

## The body also has a history: A critical aesthetics for arts education

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### ABSTRACT

This paper begins by providing a brief introduction to Foucault's work on the body. In the next section it reviews the feminist encounter with Foucault's work focusing on the political technology of the body before examining feminist appropriations of Foucault and the relation between aesthetics and the body. In the final section of the paper, I make some preliminary remarks about the relation of body theory to art education.

### Introduction

*The body also has a history:*<sup>1</sup> this is a central insight that emerged during the 1980s on the basis of a set of insights derived from the intersection of phenomenology, art history, psychoanalysis, historical criticism, feminist and gender studies, and the whole gamut of postmodern studies. These approaches had simultaneously embraced the linguistic, the cultural and the spatial turns, and together prefigured the rise of a new multi-disciplinarity that based its objects of study outside traditional disciplinary boundaries (see Peters, 1999). Body theory and criticism emerged in the 1980s and was given a particular orientation by Michel Foucault's work that helped to make 'the body' a category of social and political analysis and an object of historical analysis. Foucault drew his lessons from the phenomenological tradition of French thought on the body (Sartre, Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty) that emphasised its materiality and the socio-cultural specificity of its embodiedness, inscribed by power relations and at the same time marked by gender, race and class.

Before Foucault, Sartre had written of the empirical ego—the physical-psycho self—as the unifying materiality, differentiating himself from both Kant and Husserl, who tried to show that the 'I' is the formal structure of consciousness. Simone de Beauvoir theorised woman as Other and in a series of philosophical novels had examined the particularities of specific embodied relationships to the Other. *The Second Sex* originally published in 1949 made the sexed body into an object of phenomenological investigation for the first time. Merleau-Ponty, for his part, highlighted the difference between the objective body and the phenomenal body, a difference reflected also in terms of objective and existential space. Drawing on Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty understood the 'lived body' as the site of consciousness and perception, thus avoiding Descartes' mind-body dualism and the reductionism predicated upon it. These were Foucault's immediate inheritances, supplemented by his readings of Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger. This paper develops the narrative in terms of a trajectory that follows the phenomenological line through to Foucault, who while rejecting the phenomenological account of the subject, held onto the body as a site of power relations occupying a spatial-temporal location in development of Western institutions.

This form of philosophical and historical analysis of the human body also led to a differentiation of its history in terms of the physical body, the social body, the gendered body and the 'body politic' but also of its figural and metaphorical forms, including, the female body, the medical body and the laboring body. Most significantly, the body of the exoticised Other helped to provide the basis for extending a kind of Orientalism related to the needs of colonisation and the control of native populations. The body as a site of colonisation is a subject of very recent investigation and interesting to dwell on briefly to indicate how much of Western art, both visual and performative, is tied to the eroticised colonial body, especially of women. In this regard think of the nineteenth century scholars who translated the works of 'the Orient' into English on the understanding that effective colonisation required detail knowledge of Indigenous cultures, and also the Orientalist painters such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, and, arguably, Henri Matisse. In the eighteenth century it became popular to depict the East in terms of customs, landscape, lifestyles and women's bodies (in particular, the undraped female form in the harem). History of the body in colonialism is not restricted to representations or to visual culture. 'Specimens' as objects of curiosity were often taken back 'home' and the body was also the site of early sexual contacts and encounters, of colonisers with 'local' women, whose offspring became the first cultural 'hybrids'.

British Orientalism in India, for example, took a specific form strongly related to the needs of East India Company to train a class of British administrators in the languages and culture of India. Orientalism in Western musical style was not based on ethnic cultural practices so much as Orientalist signifiers. The Turkish style, (for instance, Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), as the first example of Orientalism in music, was entirely a product of the Western imagination and provided a source of superiority over the Turks who had dared to conquer the West.<sup>2</sup> For Edward Said (1978: 3) Orientalism is "a Western style of dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" through a "system of knowledge" which develops a "positional superiority". Western art participated in this process of generating cultural representations and stereotypes that helped to create prejudice against non-Western cultures. A clear example is Ingres' *Odalisque and Slave*, which depicts a nude woman reclining in a Middle Eastern harem.<sup>3</sup> Marie Benoist's *Portrait d'une Nègresse* (1800) is an interesting exception to the standard representations of blacks.<sup>4</sup>

Griselda Pollock (1999: 264) argues that black women in Western art typically represent "a space in the text of a masculinist modernist culture in which flourishes an Orientalizing, Africanist fantasy that circulates between artists, their models, and contemporary art historians in the twentieth century" (see also Pointon, 1990). Exoticism also took place at home as well as abroad with genteel and gentlemen's soft pornography and fetishising of the female body based on the ideology of the male gaze as an objectifying force, that had strong and popular links in the public imaginary to the nudes of Auguste Renoir and Paul Gauguin (see Nead, 1992). (By contrast see the work of Suzanne Valadon who herself started by posing for Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec and later painted homely nudes of women where the implied male viewer is totally absent).

Foucault's form of historical or genealogical analysis recently has led to a range of studies that theorises the body in relation to its adornment, symbology and representation (art and aesthetics), its age and gender (feminism, gender studies), its extension, pain and repair (medicine), its physical limits (sport), its cultural specificity (anthropology) and its social construction (sociology), its constraints and torture (penology and war studies) and the body as a site and locus for a set of power relations (politics) that runs through all these related fields. These analyses fundamentally disturbed the Romantic essentialism and naturalism that had depicted the body as unity—an unchanging and ahistorical category immune to social and political analysis.

Indeed, it was the combination of aesthetics and feminism that first initiated and propelled body criticism. From the Greek ideal of Venus de Milo to Rubens *The Three Graces* in the 17th century to the heroin-chic anorexia of the Milano catwalk, female body fashions indicated in a plain manner the changing ideals of 'beauty' and their enmeshment in the politics of desire and consumerism. In

a myriad of studies across the range of disciplines and arts the body has emerged as the cornerstone of a new form of criticism which is at once both historical and materialist: *the body as a site of power, desire, thought, action, constraint, control and freedom*. Foucault also taught us of the power of the Nietzschean trope—the body as a work of art—which also pointed to the notion of self-fashioning and self-stylisation of the body.

In part this signals a watershed in cultural theory of the body as a category of analysis, where the body has developed the same ontological status as the notion of *practice*. Both these are now seen as new sociological and cultural givens that help us to map new constellations of self/body image, concept and assertion, as well as providing means of social, group and collective analysis. The body as a category now customarily feeds theoretical developments in feminism, postcolonial theory, queer theory, gender theory, performance theory, cybertheory, and race theory. At the same time, the history of the body and of body criticism indicates a profound shift in an understanding of ‘ourselves’, particularly in the West, from the religious and doctrinal visions that pictured human beings as enduring souls able to survive the rotting of the flesh, emphasising the shift to a situated material and anatomical body that could be modified, healed, exercised and improved (‘medicalised’) giving rise to the suspicion, as Roy Porter (2003: 472) expressed it in *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, “the doctrine of mind over matter stood for power over the people”.

## Foucault, Feminism and the Body

### *The Political Technology of the Body: From Tortured to Docile Bodies*

In an interview a year before his death, Foucault (1982) confessed to Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus that his real quarry was *not* an investigation of power but rather the history of the ways in which human beings are constituted as subjects. Foucault described this constitution as a process that inextricably involves power relations as an integral aspect of the production of discourses. As he said in a now often quoted passage:

My objective ... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects ... The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of the sciences ... In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call ‘dividing practices’ ... Finally, I have sought to study – it is my current work – the way a human being turns him-or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality ... Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research (Foucault, 1982: 208).

There are a number of observations to be made about this statement. First, Foucault’s main interest is plainly the constitution of the human subject, which involves three modes of objectification through scientific discourses, ‘dividing practices’, and processes of ethical self-constitution. Second, Foucault pursues his objective through an historical approach to systems of thought to analyse the history of subjectivity. Third, power is not the main objective of his inquiry but rather a necessary part of the unfolding of his historical analysis. Fourth, in this statement there is a complete absence of any reference to the body *per se*, even although it is buried in Foucault’s historical accounts of subjectivity and revealed in his method.

The history of subjectivity and the human subject for Foucault was intimately tied to the body. Foucault examines of the long Western tradition of the philosophy of the subject by which he means a *problematique* dominating the modern *episteme* that privileges the subject-as-mind as the foundation of all knowledge, action and signification. As mentioned briefly earlier, Foucault was strongly influenced by arguments concerning the body and the importance of space by the phenomenological tradition of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Beauvoir and by structuralist methodologies employed by the Annales School (Bloch, Febvre, Braudel) and Marxist thinkers (Althusser, Lefebvre).<sup>5</sup> Against the mainstream philosophical tradition, Foucault

radically decentres both the traditional Cartesian notion of a unified subjectivity and the Hegelian subject that comes into play only through struggle, the dialectic and politics of recognition. From his very early conceptions the subject is already historicised and materialised in relation to discursive and institutional practices that focus on the body. In other words, Foucault historicises questions of ontology, substituting genealogical investigations of the subject for the philosophical attempt to define the essence of human nature. In this inquiry then Foucault is aware of the importance of *locating* the subject in time and space by focusing on the body. This move is important in historicising the body, in disturbing the naturalisation of the body and its cultural givenness—a step prior to recognising its mode of analysis in aesthetics and arts education by focusing on its representation, performance, movement, and cultural signification.

Foucault concentrates the body in modern society and analyses it as a product of power relations. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) begins with a powerful description of the torture of Damians the regicide—“the body of the condemned”—whose flesh is torn away and whose body is cut, burnt with red-hot pincers and sulphur, and, later drawn and quartered, consumed by fire, and reduced to ashes. Foucault elaborates in detail the gruesome and meticulous approach of the executioner who works on the body to cause maximum pain in the public gaze. He contrasts this very public execution and spectacle with the timetable for young prisoners issue by Léon Faucher eighty years later. The relationship between punishment and the body has changed:

The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property ... [Now] the body ... is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain ... is no longer the constituent element of the penalty (Foucault, 1977: 11).

While “The gloomy festival of punishment was dying out” (8) which also meant the “decline of the spectacle” (10) and the end of the tortured body, the hold on the body did not disappear entirely. Now this modern punishment worked on the body to strike at the soul and Foucault interprets his goal as “a correlative history of the modern soul” (23) to “try to study the metamorphosis of punitive methods on the basis of a political technology of the body in which might be read a common history of power relations ...” (24). As he says more directly in a way that distinguishes him as a political theorist and explains his significance to feminists:

the body is also directly involved in a political field ... Power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This is directly connected to the economic system, for the body is both useful and productive. But the body as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (Foucault, 1977: 26).

In short, “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body” (26).

In the same chapter of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) describes and analyses a political system with the King’s body at the centre. Yet in the nineteenth century, Foucault suggests that the “body of society” becomes a new principle. The social body is protected through a series of dividing practices involving the segregation of the sick, the quarantining of “degenerates”, the schooling of boys and girls, and the exclusion of delinquents. In the early interview “Body/Power” (given in 1975) Foucault (1980: 55) says: “the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals”. These relations of power do not obey the Hegelian form of the dialectic but rather take the path of a strategic development of a political struggle which involves both the mastery of the body, achieved through an institutional investment in the power of the body, and the counter-attack in the same body. We must remember that questions of design and aesthetics are very much a part of these political investigations even if they do not privilege questions of art.

Foucault upsets the normal understanding when he claims that we should set aside the thesis that power in our capitalist societies has denied the reality of the body in favour of the mind or consciousness. In fact nothing is more material, physical, corporeal than the exercise of power. He encourages the question of what mode of investment of the body is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours. In the period from the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century the investment of the body by power was “heavy, ponderous, meticulous and constant” as evidenced in the disciplinary regimes of schools, hospitals, barracks, factories and the like. Then in the 1960s, it began to be realised that “such a cumbersome form of power was no longer indispensable” and “that industrial societies could content themselves with a much looser form of power over the body”. As he insists: “One needs to study what kind of body the current society needs” (Foucault, 1980: 58). And this speculation cannot be approached today without reflection upon and investigation of the body as the site of desire, the object of narcissism, and the constant relay of commodity fetish that one finds contemporary fashion, in various forms of the consumption of the body, and in the seemingly endless forms of self-fashioning promised through diet, exercise, sport, and medical procedures that all have come to mark neoliberal forms of body subjectivity under late capitalism.

In ‘Docile Bodies’ that begins part 3 of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault continues the analysis by arguing, “The Classical age discovered the body as an object and target of power” (Foucault, 1977: 136). The anatomico-metaphysical approach to the body was supplemented and overlapped by the technico-political, which, through the disciplines, addressed the docility and usefulness of the body. As Foucault puts it “The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when *an art of the human body was born*, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful ...” (137-138, emphasis added). We can note here already the Nietzschean trope of an “aesthetics of existence” and a “physiognomy of values” as the body manipulated and shaped is at once both aesthetic and political.

In the seventeenth century “bio-power” emerged as a coherent political technology based on a new power over life which takes two main forms of the body as machine and as the regulator of population, which focuses on the reproductive capacity of the human body. The first form of bio-power occurs in the military, in schools and the workplace, and is aimed at a more productive, more disciplined, and useful population; the second occurs in demography, wealth analysis, and ideology, and seeks to control the population on a statistical level. The study of population soon became “political arithmetic” and as administrators needed detailed knowledge about their own state they developed welfare and state mechanisms designed to create happy, well-fed, healthy and docile populations.

In the *History of Sexuality* Foucault examines the power/knowledge *dispositif* of modern sexuality and how the will to knowledge constituted a science of sexuality (“scientia sexualis”) and a “discursive explosion” producing the truth of sex. Foucault questions the “repressive hypothesis” and the account of power on which it rests. For Foucault power is exercised rather than possessed and it is immanent to economic, scientific, sexual relations. It comes from below rather than from above and it is both intentional and non-subjective. Further, power is always accompanied by resistance. Through this perspective, Foucault suggests, we can escape the Sovereign/Law (‘juridical’) notion of power. Thus, sexuality is not a drive, but a “dense transfer point” for power relations that work through bodies.<sup>6</sup>

His last two books on Greco-Roman sexuality, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, turned to ancient conceptions of the ethical self, comparing pagan and Christian ethics through their approaches to sexuality. Where the Christian code forbid most forms of sexual activity except within sanction circumstances, the ancient Greeks emphasised the proper use of pleasures in moderation but also engagement in the full range of sexual activities. Pagan sexual ethics exemplified an “aesthetics of the self” where the self became responsible for the creation of a beautiful and

enjoyable existence. The role of aesthetics and art in religious life of the body has still to be unpacked.

### *Feminist Appropriations of Foucault*

Feminist scholars have been perhaps the most active in providing a gendered critique of Foucault and, at the same time, responsible for appropriating his work and extending it in positive and useful ways. Feminist theorists, for instance, have developed Foucaultian insights about the relations between power, the body and sexuality. These insights have been developed alongside a strong tradition of body theorising going back at least as far as Simone de Beauvoir in the 1940s, culminating in the publication of *The Second Sex* in 1949. De Beauvoir was influenced by Sartre but also Henri Bergson's philosophy of becoming (*élan vital*) and Richard Wright, the African-American writer, whose work of the lived experience of oppressed Black people provided a model for analysing women's oppression.<sup>7</sup> Phenomenology, structuralism and poststructuralism was developed in new ways by a new generation of French feminists including Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray. Feminists in the U.S., U.K., Australia, diasporic intellectuals, and increasingly those in the Third World used this range of resources in philosophy, politics, art history, and in the creative arts, to explore new directions in body criticism focused around the history of body image, the body and visual culture, bodily inscription, mutilation, interpersonal and gender relations, and the control of sexuality. The field is now so advanced and complex that there is no easy characterisation of all its strands.<sup>8</sup>

In general, it is probably safe to say that feminists operating with Foucault want to argue that the female body is constituted through its social, medical, symbolic and cultural inscriptions. It can no longer be regarded as a cultural given and can only be understood and interpreted in terms of its cultural meanings which include the full range of cultural representations— both literal and figurative—and surgical and cosmetic interventions. The body is a site of representation and inscription of power and its materiality is the space of symbolic value.

Aurelia Armstrong (2003) provides the following useful summary of the way in which feminists have appropriated Foucault insights:

Firstly, Foucault's analyses of the productive dimensions of disciplinary powers which is exercised outside the narrowly defined political domain overlap with the feminist project of exploring the micropolitics of personal life and exposing the mechanics of patriarchal power at the most intimate levels of women's experience. Secondly, Foucault's treatment of power and its relation to the body and sexuality has provided feminist social and political theorists with some useful conceptual tools for the analysis of the social construction of gender and sexuality and contributed to the critique of essentialism within feminism. Finally, Foucault's identification of the body as the principal target of power has been used by feminists to analyze contemporary forms of social control over women's bodies and minds.<sup>9</sup>

Foucault's work, although not his alone, has also stimulated interest in related questions concerning identity, subjectivity and resistance. In broad terms it is probably better to say that Foucault-inspired feminist body criticism has fed into a range of "theoretical modes of exploration of the body" that have developed as "complementary elements of feminist aesthetics".<sup>10</sup> Korsmeyer (2004) catalogues the "gendering of sense experience", for example, through making food a medium of art works, new genre of performance art aimed at a critique of dominant art-cultural representations and traditions such as the nude and focusing on the "arousal of disgust as an aesthetic response" through picturing taboo aspects of women's bodies including, menstrual blood and excrement. This exploration of viscous interiority functions as a critique of the imposition of past aesthetic standards concerning 'beauty' that have dominated and repressed women.<sup>11</sup>

## Body Aesthetics, Body Theory and Art Education

On one line of body criticism that we might christen ‘body aesthetics’ the body becomes the site for a range of critical practices in the arts and humanities for the investigation of cultural representations, constructions and inscriptions of power and hierarchies of value. This includes the investigation of the socio-political context of procedures for ‘body contouring’— liposuction, abdominoplasty, lifts, nips and tucks—as well as the philosophical significance of the search for the perfect body through methodologies and means that historicise the body and provide it with a history. Body aesthetics may also focus on ethnic and cultural specificity of bodies in relation to aesthetic traditions and ideals, and the intimate connection between medical practice, politics and aesthetics on the understanding that ‘design is politics’. It may also involve a kind of projection into post-human forms of prosthesis, exosomatic development, and the virtual body. From this perspective, we can analyse the social pathologies that cause *disorders of bodies* (rather than the self) especially those that are amenable to political economy such as eating disorders (at both ends of the spectrum—‘obesity’ and ‘anorexia’), the death-denying emphasis on the exercised body, the ‘healthy’ body and the plethora of diet routines promoted by fitness clubs, the pharma-industry, body shape and the fast food industry, and the relation between aesthetics and sports, and so on.

It is clear that body aesthetics is a complex field embracing normative, historical and scientific elements. Body aesthetics also provides a strong link between body theory and art education. I want to conclude this chapter by sketching a programmatic basis for body criticism as a critical aesthetics for arts education. This is only a tentative program and one which is open to further development. A critical aesthetics for art education, one among a number, on my model interpretation would have at least three components:

1. *Body theory and criticism* examines the cultural, ‘race’ and gender representations and experiences of the body through historical (genealogical) and art history methodologies. Central questions might include:
  - What are the histories of the body?
  - What are the changing theoretical orientations to the study of the body?
  - How do representations and performances of the body reflect and support prevailing or dominant notions of race, gender, nation and global society?
  - What forms do embodied consciousness and embodied practices take in relation to work, sex, religion, medicine and the like?
2. *Body aesthetics* focuses on the ways in which the body has been shaped and contoured particularly in relation to popular and non-Western cultures. Central questions might include:
  - What is the relation between aesthetics and the body in historical perspectives and how has it changed?
  - How has the body been presented in works of art and art practices?
  - How does embodied experience manifest itself in aesthetic terms?
  - In what ways do genealogical investigations force us to re-evaluate the artistic canon and associated traditions of aesthetics?
3. *Body art and art-of-the-body* examines the art-specific practices that have developed around the body focusing on the creation and reception of various forms of body art/ art body. Central questions might focus on the following:
  - How does the tradition of ‘the nude’ (male/female) inform Western art practices and aesthetic standards of beauty?

- What are the uses of the body in Western art through painting, sculpture, photography, installation, film, video and performance?
- What are the forms of body art (tattooing, piercing, implants etc), performance art etc. and what is their ethnic and socio-political significance?
- Historically, what have been the relations between the artist and the model, the body and Western identity, eroticism and pornography, corporeal presence and absence, and feminism and the body?

In this schema, as I see it the three levels move from the wider philosophical and historical context of body criticism to the more art-specific practices with body aesthetics providing the link between the two. In one sense the critical aspects emerge from poststructuralist, postcolonial and feminist approaches to the body with a strong focus on the concept of difference with a normative orientation towards body freedoms/unfreedoms, and the ways in which an artwork might enable the aesthetic transformation of experience. Insofar as this critical aesthetics draws on Foucault and poststructuralism more generally it will not seek a break or annihilation of the past (contra modernism) but rather its reconstruction, periodisation, interpretation and understanding in terms of knowledge systems. Following poststructuralist insights it will utilise both genealogy and deconstruction as the means to decenter preconceived structures, institutions and values while drawing attention to the artistic process and the observer-observed relationship on which it depends (see Crowther, 1993).

Insofar as this critical aesthetics draws on feminism it will “inquire into the ways that gender influences the formation of ideas about art, artists, and aesthetic value”. Korsmeyer (2004: n.p.) goes on to remind us “Feminist perspectives in aesthetics are also attuned to the cultural influences that exert power over subjectivity: the way that art both reflects and perpetuates the social formation of gender, sexuality, and identity”. Insofar as this critical aesthetics draws on postcolonialism it will focus on relations between Europe and the societies they colonised and the role that art, and other forms of cultural representation, played in depicting the bodies of Others. We can include non-Western forms of colonisation and imperialism. In particular, the role of art in colonial education and its relation to culture and identity of the colonised emphasising the forms of oppression, modernisation, cultural imperialism, *and* neocolonialism in the age of globalisation and transnationalism. In all three modes—postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial—critical aesthetics of the body will emphasise both the ideology of the gaze in the construction of the Other, its imaginary production of different kinds of bodies—erotic, maternal, laboring, exotic, virile—and forms of resistance against these stereotypes and discriminatory aesthetic practices. This would, at least, be a starting point for a critical aesthetics for an arts education based on the body.

## Notes

1. This paper first appeared in *International Handbook of Research on Arts Education*, L. Bresler (Ed.) Dordrecht, Springer. My thanks to an anonymous review for ACCESS.
2. See *Orientalism and Musical Style* by Derek B. Scott. Retrieved May 19, 2005, from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/Info/CMJ/Articles/1997/02/01.html>
3. Carol Ockman (1995) examines the shift in French art in the late eighteenth century from the neoclassical representation of the heroic male to emphasis on the female nude and the increasing identification of the sensual with the female body, especially in Ingres' work.
4. See “Slavery is a Woman: ‘Race,’ Gender, and Visuality”, in Marie Benoist’s *Portrait d’une Nègresse* (1800) by James Smalls. Retrieved May 19, 2005 from [http://19thc-artworldwide.org/spring\\_04/articles/smal.html](http://19thc-artworldwide.org/spring_04/articles/smal.html)
5. In “Of Other Spaces” Foucault contrasts the nineteenth century ‘obsession’ with time’ with the present epoch’s preoccupation with space postulating three histories of space: a hierarchic ensemble



of places in the Middle Ages— “sacred places and profane places: protected places and open, exposed places: urban places and rural places”— which was opened up by Galileo when ‘extension’ (and infinite space) replaced ‘emplacement’ (or localization); and, today when ‘site’ and the relations between sites has been substituted for extension. As he says: “Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites” which he explains as follows:

The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids. Moreover, the importance of the site as a problem in contemporary technical work is well known: the storage of data or of the intermediate results of a calculation in the memory of a machine, the circulation of discrete elements with a random output (automobile traffic is a simple case, or indeed the sounds on a telephone line); the identification of marked or coded elements inside a set that may be randomly distributed, or may be arranged according to single or to multiple classifications.

The aesthetics of the body is, in part, an aesthetics of space and, therefore, in the Foucauldian sense as aesthetics of the movement or mobility of bodies.

6. Foucault refers to four figures here: Hysterization of women’s bodies (hysterical woman); Pedagogization of children’s sex (masturbating child); Socialization of procreation (Malthusian couple); Psychiatrization of perversions (perverse adult), that together link the stimulation of bodies and intensification of pleasures with the incitement to discourse and the formation of knowledges.
7. See Simons’ essay “Is *The Second Sex* Beauvoir’s Application of Sartrean Existentialism?” Retrieved May 18, 2005, from <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Gend/GendSimo.htm>
8. See the bibliography. Retrieved May 18, 2005 from <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/bod.html>
9. See *Foucault and Feminism*. Retrieved May 18, 2005, from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/foucsem.htm>
10. See Korsmeyer (2004) section on “The Body in Philosophy and Art” in *Feminist Aesthetics*. Retrieved May 18, 2005, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-aesthetics/#5>
11. For a bibliography of “Feminist Aesthetics” see <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/aes.html> Retrieved May 18, 2005.

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