



Penetrating the Skinscape of Rajiv Joseph's *Gruesome Playground Injuries*

By Karin Waidley

The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves... and while the intimacy of a fully developed private life... will always greatly intensify and enrich the whole scale of subjective emotions and private feelings, this intensification will always come at the expense of the assurance of the reality of the world and men.

— Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*¹

Touch exceeds language's significability.

— Erin Manning, *The Politics of Touch*²

Gruesome Playground Injuries, Rajiv Joseph's 39-page play, is quite brief in comparison to his opus *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* or his surreal narrative *Animals Out of Paper*. The casual reader might assume that brevity equals simplicity; however, this play is far from a simple two-hander. In "Landscapes of Emergency," critic and philosopher Rebecca Solnit states: "The body is where private and public collide... Skin mediates two universes. The gates of this border are significant and often profoundly disturbing—the places where self-containment ceases either to be contained or to be self."³ As Solnit observes, Joseph's play moves beyond its

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 50.

² Erin Manning, *The Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 86.

³ Rebecca Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent: On Landscape, Gender, and Art* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 173.

“skinscape,” deep into another realm, and well past where the bodies of the characters first form their imagined and then physicalized universes in performance.⁴

Joseph vies for an offstage-but-still-onstage acting time and space. Per his request, all “injuries” and costume changes must happen leisurely, in full view of the audience—the labor of making and remaking wounds that appear, disappear, and re-appear is the responsibility of the actors playing Doug and Kayleen, the characters upon whose bodies these gruesome injuries happen. He complicates this dramaturgical dilemma with the passage of time. The “kids,” as Joseph colloquially calls the only two characters in the play (despite the fact that they are approaching middle age by its conclusion), begin their harmful friendship at age eight, move forward 15 years in the next scene, and then back 10 the next. Marching through the play with this erratic chronology, continuity is not built from time moving forward but from the consistency of the characters’ wounds and the scars that follow. If Doug has blown out his eye at age 23, he must wear a patch at age 28 but none at age 13; in this way, the audience comes to understand that the scene that happens *after* the injury has been seen in the scene before.

Doug and Kayleen spend thirty chaotic years this way, loving and torturing each other in perhaps equal measure. Joseph’s brief play digs deeply into their wounds, first fostered on the playground, to expose what has festered and scarred there across this large expanse of time. Self-inflicted sickness or injury inflicted on the other does occur, including the mixing of the kids’ vomit in the school nurse’s wastebasket when they are eight, or the cutting of Doug’s

⁴ I borrow this term from Erin Manning’s *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*, specifically in her chapter “Making Sense of the Incommensurable: Experiencing Democracy.” She uses “skinscape” as a synonym of “living toward death,” where something yet-to-come can be generated from destruction. I also define this term loosely as the connection or signifying border where the body meets and interacts with its physical world. I will elaborate on “skin” as a penetrable, metaphorical, and re-signifying border for Doug and Kayleen—and the play itself—throughout the paper. Manning, *Politics of Touch*, 114.

inner thigh in Kayleen's bedroom when they are 16. But the bulk of the *Gruesome* trauma happens "offstage," in a space of unseen time, a sort of chronotope of un-appearance. This unseen site is rife with the processual destruction of each character's corporeality for the sake of the other and for the audience: there, eyes and teeth are blown out; skin and stomachs are cut; bodies are electrocuted and backs broken. The dramatic action, then, depicts the after-effects of the physical and emotional crises but not the violence itself, ghosted outward from the chronotopic unseen scenes.

This playing space of un-appearance can and should be engaged as a central action of *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, coming alive somewhere past the point where characters meld into their host actors just off from center stage, as they shed clothing and injuries to prepare themselves for the next scene. In fact, Joseph requests this when he states in his author's note, "There is no need to hide any of this from the audience."⁵ However, Joseph leaves the mechanics of his directive up for interpretation. This essay demonstrates a successful approach to this directive, activating the engaged space/time of un-appearance to counter the stage where the "real" action emerges. Like Foucault's heterotopia,⁶ this chronotopic counter-site inverts, refracts, and provokes what is found in its mirrored image onstage. Perhaps more importantly in dominant culture, it inhabits it with a very specific choice: casting not one, but two Dougs and two Kayleens.

Two male actors play Doug and two female actors play Kayleen. On performance night, one principal is Doug while the second Doug assists his other "self" with the costume and makeup changes. On alternate nights, they switch. The same happens with the Kayleens, all

⁵ Rajiv Joseph, *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2012), 4.

⁶ For more on Foucault's heterotopia, please see "Of Other Spaces" in *Diacritics* 16.1 (Spring 1986), 22-27.

done under the watchful eye of the audience as per Joseph's production requirement. But the two characters onstage also exist under the gaze of the two "other" actors, present just offstage, as they, too, never leave the performance site/sight. In this way, they become caretakers of their "other" in the space of unseen time passing and unobserved injuries happening. In this landscape of un-appearance and the relationships forged and found within it, borders between onstage and offstage dissolve, giving primacy to that which occurs "out of sight." At the same time, this duality assaults the borders of the skin and its contained identities in order to topple hierarchies of value that culturally place work over labor and prioritize heteronormativity. This space sanctifies and activates same gender-platonic intimacy rarely witnessed beyond the private realm. The "making" of art that happens in this space results in acts of violence that are no longer gruesome, but generative.

The production choice described above, which I employed in 2014 at Western State Colorado University, flays open the play, exposing layers not at first visible. By alternating actors playing the same role, the characters' "others" knit together a continuum with their double. On a practical level, relationships are built on assisting with the intricate costume and makeup changes each actor knows intimately because these alterations are also theirs. Each character's "other" becomes the stand-in for an actual mirror to measure their double's injuries against. The "other" proceeds with meticulous precision in applying and masking wounds, acting as a custodian who cares for the skin that nightly must be tended, rent, and mended. In this particular choice, *two selves* exist offstage tending to *one body* that emerges onstage. These doubles work together to contain the vital parts that seep through the wounds inflicted by the injurious relationship building onstage. Like Solnit describes above, through tending to

the borders of the skin, these four actors stitch together two universes—of Doug and Kayleen, of the real and the fictional, and of onstage and off. Erin Manning names this phenomenon in a different context as a “politics of touch,” where the act of touching moves beyond physical corporeality to the body (or bodily) politic, writing: “Bodies can be regulated, certainly, but bodies relate always beyond or in spite of these regulations, reciprocally, and this is their politics, a politics of touch that operates always, in some sense, in excess of the national body-politic.”⁷ Through the performative act of touching an “other’s” skin in this contiguous private and public realm, socially constructed norms of how one body’s gender “should” relate to their mirrored self comes up for review, resignification, and re- or *deregulation*.

This space of un-appearance is rife for resignification and deregulation due to the nature of its merged private/public realm. Hannah Arendt spends much of *The Human Condition* defining not only the distinction but also the slippage between the private and the public. Her focus is on political action, yet she pulls from theatre to analogically describe what she calls the “space of appearance.” Arendt asserts that “the theatre is the political art par excellence,” as “only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art.”⁸ The theatre, she claims, “is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others.”⁹ This is where the *body politic* emerges into focus on the “*brilliantly-lit stage* on which common attention is” lent, she argues. And “a gaze of universal attention *confers dignity* on the people and things that appear in it.”¹⁰

⁷ Manning, *Politics of Touch*, 107-8.

⁸ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 188.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Margaret Canovan, “Politics as Culture: Hannah Arendt and the Public Realm,” in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra Hinchman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 180; my emphasis

Margaret Canovan builds on Arendt's theatre analogy by insisting that what happens to the image of the self (or the body of the actor) in the public space is what is important: "[Arendt's] emphasis is upon appearance in public, upon stepping out into the *bright light of the public stage*, upon the *self-revelatory character of action* and upon the need for an audience *to see and remember* what is done" there.¹¹ Had Arendt been writing more recently, she, like Erin Manning above, could have claimed that these descriptions have the characteristics of a "bodily" rather than a body politic, in that "the body is experienced largely in terms of its acts, needs/desires, and contacts rather than as itself," i.e. in its relationship to others.¹² In fact, Mary G. Dietz does just that when she says, like Manning, "in [Arendt's] theory, 'bodily politics' exists and exhibits itself in the life of action within the public realm," as opposed to the "body" politic that seems "male-stream" and exclusive.¹³

"Bodily" is more dynamic, decrying the static body as if it is in motion, development, or—as Arendt claims—a state of revealing itself. It can be argued that to become "bodily" requires the active collapse of the boundary between public (male) and private (female) and, in so far as this blurring occurs, confers dignity upon what or who is found there. A slippage of rigid borders between the realms can alter what is culturally considered a "male-driven" public space and push the actions therein into a more gendered feminine site. As a result, those "bodily" bodies put in plain view are receivers of a re-signified and dignified presence. But can the public realm become both "bodily political" *and* feminine at once? And can it cancel out the

¹¹ Canovan, "Politics as Culture," 189; my emphasis.

¹² Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 173.

¹³ Mary G. Dietz, "Hannah Arendt and Feminist Politics," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra Hinchman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 251.

mael(male)strom of exclusivity by conferring dignity upon the bodies found there—no matter what their genders may be? I believe so.

In my 2014 production of *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, the “bodily” site/sight (in plain view of the audience) is where the private and public, the feminine and masculine, collided to make something new. In what remains or is remade after the collision is the private/public realm of the female, *no matter what gender identities of the actors that live there*. Borders of gender are no longer self-contained, controlled, or completely accountable. As Solnit writes: “In her, things merge, and from *her*, they *e-merge*.”¹⁴ In and through this now female public space (“her”), a newness of action and gendering is revealed. Solnit uses the French etymology of “e-merge” to further describe an “e-mergency,” not only as a crisis but also as “an emergence speeded up,” similar to what one experiences through compressed dramatic action, especially in a 39-page play.¹⁵ Engaging in an emerging “bodily politics” in the theatre/through performance/in a succinct play about continual crisis seems a feminine act sanctified in the realm of the male-stream public. In the production referenced above, there are two women and two men; however, both pairs of actors, despite their gender and that of their characters, fully engage themselves in this feminine, private act of revealing one’s male “bodily political” crises in public.

Although Arendt is much maligned for not being explicitly “feminist” in her writing, she *does* distinguish between labor and work, and she genders the spaces (public/work/male and private/labor/female) within which this bodily political (performance) action takes “place.”

¹⁴ Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 174.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

Contemporary feminist theorists and artists, like Rebecca Solnit, have expanded on these same ideas:

Arendt gives great weight to the distinction between work and labor. Work generates, *labor* maintains... Labor has rarely been honored and hardly recognized; it took and *takes place* in the realm of the female, the domestic, the rural, the private; it maintains and is marginalized *with* the body. If the work of making is predicated on absence, then the *labor of tending* (to) is organized around presence.¹⁶

One must be present to be tended to. And if there are *two* tending to each other? Here in the offstage chronotopic/heterotopic space of this production of *Gruesome Playground Injuries* is the *presence* of the two female and two male bodies who invoke a sight/site-specific, laboring, political act: the intimate dressing and undressing of bodies and wounds, working diligently to bring them into an engendering (or de-gendering) dignified focus.

Culturally, we *tend* to accept two women engaging in feminine acts of labor: fixing each other's hair, appraising how each other looks, assuaging each other's pains with physical embrace, even putting make up on each other. These loving and lavish acts are culturally sanctioned, so it wasn't a stretch for an audience to accept the convention of the offstage/onstage, private/public place of feminine action with two Kayleens tending to each other. Yet, even in this "seeing place," there were times when those endorsed acts became too uncomfortable to pay attention or attend to. Audiences struggled to hold their gaze when the actor playing Kayleen was being undressed and re-dressed—not just her body, but her wounds as well. The injuries that Kayleen kept mostly hidden on the interior (a very different representation than Doug's, whose wounds continually bled) silently pushed their way to the

¹⁶ Ibid., 164-5.

surface; her border could no longer contain the self-destructiveness that reluctantly yawned as she found a voice by cutting her own skin.

Jane Tompkins writes, “To speak is literally to open the body to penetration by opening an orifice; it is also to mingle the body’s substance with the substance of what is outside itself. Finally, it suggests a certain incompleteness, a need to be in relation.”¹⁷ Doug and Kayleen both engage in this act of penetration—not with each other, but with their “others.” This explosion of exposure did in fact unsettle audiences at first, especially when Kayleen “cut” her legs only to cover them up and reveal them to Doug in Scene 5. However, Kayleen didn’t cut her own legs—her “other” self did it. Having been subjected to watching the injuries being “made present” and seeing them then absented by her clothes and her “other,” the audience knows, tangibly, that truth lay beneath the surface. The viewing presence (audience) could not ignore the bodily presences (the Kayleens), even if the ghosted wounds were now “unseen.” In this production choice, Kayleen found a voice through mimetic penetration in performance that she didn’t originally have in the scope of the *play*.

An intimate connection (relation) is made in this public/private space, found between the women engaged in the acts of caring for the wounds normally only seen in the privacy of one’s home. The creation of wounds in public splits open Kayleen’s skinscape, and the mutual laboring to do so provides sanctuary to the actor who has to be “injured” for the evening. Harmony Neal, one of the actors in my 2014 production, stated, “Knowing that Brooks [Mitchell] would be there made me feel less vulnerable in front of strangers. She provided a safe space: someone to shield the audience’s gaze, who were either looking at me pulling off

¹⁷ Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 56.

my pants or cutting my legs, or worse—trying not to look.”¹⁸ Neal agreed that the penetrating gaze or the “looked-at-ness” in the relationship with the audience became more comfortable as the play moved forward and the convention of two Kayleens became more familiar. In contrast—and likely through their heterotopic inverting function—as the injuries became more severe onstage, Neal felt anchored by the performance act(ion) in which the two women mutually labored together for each other’s wounded bodies in the spoken-for, safe, “offstage” healing space.

Because of the discomfort a voyeuristic audience may experience when looking at women publicly dress and undress, they are forced to shift their penetrating gaze elsewhere. In my 2014 production, *Gruesome* was staged in an arena setting; in this case, the audience’s focus fell upon (and felt more comfortable sanctifying) the male-to-male public/private creative space of un-appearance, which I have argued is now imbued with “feminine acts.” Audiences confer attention and dignity—not scrutiny—to the bodies they find there. And what is discovered is a truly exquisite private/public creative space (required by Joseph), in which *feminine* acts of tending to each “other” are engaged in by two men and endorsed by the convention of performance already established (or, as Arendt would say, “physical space officially marked out for public affairs”¹⁹). Yet this caretaking between the Dougs seems quite different than what is happening between the two Kayleens.

Audiences first witnessed this nurturing, feminine act of “tending to” between the Dougs at the end of Scene 2. Doug has blown out his eye lighting fireworks on the night of Kayleen’s father’s funeral. Before the onstage scene begins, the other Doug creates the

¹⁸ Harmony Neal in discussion with the author, March 13, 2016.

¹⁹ Canovan, “Politics as Culture,” 181.

gruesome wound, tenderly wrapping gauze around his partner's eye and head, carefully dripping the blood from the socket and down onto his shirt. This must be done with great attention because, pragmatically, the blood would sting if it gets in the actor's eye. During the scene itself, Kayleen comes to see Doug in the hospital after he has succeeded, in a macabre way, to get her attention and get her *to attend to* him. Doug pleads with Kayleen to touch the empty space where his eye had once been, but she ultimately doesn't heed him:

DOUG: Will you please touch my eye?

KAYLEEN: Get away from me! Doug, I can't look at that. Please, put your stuff back over it...

DOUG: You can make it better.

KAYLEEN: No, no I can't. Leave me alone.

DOUG: Just touch it! Once!

KAYLEEN: NO! I WILL NOT! I am not here to take care of you, Doug. I am not a *healer*.²⁰

Kayleen exits in a fury and Doug is left alone with his gaping wound. Here, Tompkins' argument from above seems gender-based. Doug's penetration of skin silenced his voice, unheard or at least unfulfilled by Kayleen. The heteronormative relationship playing out onstage negates the vocal power of this penetration. Yet, when staged with a doubled Doug, he is healed: not by Kayleen, but by the "other" Doug who patiently stands guard, waiting to gently remove the rest of the gauze, wash away the blood, and prepare his body for the next scene.

What took place in the male-inhabited yet female-defined chronotopic/heterotopic space of un-appearance is in stark contrast to what happened onstage. Here, audiences saw a *tender act between the two men*; a homo-social connection yielded to soften the blows that had accumulated onstage by the violent, heteronormative relationship standing stalwart there. Doug's voice calling out to Kayleen to save him is not heard by her, but by another man. This

²⁰ Joseph, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, 15.

calling out would have gone unheeded had he, the “other” Doug, not been there to hear. Rebecca Solnit defines tending “as a creative act that relocates the lack, or what has been lost,” like Doug’s eye and Kayleen’s love. Her love is lost but the Dougs’ love for each other is gained. The loss moves “from this world to that one,” from the exterior (onstage/public/male/place of action) to the interior (offstage/private/female/place of laboring).²¹ Kayleen wouldn’t “take care” of Doug, but his “other” self willingly did so because he will have the same need the next night. “*Tending*,” says Solnit, “a word that means to care for is, after all, connected to the word *attending*, which means to pay attention to, and to wait.”²² The “other” Doug’s sole responsibility in this performance was to wait for the featured Doug to return to the sanctuary they had created in the offstage space, and there engender the materiality to plug up the bottomless pit where Kayleen’s love may have never been.

Audiences for Joseph’s play also must watch and wait: to tend to the actors and each other while all (*pause*) the gruesome (*pause*) changes (*pause*) take place (*silence*). From Joseph’s author’s note: “All transitions between the scenes should be leisurely... the lengths of the transitions signify and allow for large passages of time in the lives of the characters. We should especially see Doug’s dressing of his wounds.”²³ What is implied here by Joseph is that the actor playing Doug self-contains his wounds, caretaking and tending only to himself in performance. However, in the production choice I am championing, there are two Dougs (and two Kayleens); through two dressing each other’s wounds, the containment of the skinscape

²¹ Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 165.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Joseph, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, 4.

ceases. Audiences confer attention and dignity to the intimacies that ephemerally accumulate, deregulating and de-gendering these bodily political acts by observing them in public.

This is to say: at first glance, the audience sees the Dougs carefully dripping and blotting blood from eyes and gashes. *But this is not only what they witness.* They also slowly and meticulously tie each other's ties, straighten each other's jackets, evaluate each other's appearances, brush each other off, fix each other's tousled hair, carefully paint their teeth black to show what is missing, and tenderly help each other into a wheelchair at the end of the play to signify all that is no longer able-bodied, knowing the next night the roles will be reversed. They relocate the lack—what has been lost—moving from onstage to off, or offstage to on, in order to wholly gain something else: a tender, attending, and attentive love between the two men.

In Scene 6 of the play, when the kids are 33, their mutually (self-)destructive lives collide again. Kayleen has been committed to a facility after a suicide attempt. Ironically, Doug, whose antics to get Kayleen's attention over the years have become more public—and his injuries more extreme—begs her from her private and contained place to keep him moored: "Are you going to let me drift away here? Because I don't want to... I'm worn out. I don't have so much left in me anymore you know. I'm saying don't let me, don't let me drift away again."²⁴ Kayleen gains strength while Doug is cast adrift. Two scenes later, the final of the play, Kayleen has finally enacted self-change. She is healed and Doug is permanently broken. Solnit states, "*Tending is an ahistorical act, located in the cycles of biology, whose results have little duration beyond the act, and whose attendant cannot disengage, thus, tending is [an intimate] gesture*

²⁴ Joseph, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, 31-2.

against change.”²⁵ Although she continues to try to tend to Doug’s wounds, the very evidence of her healing clearly denotes that Kayleen can no longer relate to him. She has broken their cycle.

Finally, the kids are 38. Doug is paralyzed. Kayleen begs Doug to let her touch him, thinking that through the border of his skinscape, “where their two universes have collided,” she might repair his battered body. But Doug, akin to how Erin Manning defines “skinscape,” is “living toward death,”²⁶ evidenced by his pleas to Kayleen: “Don’t touch me, Kayleen... Don’t touch me... Do not touch me... I’m good like this. I’m good. Don’t need anything else. Except maybe when I see those kids flying around on the ice. But I’m done flying around.”²⁷ Only their mutual scars remain. Solnit describes an “emergency” as a “temporal border between two states [in which] all borders are dangerous.”²⁸ Adding an “e” to the French word *merger* denotes being within or under a liquid, immersed, or submerged. Doug is drowning in his own skin.

Solnit argues, “An *emergency* [is] the point at which change accelerates out of control—beyond the ability of the system to respond.”²⁹ In effect, the constant injuring of each other becomes the absence of change. Neither Doug nor his “other” can disengage and save himself—the play must continue. Kayleen hopes that a final laying of her caretaking hands on the “temporal border” of his skin will cease the collision of their two universes and stop Doug’s

²⁵ Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 165.

²⁶ Manning, *Politics of Touch*, 114.

²⁷ Joseph, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, 38-9.

²⁸ Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 167.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

continual state of emergency. But she cannot. No amount of plugging orifices in Doug's skinscape by Kayleen can bring his character up for air:

What if being human becomes a currency that cannot be exchanged for anything, that cannot be measured because there is nothing to be measured against? Once the "other" is lost, nothing can be measured, and memory lapses, belief loses its shape, everything and nothing is possible: a state of emergency."³⁰

Yet, the actor playing Doug has been tended to and cared for "offstage" for 90 minutes by his "other," a *human* buffer against complete submersion into emotional and physical paralysis. It is this relationship, not the one with Kayleen, that saves him, that heals him through the creative acts of labor that audiences have witnessed "offstage." What emerges here in this offstage space is not a continuation of the crisis or some uncomfortable, categorical labeling of the male-to-male intimacy, but a platonic, tender(ing) relationship that is both exquisite and a relief to watch, sanctioned and honored by the dual, same-gender casting. Even if Kayleen's healing has happened elsewhere, onstage, it is offstage where the emergency for Doug (and the Dougs) can finally cease.

What may well begin as a practical solution to Joseph's alienating (in a Brechtian sense) dramaturgical requests creates relationships of profound intimacy in the engaged "offstage/onstage," chronotopic/heterotopic space of un-appearance that stems a bodily crisis of identity. *Here*, two Dougs and two Kayleens forge powerful bonds *with* each "other" that balance the state of emergency happening *between them over there*. In addition, the various requirements of the costume and makeup changes—the way wounds are applied, removed, and tended to by the caring "other"—are interesting to witness and forgive as the

³⁰ Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, 173.

unforgiveable happens “onstage.” These acts are sanctified through the presence of convention, performance, and private bodily politics. Because what transpires in the “offstage” space is so beautiful and tender, the injuries inflicted (and re-inflicted) onstage feel that much more *gruesome*.

The mimetic healing of Doug’s and Kayleen’s real bodies can take place in this “offstage” private/public space. True selves appear parallel yet inverted, visibly inscribed on what Arendt saw as a “brilliantly lit stage” of bodily political action.³¹ Two universes of same-gendered actors (not characters) coincide (not collide), and the emergency of exclusion ceases. Those that reemerge are not only unscathed and unscarred, but they have carved a new space of acceptance and dignity for the bodies that live there, temporarily, under the scrutiny of the public and social eye. Susan Okin writes:

Only when men participate equally in what have been principally women’s realms of meeting the daily material and psychological needs of those close to them, and when women participate equally in what have been principally men’s realms of larger scale production... will members of both sexes develop a more complete *human* personality than has hitherto been possible.”³²

In this theatrical space, four bodies are re-signified and their genders deregulated. If one is willing to wait, watch, and *feel* what emerges there—a destruction of gendered boundaries and a resignification of humanness—the result will be undeniable: “Touch makes possible the image of a [gendered] body falling apart, leaving parts of itself behind, incorporeally becoming” something new.³³

³¹ Canovan, “Politics as Culture,” 180.

³² Susan Moller Okin, “John Rawls: Justice as Fairness: For Whom?” in *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory*, ed. Mary Shanley and Carole Pateman (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 195.

³³ Manning, *Politics of Touch*, 140.

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