim in amazement, "I tell you, some of those century-old crumbling newspaper pages seem like they were drawn yesterday" (Spiegelman 2004, unpaginated). The old cartoon characters never die, they never outlive their relevance in speaking to any time, this time. Spiegelman uses half of his graphic novel to reprint panels from old comic strips. Spiegelman's own recounting of 9/11 covers about half of the book (10 pages) followed by 6 full pages of old comic strips, signs of the cartoonist's inability to find an adequate vocabulary to respond to the present. Even though the two sections of the book are clearly separated, the latter half spills onto earlier sections. Rudolph DirK's anti authoritarian Katzenjammer Kids appear as twins wearing the twin towers as hats on their heads, running wildly as their hats were on fire (2004, 2; 5). Spiegelman appears as the father in George Mcmanus's *Bringing Up Father*, fighting with his wife who cannot sleep because Spiegelman watches CNN all night and who wakes Spiegelman up with the blaring radio in the morning (the radio and the fact that her face suddenly changes into Osama bin Laden) (2004, 8).

The six page Comic Supplement prints comics from the early 1900's. On one *Glorious Fourth of July* in 1902 (Plate IV) grandpa is shown reading the Declaration of Independence. The distracted audience chatters on oblivious to grandpa's words. Grandpa is shown blowing up the podium on which the audience sits to get them to pay more attention to his pronouncements. One of the Frenchmen in the audience is shown exclaiming: "I detest the Fourth of July!" Clearly, Spiegelman uses the old comic strips to ventilate his own grievances on the nature of American democracy. And again, Spiegelman also comments on the uncanny repetition of time, its disjointedness. No linear narrative can explain this time, any time.

Another comic strip from the New York American titled *Bringing Up Father*, shows father travelling to Italy. Father is perturbed to see the Leaning tower of Pisa, ignorant of the fact that the tower is supposed to be titled. Anxiously, he asks for help to support it least it fall on his head. All night father worries about the tower falling on his head. He wakes up in the wee hours of the morning to erect a structure beside the tower so that it does not fall. They show father sleeping peacefully only after that. Father's haunting by the Leaning tower is reminiscent of Spiegelman himself who days after Sep. 11 still saw the towers repeatedly falling down. Nothing seems real except the reality of an imminent catastrophe.

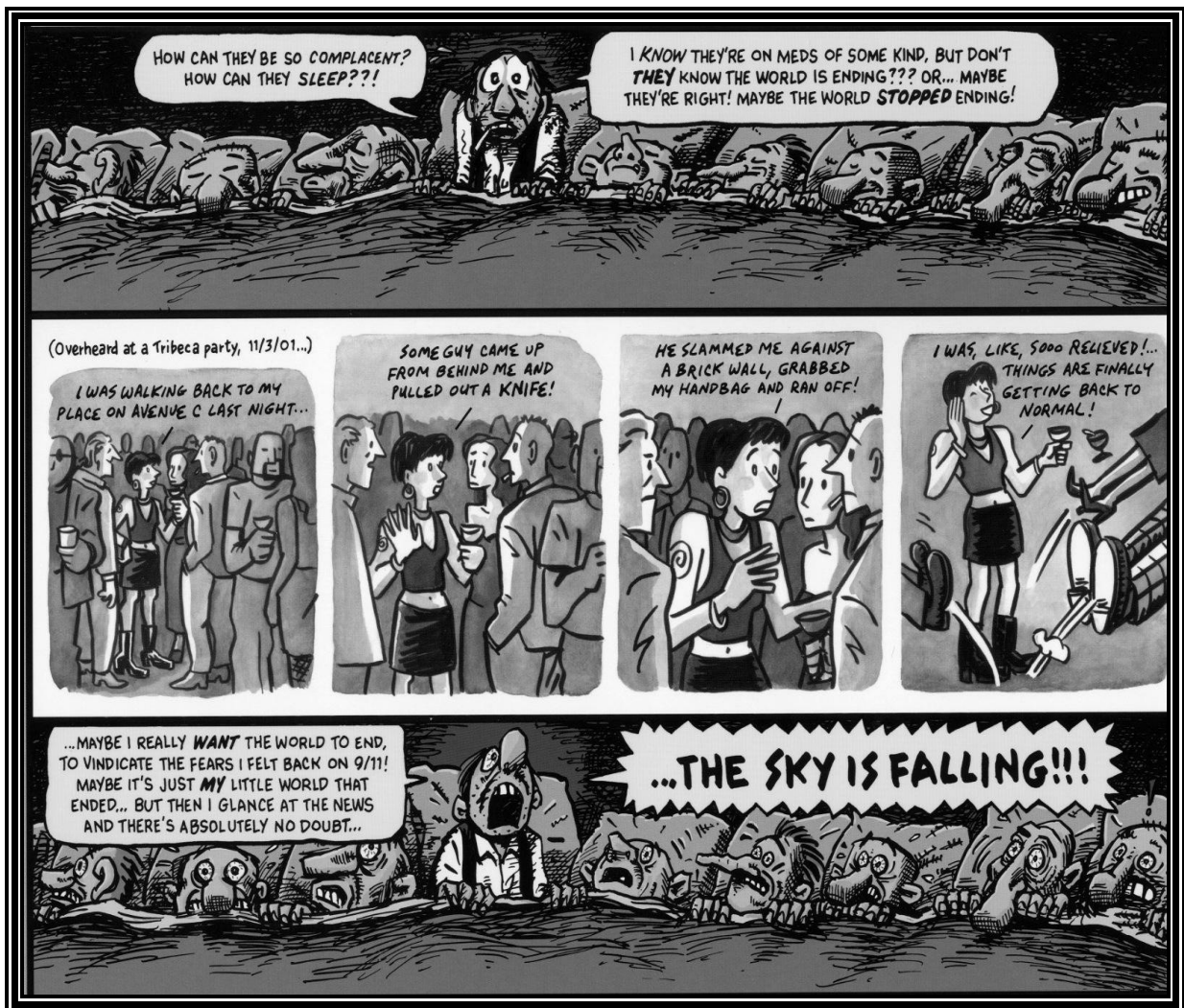


Figure 17⁹⁶

Spiegelman's use of old ghosts in conversation with the new is a comment on the repetition of time, rather than a teleological progression. Derrida writes, "Given that a *revenant* is always called upon to come and to come back, the thinking of the specter, contrary to what good sense leads us to believe, signals toward the future. It is a thinking of the past, a legacy that can come only from that which has not yet arrived—from the *arrivant* itself" (1994,196). Like Derrida, Spiegelman exclaims, "Enter the ghosts, exit the ghosts, enter the ghosts" (Derrida 1994, 196).

⁹⁶ Source: Spiegelman 2004, 9.

Derrida establishes the relevance of Marxism today by invoking the image of the specter. The specter is never old or outdated. Also, the specters illuminate by their non-earthly glow the investments in deeming a project old or outdated. Old comics, to Spiegelman, function in a similar manner. Belonging to the past, they are a part of the present and the future. They unwrap our present with intricate anachrony, shaking our previously held securities and supports.

Conclusion:

Specters are still haunting, not only in Europe and not only of communism. Our contemporary society is still a "society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange...like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world that he has called up by his spells (Marx and Engels [1888] 1973: 72). The task then remains to follow the ghosts and spells of power in order to tame this sorcerer and conjure otherwise (Gordon 1997, 28).

Spiegelman's use of ghostly politics operates on multiple levels and provides a rich reservoir to theorize on transformative politics today. Our study of Spiegelman's ghost images lets us draw certain characteristic features of haunting.⁹⁷ First, ghosts import a charged strangeness in the place they haunt, thus unsecuring the propriety and property lines that mark a sphere of activity or knowledge. To Spiegelman, New York would never remain the same. The ghosts opened up the symbolism of 9/11 and situated it on a much wider spatial location. Secondly, the ghost is also a symptom of what is missing. It gives notice not only to itself but also to what it represents. The ghost towers of 9/11 were representative icons of both advanced capitalism and its disarray. On the same point, the ghost also simultaneously

⁹⁷ See Avery Gordon's (1997) discussion of haunting. I do recognize that to attribute "characteristic" features to ghosts is an oxymoron. The features that I elaborate on are specific to Spiegelman's ghosts, and other subversive ghosts, recognizing that even this specificity is for analytical convenience.

represents a future possibility and hope. Derrida calls this spirit (in the context of the spirit of Marxism) a "messianic affirmation," "a certain experience of the promise that one can try to liberate from any dogmatism and even from any metaphysico-religious determination, from any messianism" (Derrida 1994, 89). The spirit represents a promise to be kept, to produce new effective forms of action and practice and so forth. In Spiegelman, we see the spirit operating in his stringent critique of the present US government and efforts to move out of its circle of violence. Third, operating between the realm of the living and the dead, the ghost is a-live. We are in relation to it and it has designs on us, such that we must reckon with it graciously, attempting to offer it a hospitable memory out of a concern for justice (out of a concern for justice which is inspirational for the ghost and for us). The need for justice in relation to the ghost cannot be a static concept, obtained in one stroke for all times. Justice is in process and always haunted. To Spiegelman, the reaction of the US government to 9/11 was inherently problematic and created new ghosts in search of justice. Operating without rules, the specters are a "state of exception." Appearing within and beyond a political state of exception which violates the rule of law, specters showcase a subversive un-ruliness as counter-image to the political sovereigns functioning without democratic rules.

Specters have haunted many since 9/11. Robin Morgan in response to 9/11 writes: "The ghosts stretch out their hands. Now you know, they weep, gesturing at the carefree, insulated, indifferent, golden innocence that was my country's safety, arrogance, and pride. Why should it take such horror to make you see? The echoes sigh, Oh please do you finally see?" (In Hawthorne et al. 2003, 50). For writers such as Morgan the ghosts implore change by urging us to see beyond the lure of safety. Specters have increased their political relevance after 9/11. In this

chapter I have hoped to have demonstrated that conversing with specters is subversive and democratic in the political climate after 9/11 marked by increasing political closures manifested explicitly by measures such as the Patriot Act and declaration of the state of exception, and subtly, by increasing security concerns. Thus specters to me are of positive democratic relevance today. I look at the State as the agent of control and regulation which needs to be haunted by an oppositional ghostly party. However, Žižek would point out that I am leaving out of consideration the way in which "state power is split from within and relies on its own obscene spectral underside" (2000, 313). To Žižek, public state apparatuses are always supplemented by their shadowy double consisting of unwritten rules, institutions, practices and so forth. Žižek points out that today, we should not forget that the series of publicly invisible agents leading a spectral half-existence includes the entire white supremacist underground (2000, 313). Thus, from Žižek's analysis we learn that the problem is not simply that those who are marginalized lead a spectral existence because of being excluded from the regime; the problem is that this regime itself, in order to survive has to rely on a whole gamut of mechanisms whose status is spectral, disavowed, excluded from the public domain (2000,314). After hearing Žižek, can I still conclude that specters are of positive democratic value?



Figure 18⁹⁸

Zizek's pointer helps me to further nuance my conception of specter-ular democracy. I had refrained from making a distinction between good ghosts and bad ghosts. Even after listening to Zizek, I refrain from such a distinction as that would severely compromise the complexity at hand. In fact, now, I go even further to attest that a democracy needs to have spectral visitations in order to remain democratic, regardless of the ethical nature of the spectral visitor. The specter cannot have "a" nature. Nor should we think of specters in the singular. By not recognizing those that operate between the living and the dead, we give importance to only the living and the dead. Would it serve our democratic purpose to consider the neo-Nazis or the remnants of the Ku Klux Klan as either living or dead? Only by recognizing

⁹⁸ Source: <http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/images/blbushdubcula.htm>

them as specters can we remain eternally vigilant to their re-appearance. Only then can we stop them from living.

Specter-cular democracy recognizes the importance of being alert to incessant haunting. It forbids a cementing or a closure to democratic workings. My conception of specter-cular democracy is based on un-securing ourselves. If we are to have any hope for the future predicated on democracy we must develop a post-ontological position based on un-security. To many, un-security invokes images of chaos and violence. Maybe, it is our carefully crafted ontological need for security that results in violence. Earlier, in Chapter 2, I discussed Judith Butler's emphasis on the "undoing" of identity in response to 9/11. The "undoing" of identity refers to disentangling the normative cages that contain us within bounded parameters and spheres of action. "Undoings" inspire unleashing the vitality in ourselves, initiating ontological ekstasis. The politics of un-security that I discuss in this chapter involves the self and others in a similar kind of politics, situated within the political realm. "Undoing" identity does not refer to a loss of identity, a loss of a sense of "I" and "We," but rather it implores us to take responsibility for an "I" and "We" that is crafted on exclusion and violence. The politics of "un-security" is based on a similar ethical demand. Un-securing ourselves does not mean living in insecurity, yanking away the floating devices which keep us from sinking in a materially structured world. It entails a careful interrogation of our security mechanisms, a deconstruction of what makes us feel/be secured. This deconstruction necessitates taking into account the many effects of security politics whereby feeling secured always has a political trade-off of de-politicization, and passivism under increasing surveillance mechanism that secure us in the first place. The politics of un-security that I celebrate would endow political actors with increased buoyancy of

the self, dislodge them, shake them, inspire them to travel beyond comfortable zones towards exploring different potentials in the self and others. Un-securing ourselves is a politically productive undoing, an undoing from passive citizenship towards mobile activism. Un-securing ourselves is based on an ontological and epistemological dislocation, a "hauntology" rather than a static sense of ontological fixity and immobility.

The "hauntology" that I have discussed in this chapter, through Spiegelman's encounter with the ghost towers involved itself with the politics of un-security in a specific way. Spiegelman's repeated conversations with the ghost towers involve him moving beyond the containment of the security state. His political stance is clearly partisan, an explicit criticism. But Spiegelman, does not entrench himself on one side of the barricade, in stringent opposition. Rather, he stubbornly keeps questioning our politics and the violence that emanates from any containment. His post-modernism is anarchical. Anarchy does not have to be violent.⁹⁹ It instead, could showcase a mode of being and becoming that moves away from systemic violence by un-securing us from only "a" certain way of doing and thinking. I consider anarchy democratic because of its necessary open-endedness, its embrace of excess, and its endeavor to move beyond the scripted vocabulary of the present. When thinking of anarchy, why do we ascribe strict rules to its functioning and associate it with negative, violent politics? Why do we bind an ideology that seeks to function without rules, to rule bound specifications? Am I seeking to defend the need for new anarchy in a post 9/11 world as responsible politics? I am asking us to reconceptualize democratic functioning by thinking through scripts that bind us to a vicious

⁹⁹ For example, Gandhi identified himself as an anarchist. In Gandhi's view, violence is the source of social problems, and the State is the manifestation of this violence. Hence he argued that that state is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least.

circle of violence. This spirit to question rules and seek to enlarge democratic parameters has to be married to the anarchic spirit of violating the boundaries of the present.

The democratic politics heralded by the spectacle of the specter also situates its significance in unveiling the potential of visual politics as resistance. In the first section of this chapter I discussed Hobbes's *Leviathan* as the prototype of liberal politics that formulates politics as placid spectatorship, followed by Foucault's analysis of the "empire of the gaze," the all-penetrating surveillance that encodes us in its image. In a similar tone, Debord and Giroux discuss their suspicion of the spectacle, which stultifies subjects in capitalism's political interests. My analysis of the spectacle of the specter via Derrida's theoretical impetus and Spiegelman's images has highlighted the subversive potential in vision, its capacity to haunt, its endeavor to inspire democratic spectatorship as active resistance. Ghosts are a-live. They constitute the living dead and push us towards conceptualizations, beyond dualisms, beyond safety. Working in complex companionship with trauma and memory, ghosts de-ossify and shake us from a comfortable reconciliation. Ghosts are primarily visual, and in this "seeing" I discern political agency, the ability to move through the paralysis affected by terror.

The specter makes specter-ular democracy possible. Spectral violations unsettle us and prove our conceptions of ourselves being safe and untouchable as inherently false. By stealthily flitting in and out of our carefully erected, supposedly impermeable security corpus, specters make us question our essentializations about "us" and "them," "living" and "dead," our ideological figurations. There is always something not known, or anticipated, invisible and unrecognized. Specters make us realize that essentializations are a security, a false security that needs to be

periodically shaken. Specter-ular democracy or a democracy that seeks to constantly recognize specters is a democracy in process, in vitalic movement against a 9/11 Leviathan.

The 9/11 Leviathan arrogantly proclaimed that "divided we stand," mirroring the "divided we stand" symbolism noted by Eric Darton in his book about the World Trade Center (1999, *Divided We Stand: A Biography of New York's World Trade Center*). In contrast, specter-ular democracy implores the importance to take responsibility and shatter the mirror of the present by not willing to reflect from it.¹⁰⁰

I weep for a city and a world. Instead, I cling to a different loyalty, affirming my un-flag, my un-anthem, my un-prayer—the defiant un-pledge of a madwoman who also had mere words as her only tools in a time of ignorance and carnage, Virginia Woolf: "As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."

If this is treason, may I be worthy of it.

In mourning—and in absurd, tenacious hope (Robin Morgan in Hawthorne et al. 2003, 24).

¹⁰⁰ Specters do not reflect on a mirror.

Chapter 5

(In) Conclusion

The Wolf and the Lamb
The strong are always best at proving they're right.
Witness the case we're now going to cite.
A Lamb was drinking, serene,
At a brook running clear all the way.
A ravenous Wolf happened by, on the lookout for prey,
Whose sharp hunger drew him to the scene.
"What makes you so bold as to muck up my beverage?"
This creature snarled in rage.
"You will pay for your temerity!"
"Sire," replied the Lamb, "let not Your Majesty
Now give in to unjust ire,
But rather do consider, Sire:
I'm drinking—just look—
In the brook
Twenty feet farther down, if not more,
And therefore in no way at all, I think,
Can I be muddying what you drink."
"You're muddying it!" insisted the cruel carnivore.
"And I know that last year you spoke ill of me."
"How could I do that? Why I'd not even come to be,"
Said the Lamb. "At the dam's teat I still nurse."
"If not you, then your brother. All the worse."
"I don't have one." "Then it's someone else in your clan,
For to me you're all of you a curse;
You, your dogs, your shepherds to a man.
So I've been told; I have to pay you all back."
With that, deep into the wood
The Wolf dragged and ate his midday snack.
So trial and judgment stood.
(La Fontaine, quoted in Derrida 2005, x).

Derrida uses this fable from La Fontaine to preface his book on Rogue States. Written in the aftermath of 9/11, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (2005) provides a hard-hitting commentary on current democratic politics which follows the (ill) logic of the wolf and lamb fable. Iraq was declared a "rogue state," Saddam Hussein called the "beast of Baghdad" by

Washington and London, and subsequently bombed (or carried deep into the wood). The word "rogue" traces its lineage from Spenser and Shakespeare to refer to unprincipled people, outlaws. This description is extended to animals to describe a wild animal such as a rogue elephant. Derrida argues that the classification of other States as "rogues," starting from Clinton's administration to the present in talking about Iraq, Nicaragua, Cuba, North Korea, Iran etc., is the very characteristic of Rogue States: "The first and most violent of rogue states are those that have ignored and continue to violate the very international law they claim to champion, the law in whose name they speak and in whose name they go to war against so-called rogue states each time their interests so dictate. The name of these states? The United States" (Derrida 2005, 96). Derrida exemplifies his theory on Rogue States through the fable of the wolf and the lamb. In a similar vein I have used Spiegelman's cartoons to illustrate my endeavor to re-think the feminist democratic imagination, understand its transgressive potential in confronting contemporary politics. While Derrida uses the fable to describe, to illustrate succinctly, graphically, and reductively the situation at hand, I use cartoons to do all the above, and also, provide inspiration for change. The simplicity in the medium of the fable, its pithy maxim, is not similar to a cartoon which though simple is not as didactic, not as spelt out. Here, I refer to Spiegelman's genre (or defiance of the genre) of cartooning. The confluence of image and text in a cartoon plays with the imagination in a unique way to provide a space to visualize a reformulation of reality, against the often prescriptive quality of fables. Both cartoons and fables are fictional with an acidic potential to clarify a situation, humans stripped down to their essence, reduced to their pith. Animals are anthropomorphized in both cartoons and fables, both essentially posited as fictional, against factual reality. The usage of such fictions, by Derrida,

and in my dissertation, the telling of stories, help en(lighten) reality's narrative and its fictional character. The "fictive" enables me to blur boundaries (between the fictional and non-fictional) without burning bridges.

I use fictive images to exemplify my theoretical position which insists that the question of style is intrinsically related to the politics I propose. Spiegelman's cartoons harmonize with my project when his style of cartooning becomes the art of undoing identity, when his uncharacteristically heavy cartoon book symbolizes the weighty issue at hand, when his animal images showcase the need to un-human ourselves to forge an ethical response to terror, and when his ghost images urge us to keep seeking democracy, the promise to be. Spiegelman also exists apart from my dissertation. I could only naively hope to capture him fully, which is not my intention or goal. I use Spiegelman's work for my project to chart a different pathway from logocentric philosophy, to use the tools of theory, instead of being used by them. Or in other words as Braidotti writes, "I would much rather fictionalize my theories, theorize my fictions, and practice philosophy as a form of conceptual creativity" (1994, 37).

In this dissertation I analyze Spiegelman's use of image and text, his post-modern style of cartooning, to argue for the undoing of polarizing forms of identity as a response to 9/11. The "amplification through simplification" seen in cartooning bares issues to their glowing bones, strips pretenses, lays bare the facade of normalization. It extols us to ask, what is the image of violence, what is its text? How is race, gender, age, disability, imaged and through what discourse? I emphasize playing with image and text to unwrap the many layers of close-minded identity thinking and move towards an identity that acknowledges patterns of identification and relationality. Earlier (in the second chapter), I had used a quote from Robert Harvey to

demonstrate the multifaceted nature of cartoons: "Comics...are sometimes four -legged and sometimes two-legged and sometimes fly and sometimes don't" (1996. 20). Here, after a flight with Spiegelman's cartoons, his four legged and two legged images, I also state that his cartoons image comic politics, de-humanized politics that only a flight of fancy can represent. Our politics too, though dominated by the two legged is comic nonetheless, horrifically comic in its adherence to the "politics of zoo-keeping" as the basis of democracy.¹⁰¹

In my exploration of cartoons and its two legged protagonist in the process of becoming four-legged, I stressed the urgency of moving beyond bureaucratic thinking, moving from Aristotle to embrace Deleuze, and thereby moving from polis to noumas. While the polis operates with borders, the noumas is an open space, without enclosures. Feminist transnational politics in its endeavor to move beyond the bounds of singular national politics and form effective bonds across borders has to make this imaginative move, unscript itself from parochial thinking towards an expansion of thought and action. As Spiegelman demonstrated in his bordering of every page with ghost images of the twin towers, our borders are haunted by exclusions and investments. I urged us to un-secure ourselves from security mechanisms that anchor us securely within a regime of violence. Unless we find the means to divest ourselves of polarized identity thinking we will remain complicit with the Leviathan State's regime of violence. Instead, I celebrated specter-cular democracy which would speak to the need for democratic politics after 9/11, not by a didactic closure, but through open-ness and productive haunting which enable us to move ahead, not by forgetting the memory of the past, but by recognizing it to be a-live. Next, I elaborate on my conception of specter-cular democracy which incorporates

¹⁰¹ I use Benjamin Barber's (1984) concept of the "politics of zoo-keeping" in Chapter 3 to refer to liberal democratic politics which manages its citizen body in closely guarded cages.

the major thematic ideas developed in this dissertation. My conception of specter-cular democracy is drawn towards the needs of feminist democratic politics in speaking to our contemporary times.

Specter-cular democracy works with a spectacular democratic ethos, in constant dialogue with specters of the past, and with the vision to forge forward to the needs of the times. I argue for a democratic image (ination) vibrantly alive and ebullient, conscious of its processual quality, and tuned to a constant process of becoming. De-limiting feminist politics to legislative proceduralism greatly restricts its spirit and purpose. Following democratic procedures, laboring for electoral representation and using the existing laws to bargain for rights and equality is an indispensable part of feminist politics, even today. However, we do need to expand our domain for action, imaginatively think towards an expansion, rather than remain in the vicious circle of the present, using its tools, remaining in its orbit. I emphasize the need to celebrate politics rather than see it solely in utilitarian terms; recognize the buoyancy in democratic politics without reducing it to the pursuit of new legislative measures.¹⁰² Doing feminist politics has a responsibility beyond simply solving problems for the time-being. It must also take responsibility to delve further, burrow deeper in order to reap and sow for this time,

¹⁰² I was troubled with the luxury that I saw in my work. How could a dissertation that worked with cartoons, animals, and ghosts hope to speak to important politics like poverty and violence? Was I celebrating triviality, at what costs, and also was this project a betrayal of my own "third world" roots? I am much indebted to Wendy Brown in helping me see the value of my project, precisely in speaking to the fears I had in mind. In our conversation (2007), she quoted Audre Lorde and pointed out "poetry is not a luxury," imaginative reformulations is radical politics, and critically indispensable for feminist politics. Yes, indeed, "poetry is not a luxury": For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives" (Lorde 1984, 36-39). Wendy Brown's use of Lorde to make me see the value of my project was illuminating beyond measure.

every time. Specter-ular democracy is utopian and deconstructive. I consider both values to be indispensable in thinking about democracy as a political project.

The usually prosaically somber Derrida talks about the "multicolored beauty of democracy" in tracing the lineage of the term from Plato. To Derrida, "Democracy seems—and this is its appearing, if not its appearance and its simulacrum—the most beautiful (*kalliste*), the most seductive of constitutions" (2005, 26). Derrida compares democracy to the colors in a peacock, diverse, variable, whimsical, complicated (2005, 26). Siding with Plato, Derrida announces that "democracy" is neither the name of a regime, nor a constitution, "it is not a constitutional form among others"¹⁰³ (2005, 26). Thinking about democracy in Derrida's terms is utopian and deconstructive as it looks upon democracy as a possibility, an unrealized potential that has to be constantly strived for by unwrapping the supposed presence of democracy as "is" today. Democracy is always "to come." I work with a Derridean conception of democracy and emphasize its relevance for feminist politics. It is to be noted that working with a "democracy to come", does not mean "less democracy to come." Rather, my conception looks upon democracy as a meaning in waiting, not yet presentable, not yet bygone, always coming, in attentiveness to otherness.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Derrida (2005) discusses Plato's description of democracy in the *Republic*. To Derrida, Plato in talking about the democratic man says that each person in a democracy can lead the life he chooses. Thus democracy is not quite a constitution or regime. Rather, it resembles a beautiful, seductive, and brightly colored garment (Derrida 2005, 26). The multicolored beauty of a democracy is of political significance because it particularly arouses the curiosity of women and children. Thus, to Plato (according to Derrida), all those who take after women and children consider democracy the most beautiful. Derrida does not say that Plato is a democrat; instead he uses Plato's description of democracy to draw out his own democracy which is far more than a regime type, or constitutional model.

¹⁰⁴ Romand Coles provides a generous reading of Derrida's democratic project, his resistance to recolonizing interpretations towards the flow of becomings. However, he notes that although Derrida's work addresses "the other," it never really engages with "others," "His textual practice in this regard falls short of his most compelling theoretical calls to engage the 'other headings' "(Coles 2005, xxvi). I do

The question of the "other" is of pivotal concern for feminism. "woman" is constructed as the "other" to man, culture, and associated entitlements. Feminism has rallied furiously to break through the binary of man/woman which has spilled into other binaries, and vice-versa, such as civilized/uncivilized where the "other" to the dominant is feminized, subjugated, and needs to be rescued. My dissertation has engaged with binary thinking at multiple levels, man/animal, living/dead, serious/non-serious, attempted to deconstruct its meaning, emphasized their workings as discursive fictions, and worked towards reconfigurations where we don't remain trapped within these binaries. Zizek, rightly points out that a specter is haunting western academia, "...the spectre of the Cartesian subject. All academic powers have entered into a holy alliance to exorcize this spectre:...Where is the academic orientation which has not been accused by its opponents of not yet properly disowning the Cartesian heritage? And, which has not hurled back the branding reproach of Cartesian subjectivity against its more 'radical' critics, as well as its 'reactionary' adversaries?" (1999, 1). Feminist Deep Ecologists see in the Cartesian dualism the basis for the ruthless exploitation of nature, and Feminist post-modernists see modernity's violence wrapped in the Cartesian dualism. Critiques of post-modern feminists see the post-modern emphasis on a gender-less, sex-less diaspora as a male patriarchal formation, simply a re-iteration of the dualism under a language game, proving Zizek's statement as indicative of feminist scholarship.

recognize that Derrida seldom engages with others outside European philosophy, but, I also want to emphasize that the "other" works in Derrida's projects, less as physical entities, and more in the sense of the marginal to the dominant as his work on animals suggests. Coles though, does not simply critique, but provides us with a book that actively uses the Derridean paradigm in harmony with feminists of color to forge a democratic ethos characterized by "tension-dwelling" (2005). I take Derrida, and Coles as inspiration in my endeavor to think about a Derridean feminist project. Perhaps, Derrida's utility resides in the space where "Every single other is received without being captured" (Lawlor 2007, 119).

As I have noted earlier, binaries are also dominant in our contemporary political rhetoric, dividing "us" from "them," justifying violence against the "other." In my dissertation I emphasized the need to play with binaries, not a politics of post-binary, but one that does not take it seriously, emphasizes its fluid, fictional nature. I proposed the politics of "becoming animal" as a counter-ploy to the binary of man/animal. "Becoming animal" exemplifies my mode of tackling the politics of binaries, messing with its borders, un-doing them to emphasize intensive multiplicity. If in the lineage of post-modernism, this is called post-binary or post-identity thinking, I would caution us to use the term "post" with care, to mean not "beyond," but to signify a politics that engages with modernity, binaries, or identity in a critical, irreverent manner. Also, I emphasized the need to take account (ability) of binaries, and borders, where the border hyphenates the binary, acts as the spine and thus keeps the politics of binaries pivoted on a single axis. Without reckoning with borders (geographical and cultural), we cannot hope to fathom the politics of binaries. And thus, my feminism demands that we play with these borders, whether in the name of transnationalism or post-modernism, to display its constructed, fictional nature.

As an answer to the violent politics of binaries and in an effort to overcome its effects, specter-cular democracy is transnational and post-modern. Working with the feminist democratic imagination, transnational feminism is "trans" national, not simply in the literal act of travelling across borders, but in subverting conventions and set patterns of thought and action. Trans-nationalism to me is border-crossing, recognizing the simultaneous habitation of multiple identities and exclusions, and crossing-out borders which restrict expression, recognition, and celebration of individuals, rather than fictional, bounded entities. Transnational feminism is

creative thinking, trespassing, transgressing. As Virginia Woolf once said, "As a woman I have no country, as a woman I want no country, as a woman my country is the whole world." A sense of home-lessness, exile, is celebrated by theorists/writers such as Helen Cixous and Luce Irigaray.¹⁰⁵ Home-lessness and lack of anchoring could be a point of feminist freedom or even its actuality where even being at home does not mean it is theirs to claim.¹⁰⁶ However, I urge us to be attentive to the politics that accompanies homelessness, where not all of us have the luxury of this political choice. Especially, writing during a time of "global civil war" where questions of asylum, refugees, prisoners of war, and forced homelessness are paramount in most of our lives, celebrating homelessness as an ideal for politics requires sensitive qualifications and attentiveness to power politics. The transnationalism that I write about is not homelessness, but the endeavor to find many homes, not an obliteration of specific identities, but an ability to work with its messy and meshed nature without being bounded by only a specific facet of our identifiable existence.

My emphasis on transnationalism is tied with the importance I place on undoing ourselves, unsecuring ourselves from oppressive security mechanisms. However, this association is different from homelessness and more akin to world-travelling and border-crossing. Theorists have worked with sophisticated conceptions of homelessness as freedom, directly connected to

¹⁰⁵ Luce Irigaray in *The Ethics of Sexual Difference* points out that men continually create homes for themselves like in language and in the overall symbolic order. Women, on the other hand, are "homeless" in the symbolic order. Helen Cixous captures her sense of homelessness and hybridity in her description of herself as "jewoman." To Cixous, the experience of being without fatherland, a groundless multiplicity of selves without being bound to a singular identity is a source of her creativity in writing ("We Who Are Free, Are We Free?" (1993).

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Dumm emphasizes the idea of homelessness as an antidote to our loss of freedom in American society (See *Michel Foucault and the Politics of Freedom* 1996). Dumm argues that democracy requires that we leave the security and privacy of our homes and engage fully in a public life without fixity, in full freedom, and homelessness. Broadly, Dumm asks "How can we move freedom from the margins into the centre of an existence that has shut it out as it has shut us in?" (1996, xviii).

the question of security and increasing enclosures, as a result of security becoming the basis of political life (Dumm 1996). I empathize with the levity that the conception of homelessness projects, its unsecuring agenda. However, as an alien or non-immigrant feminist political theorist, I find it very difficult to adopt homelessness as the basis for democratic life; perhaps, it is its literal translation as lack-of-home that I find particularly troubling. Home is also location and as third wave feminists can we afford to reclaim a "universal" home, forget the "politics of location"? Specter-ular democracy works with un-securing ourselves, it being an element in the working of democratization itself. Un-securing ourselves is a process of unscripting ourselves from conditions that keep us apolitically cocooned. It is a process of engaging passionately with micro-politics and macro-politics, not a lack-of-home but of working from/through the home(s).

Why is it that though I herald the Derridean conception of "democracy to come" and "not yet," I cringe from a politics of lack-of-home which might not mean "less home," but a "home to come"? Isn't working with a democracy that is never going to really come, tantamount to being satisfied with a permanent sense of homelessness? If our homes are permanently haunted, can we live in them? And, isn't the politics of "becoming animal" also a question of leaving fixed homes? My conception of specter-ular democracy enjoys ambivalence (not theoretical confusion!). It uses play as a strategy for politics.¹⁰⁷ Thus it worked through cartoons, animals,

¹⁰⁷ How does one assign play a value(s)? What are the terrorists playing with? Trauma, power? How does Spiegelman play with the Holocaust, with 9/11, and still recognize evil? My insistence on the political valence of play does not mean that we hold dear "good" play and throw out "bad" play. Rather, I credit political responsibility to recognition of the complexity of play, its shadows, and its possibilities. Working with play as a strategy for politics means not arriving at a static, all-knowing position, instead it involves working stubbornly towards constitutions and re-constitutions. Nor does it mean discarding an ethical stance and thus playing along-with "evil." Rather, its ethics resides in the ethos it generates of holding tensions alive, a hauntological ethics attentive to alterity and otherness. As I have discussed through the study of Spiegelman's animal and ghost images, play does not involve an ant-foundationalist stance that disregards ethics or a normative goal in politics. Rather, play persistently questions a resting place in ethics

and ghosts to spell itself out. Plowing its way through discursive fictions, it looked at the fictive for playful subversion. The fictive being utopian and deconstructive opened the terrain for different (im)possibilities. Further, I emphasized that visualizing the fictive is an imperative for feminist transnationalism, vesting itself with multiple passports rather than simply one, with adherence to the "disloyalty to civilization" that Adrienne Rich advocated. Specter-cular democracy vests itself on an active, creative feminist imagination, unholy, illegal, and tempestuous.

Now, after a brief summary of my overall project, I return to the questions above. The theoretical posture of "democracy to come" does not melt everything solid into air; it does not base itself on homelessness or its crude translation as a lack of solidity. "Democracy to come" is *based* on and presupposes "...more radically still, more originally, a freedom of play, an opening of indetermination and undecidability in the very concept of democracy, in the interpretation of the democratic" (Derrida 2005, 25). Further, Derrida writes that play opens up democracy, its public space, by granting the right to a change of tone, to irony as well as to fiction, the simulacrum, the secret, literature, and so on (2005, 92). Play opens up the possibility of being in multiple places at the same time, of changing roles, and opens up an expansive space for the political, and for democracy. So it is possible to simultaneously work with the concept of constant becomings, "to come", "not yet," and respect a politics of location, of the need for home. This simultaneity is not the meshing of incompatible theoretical strains, as we have to

and politics. Following Butler I emphasize that "A social theory committed to democratic contestation within a postcolonial horizon needs to find a way to bring into question the foundations it is compelled to lay down" (1995, 41). To me, working with play in politics enables us to question foundations and keep a space open for political contest.

remember that home, location, and identity is multiple, mobile, non-fixed, fluid.¹⁰⁸ "Democracy to come" looks upon democracy as a space for possibilities. Theorizing the home as fluid and non-fixed keeps it open to unseen potentials. It is then in motion and future-oriented. The politics of "becoming animal" is about leaving "fixed" homes, leaving imposed naturalness and oppressive non-change, towards non-fixity and an ensemble of intensities. Playing with "fixed" homes is a prerequisite for feminism in its search for possibilities. The "politics of location" does not mean being static, stagnant, or loyal to one's local roots. Rather, in speaking to the needs of contemporary feminism, we need to reconfigure our conception to recognize mobile locations, move from a sense of being rooted, weighed down, fixed to a point of order, towards rhizomatic existence which unlike a rooted existence grows side-ways, spreading, non-linear, and non-vertical.¹⁰⁹

Feminism cannot afford to hold on to the romanticized notion of home (fixity in bodies, nations, or identities). Today in the age of transnational economy, and terrorism, with immense creativity shown by both, transnational feminism needs to be equally mobile in overturning set conventions. As David Singh Grewal argues in *Network Power*, a core tension in the world is that everything is being globalized except politics (2008). Our commerce, culture, ideas are increasingly coordinated through global conversations; however, our politics remains steeped in the nation. We see an awareness of this disjuncture after 9/11, when even though people around

¹⁰⁸ Kathy Ferguson points out that an argument for multiplicity and undecidability in feminist politics creates a space for "mobile subjectivities" (1993, 158). She emphasizes the need for mobile subjectivities, rather than multiple to avoid the implication of movement from one to another stable resting place, and instead to problematize the resting that one does.

¹⁰⁹ Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the rhizome figuration as providing a departure from linear, hierarchical modes of thinking. They oppose it to an arborescent conception of knowledge, which worked with dualist categories and binary choices. A rhizome works with horizontal and trans-species connections, while an arborescent model works with vertical and linear connections.

the world were appalled by Bush policies, they could not do anything to influence them. When war becomes a mode of production and reproduction, producing subjects in its image as bio-power, when nations are contested and transformed through war in ways that involve racialization and gendering, feminist intervention and activism becomes increasingly urgent (Hawthornthwaite 2008). In speaking to the nature of our global war, feminist politics has to expand creatively, reveal fictional discursive regimes, opportunistic nationalism, and create networks effective in countering the dispersed, "swarm" regimes of terrorism and security politics.¹¹⁰ Our imagination has to take flight to fathom counter-politics, in active pursuit of "real" politics which is complex and messy.

The burning of the twin towers was seen by many to be the fall of American democracy, similar to the burning of the German Parliament in 1933 which produced dictatorship (Wolin 2008). Earlier, I wrote about the visual politics of 9/11, the media-theatricalization that followed the event, as well as the use of the visual by the US government in its war against Iraq, bombs bursting above the streets of Baghdad, the use of visual aesthetics as part of war strategy itself. As feminists we have responsibility not only to interpret these pictures, but also to change them. This endeavor in mind, I used visual tropes to picturize my theory, used Spiegelman's visuals, his picture de (building) to interpret our world building, and imaginatively reconfigure possibilities. Spiegelman's images and their scalding intensity (invoking Laura Marks

¹¹⁰ Hardt and Negri (2004) use the term "swarm intelligence" to describe both the network power of new war methods, and the creative power of the multitude in new network political organizations that resist the global political body of capital. The notion of the "swarm" is derived from the collective behavior of animals, such as ants, bees, and termites, to investigate multi-agent-distributed system of intelligence. Hardt and Negri deviate from the swarm model seen in animal societies to develop their own version of swarm capability as they see it working in new network political organizations. These swarms are composed of creative agents who do not have to become the same to work collectively. In their varied multiplicity, and cooperation/communication, Hardt and Negri see the possibility of democracy to come.

concept of "haptic visuality" discussed in chapter 2) cannot leave us unscathed. Specter-cular democracy is ocular, the use of the visual not as surveillance but as a movement towards democracy. From the fires of 9/11 and the fall of democracy, can emerge the phoenix of democracy, i.e., specter-cular democracy. As feminists when we think of fire we are reminded of death, killing, and destruction. I urge us to re-new ourselves in this fire, let the plastic markers burn away, and visualize a feminist re-generation through fire. Spiegelman exemplifies the ferocity of a politics that can emerge through fire: "His personal recounting gives way to a sort of Blakean rage at the chicanery of subsequent politics, with large, full-color vignettes that explode out of their square frames like the very flames that tore apart the geometry of the twin towers" (Zuber 2006, 270). I used Spiegelman's fiery images to theorize on the possibility of democracy after 9/11. There is no better way to commemorate 9/11 than through democracy a-live.

Commemoration of 9/11 has projected itself in attempts to erect a memorial, do something to keep alive the memory of those lost in 9/11. The seemingly infinite varieties of remembrance have animated every aspect of the tragedy's aftermath. There was the uproar that accompanied the choice of a World Trade Center Memorial, when 13 jurors were sequestered for six months to winnow 5,201 submissions. The process has been inundated with controversy. The proposals for memorialization included building a vertical world garden, International Freedom Center, replica of the towers, etc. The politics of memorialization has to face numerous issues. For example, Gov. George E. Pataki evicted the International Freedom Center from the site, because victims' relatives asserted that its aesthetic dishonored their

loved ones' memory.¹¹¹ No concrete memorialization seems to suffice in the face of the raw emotions that define the issue.¹¹²

9/11 demands a counter-monument, not an identity nurturing, supposedly fixed and permanent fixture, but, one that brazenly challenges the basis of our beings, provokes becomings.¹¹³ Memorialization through monuments is not sufficient in itself. Many monuments remain what Derrida would call "possible" mourning, or that which interiorizes within us the image of that which is dead, and lives only in us. On the other hand, "impossible" mourning refuses to take the other within oneself as some narcissism, and engages in a continued conversation with the dead (Derrida 2001). "Impossible" mourning is transformative and regenerative. Memory demands a politics that marches to the future and does not remain ossified in the past. Much like Benjamin's angel of history that moves towards the future, with his/her face turned towards the past, feminists re-configure politics after 9/11, learning from the past, moving to the future.¹¹⁴ Or as Butler notes, "If we are interested in arresting cycles of violence

¹¹¹ The International Freedom Center was conceived as a space to show exhibits on America's commitment to democracy and freedom. The space would showcase not only the events of 9/11, but other relevant moments in American history like the civil rights movement. The family's who suffered 9/11 however, insisted that nothing should be shown on ground-zero that did not solely focus on the terror attacks and the death of almost 3000 people at the site. The plan for the International Freedom Center was consequently aborted in the face of increasing criticism from the public.

¹¹² See Devin Zuber, "Flanerie at Ground Zero: Aesthetic Counter-memories in Lower Manhattan," 2006.

¹¹³ James Young (2000) discusses the politics of memorialization in post-holocaust Germany: How do we remember events? What is the correct way to memorialize that honors the lives lost and the memory of the tragedy?

¹¹⁴ Laurie Anderson's song "the Dream Before" (for Walter Benjamin) uses the figure of the angel of history to talk to the present.

Hansel and Gretel are alive and well
And they're living in Berlin
She is a cocktail waitress
He had a part in a Fassbinder film
And they sit around at night now
Drinking schnapps and gin

to produce less violent outcomes, it is no doubt important to ask what, politically, might be made of grief besides a cry for war" (2004, xii). Endeavors to move outside the cycle of violence are the most effective memorialization, to think through the injury, decipher the mechanics of violence, and move out of its containment. Here, I worked towards picturizing the violence, theorizing the pictures, playing with the bounded legitimacy of normalized pictures, and using fictive pictures to arrest the cycle of violence. To me, this is the ethical and political responsibility of memory.

The photograph below shows three earthen pots facing a barbed wire fence/border. I have always been very intrigued by this image as it in a way frames my dissertation, reduces it to its core. I choose to use a photograph rather than a cartoon to conclude my dissertation. Speaking against didactic close-endedness, my frames are fluid. This is not primarily a question of cartoons, or photographs, or paintings, or poetry, but, a question of the human, his/her

And she says: Hansel, you're really bringing me down
And he says: Gretel, you can really be a bitch
He says: I've wasted my life on our stupid legend
When my one and only love
Was the wicked witch.
She said: what is history?
And he said: history is an angel
Being blown backwards into the future
He said: history is a pile of debris
And the angel wants to go back and fix things
To repair the things that have been broken
But there is a storm blowing from paradise
And the storm keeps blowing the angel
Backwards into the future.
And this storm, this storm
is called
Progress (Anderson quoted in Braidotti 1994, 280).

politics which involves imaging oneself and others through markers of identity which obfuscate relationality and emphasize otherness and violence.



Figure 19¹¹⁵

The three clay pots speak the politics of cartoons, animals, and ghosts, confronting boundedness/boundaries, border-crossing. Simple and elemental, the materialness of the empty pots caricature ornamental fictions, grandiose performances of identity and being. Not dual, but a non-violent solitary army composed of the trilogy, looks insolently at the barbed border. But,

¹¹⁵ Source: Photo by Alexa Schriempf 2005.

they don't mirror violence, with violence. Instead, through their hollowness resonates irreverence, a play with reality. Rather than mirrors which reflect exact images, prisms, are three-dimensional figures that break up a beam of white light into a rainbow of colors, similar to the politics of cartoons, animals, and ghosts. The pots play the music of subversion. The pots contain the ability to contain within themselves the antidote to fire (water). Stripped of pretences, the pots are a necessity. Yes, they can break, falter, and crumble, but they do so in ecological, systemic harmony.

In my dissertation, I worked with, and with the aim of, a feminist political theory that can creatively look through the present and towards the future. Feminist political theory is a site for transformations, responsive to spaces of becomings. It heralds the feminist democratic imagination, its rhizomatic contours. Proclaiming greater livability as its agenda, it is its incessant questioning. If taxation without representation is tyranny, representation without taxation is irresponsibility (Mitchell 1994, 421). The feminist political imagination, taxes (non-capitalistically) our representations, displays the unequal profits of fixed representations, makes our minds travel to alternate schemes, and works stubbornly with the yearning for democracy, fictively, passionately, persistently.

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