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The Double-bind: Women in American Politics (Competing Realities)

I propose a development of the sphere/screen binary model used by Kevin Michael DeLuca & Jennifer Peeples and rely on Jean Baudrillard's theories of simulation and hyper-reality to clarify the complex relationship between event and image, reality and Virtual Reality. I use an artifact portraying Hillary Clinton, indicative of the virtual "Hillary," to explore how representations of the Hillary of a public screen (versus a human Clinton of the public sphere) are attacked by a political sector who equate the "female" with the other, the non-human, and the post-human (c.f. transhuman). I hope to explore briefly how an increased emphasis on scholarship and theory addressing intransigent sexism surrounding images of women in American politics can lead to more equitable portrayals of female politicians and support an understanding of female political voices in the Habermasian "public sphere." By aiming for a continuous rather than a discrete model of a sphere/screen binary, I contend that analyzing rhetorical images of Hillary Clinton and other female politicians can generate new ways to address both the posthuman & Fourth Wave Feminism. This paper is divided into five short sections: 1. From Public Sphere to Public Screen (Transformations) 2. Hillary as Political *Other* (Fourth Wave Feminist Goddess) 3. Public Sphere—Public Space (Orders of Simulacra) 4. "Hillary 1984" (analysis) 4. Baudrillard's Integral Reality: Fear of a Female New World Order.

Public Sphere to Public Screen (Transformations)

Even a brief evaluation of literature in the Communications & Social Sciences using the concept of Jürgen Habermas' "public sphere" reveals a wide range of responses depending on whether the agendas are based in new media, politics, feminism, global studies, or rhetoric. Certainly the concept of a public space (or sphere) where individuals can come together to rationally, freely discuss social problems and affect political actions so that democracy may flourish has changed considerably since the cultural ideal's early formulation. Habermas, first writing in 1962 of the "public sphere" and its consequences,¹ speculates that the public sphere arose during early modern capitalism and was currently in decline due to mass media, commercialism, and consumerism. Scholars since have attempted to expand upon the notion of the public sphere, while heavily critiquing it from the vantage point of Second Wave Feminism and post-colonial studies. The advent of the Internet and the explosion of new media has directed much scholarship in communications toward a rethinking of technology-based "spaces." Two issues surrounding the concept are how the Internet may or may not contribute to a Habermasian sphere and what such a sphere might be like. Is a Virtual Public Sphere—sensitive to problematic relations regarding gender, race, and class, and allowing for postmodernist notions of play and polysemy—possible? Is the term "sphere" even desirable at such a point?

A significant number of scholars contend that the advent of the Internet has not revitalized the public sphere; Peter Muhlberger suggests that limits to human information processing, the decline of traditional political organizations, conventional net activity, and political disinterest serve as bars to internet revitalization (163). Some research indicates,

¹ In *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (translated as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* in 1989)

however, that social networks may augment the sort of heterogeneous exchanges of rational argument that save the public sphere from the decline indicated by Habermas in a pre-Internet period. Jennifer Brundidge finds that “online political discussion...and online news...bear small yet significant relationships to the overall heterogeneity of political discussion networks, and that partisanship moderates the relationship between online political discussion and political discussion network heterogeneity” (681). Significant criticism arises often in opposition to the “net freedom” claim, however; for example, that there is an “extended threat to the political public sphere by cultures of expertise that substitute media spectacle for genuine deliberation” (Goodnight 198). Another threat to online venues and social spaces serving a Habermasian function lies in the fact that “legal interpretations of public forum law do not recognize public spaces online but rather constrict policy opportunities that seek to create discursive public spheres or rights of access,” (Stein 1) and the legal issues both national and trans-national that determine the efficacy of current commercial products for the dissemination of information in the name of public discourse will largely determine the fate of a public sphere in the near future; Laura Stein claims that “under current public forum law, new media, as well as most old, cannot harbor public spaces” (18). Does technology demand that we redefine basic legal concepts of “public” and “citizens” to determine what it means to engage in public life? My assumption here is that technology will reconfigure what we mean by “the public,” audience, and group engagement; therefore forcing scholars in rhetoric, communication, and New Media to rethink public sphere “freedoms” in terms that align with contemporary poststructuralist and postmodern conventions concerning the subject, language, and intentionality.

The ideas in this paper are developed in response to “From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the ‘Violence’ of Seattle” by Kevin Michael DeLuca and

Jennifer Peeples, where they “explore the constraints and opportunities of the public screen, a current place for participatory democracy” (393) and call for an “exploration of the conditions of possibility for the rhetoric, politics, and participatory democracy in the techno-industrial corporate-controlled culture” (397). Their emphasis on a admissible use of violence by both protestors and police at the WTO protest in Seattle in 2002 implies that “for people excluded by governmental structure and corporate power, symbolic protest violence [aimed at non-persons] is an effective way to make it onto the public screen and speak to that power” (395). While the issue of violence is not core to this paper, I would argue that symbolic violence is more pervasive in information-based societies and arguably more effective via memetic responses to political events and other purely media-generated images (as opposed to photographic images of real life events) than are the still Habermas-bound events of private citizens gathering in a public sphere (i.e. the WTO protests) that DeLuca and Peeples analyze closely as an example of “remediation” (385). Symbolic violence, as pure image, as a remediated form of public protest in the “public screen,” more closely aligns with the transformation “of the media matrix that constitutes our social milieu, producing new forms of social organization and new modes of perception” for which DeLuca and Peeples call (385). While they rightly critique Jurgen Habermas and his “conceptualization and history of the public sphere [as having] many flaws, foremost among them his privileging of dialogue and fetishization of a procedural rationality at the heart of the public sphere,” (382) they themselves cling to the “practice of staging image events for dissemination” (389) despite their recognition of a technological transformation of democracy (and perhaps reality itself). Ultimately, the question of an online public sphere will continue to inform discussions of rhetoric, power, and politics in the near future, and I assume that further quantitative studies will support the exigencies of net activity as a technological factor in

increasing heterogeneous global dialogues. This question of a revised public sphere brings us next to the issue of Hillary Clinton as reality and as image for the public screen.

Hillary as Political Other (and Fourth Wave Feminist Goddess)

When we review the history of women in the media, of women as public speakers and public voices, of women in politics—it is clear that despite major inroads within the past 100 years, the role and images of women remain caught up in a double bind: when women are seen as weak, they are likable (and so dismissed) and when women are seen as strong, they are unlikeable (so dismissed). Here, I address the “Weak Hillary/Strong Clinton” issue in which a humanized Hillary is seen as likeable, but weak; and a Clinton-as-Other is seen as strong, but unlikeable. I use the moniker “Hillary” rather than the usual reference of “Clinton” or “Senator Clinton” or “Secretary of State Clinton” when I refer to the political “icon” of Hillary Clinton since her reality as a national (and global) presence, symbol, and human power transcends the limitations of a standard last name. On the other hand, when I mean Hillary Clinton as a tangible, embodied, flesh-and-blood human, I will use her last name of “Clinton” since her married name from Bill Clinton reminds us of her uses & abuses (prior to an independent political career) as wife, first lady, and sometimes political presence. Hillary is a-temporal, virtual, screen-positioned, and memetic; Clinton is historical, physical, space-positioned, and particular. Before ending on larger theoretical issues based in the ideas of the late Baudrillard, I organize my examination around three premises:

Claim 1: Women tend to be seen as weak in regard to positive, strong political leadership traits.

Mirya R. Holman, Jennifer L. Merolla, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister “find that conditions of terrorist threat increase the expression of certain gender-trait stereotypes and negatively affect

evaluations of female Democratic leaders” (173). Their analysis suggests that “Republican women and/or those with strong national security experience may be able to overcome the otherwise negative implications of security threats and gender-trait stereotypes,” in turn suggesting that Democratic female politicians operate under a double threat, being women and being Democrats and therefore seen as doubly incapable of being pro-military enough to stand up to terrorists threats. As the authors expected, “a context of terror threat caused our subjects to perceive men as better leaders and as better able to deal emotionally with politics” (186). Hillary Clinton is in the prototypical position of being seen as such a notorious “bitch” [e.g. the infamous Connie Chung/Kathleen Gingrich interview] that public images of her as weak or powerless or too “female” are counteracted by more prevalent images of her as a male-coded megalomaniac & a gender-bending tyrant. Such perceptions of fe/male power, however, undercut any possible public support for Clinton since her strengths as a “mannish woman” are seen as gender-inauthentic, threatening and socialist, a Big Brother specter for the paranoid reactionary right. So the more masculine (i.e. politically powerful) a woman such as Clinton is seen, the more threatening and unlikeable, and the more traditionally feminine she is seen (i.e. politically weak) the more unthreatening and likeable, but ineffectual.

In agreement with my claim, Lindsey Meeks states that “politics is typically seen in masculine terms, and this impression appears to increase as candidates seek higher levels of office” (177) and finds that this “emphasis among voters on masculine issues means that women need to access a more masculine subtype—and thus risk being perceived as gender-inauthentic—if they want to be considered serious candidates, particularly for higher office” (180). An outlier to the fact that women are more likely to view female politicians in a positive light, however, is that some research suggest a number of reasons why people may respond to support for a female

political candidate differently when the source of the endorsement is a man versus a woman (Vandegrift and Czopp). Both men and women expected Hillary Clinton to be endorsed by a woman rather than a man, but women were more likely to agree with a male Clinton supporter than with a female Clinton supporter while men were more likely to view a male supporter in a negative light. Might this failure of women to agree with women's political evaluations be due to an internalization of gender bias? Might men be negatively evaluating male supporters due to a perceived weakness in men (coded female) who support women? At any rate, the sexist subtext is still being tested by research. Clinton, as other female politicians, is caught in a double-bind: if she's good, she's bad; and if she's bad, she's good. "It's not that voters and her opponents think Clinton is experienced and competent, and they don't like or trust her. It's that they think she's experienced and competent and that's why they don't like or trust her" (Bleigh, et. al. "Finding"). Such a statement could never be made about a man and leads to my next premise:

Claim 2: Women are judged by a different set of rules than are men; women are seen as weak or ineffectual leaders when their behavior is viewed as emotional or even merely human.

Valerie Manusov and Jessica Harvey analyze new reportage of a turning point in the Hillary 2008 Presidential Campaign primary when Senator Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail, "teared up" following a woman's question on the challenges of women campaigning. Manusov and Harvey surmise that there are two primary and competing categories for discussion of Hillary Clinton's tears. Basing their analysis on "metapragmatic discourse" (media responses to nonverbal cues) their data regarding both "media frames" (ways the media present events or information) and "individual frames" (how audience members interpret and process information) indicate that in both frames, Clinton's tears "were portrayed as consequential, affecting perceptions of the candidate and, potentially, voting behavior, particularly among women" (292).

Hillary's tears were viewed by the media as both indicating "sincerity/authenticity," as displays of something about "the real" Hillary Clinton, or her feelings were conversely viewed as staged or phony by (largely male) anti-Clinton media voices. Unfortunately for Clinton, who is generally seen as less feminine (and therefore less likable) than other politicians (such as Sarah Palin), signs of feminine "weakness" only serve to portray her as manipulatively playing the "gender/tear card," of being an aggressive political post-gender animal.

Sarah J. Gravis and Amy L. Hilliard show that "Clinton was evaluated as less stereotypically feminine and less warm than Palin, whereas Palin was evaluated as less competent than Clinton" and that "participant gender, benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, and political orientation predicted differential voting likelihood for Clinton and Palin" (221). They indicate that "role congruity theory posits that female leaders may experience prejudice because the female gender role is inconsistent with the leader role" so that "female leaders are in a double bind: They cannot simultaneously act in ways that are consistent with both the female gender role and the leader role because the roles are contradictory" (223). The authors conclude that "women with more feminine characteristics may violate prescriptive beliefs about the leader role, whereas women with less stereotypically feminine characteristics may violate prescriptive beliefs about the gender role" (236). What this study indicates for Clinton is that 1. Benignly sexist (i.e. chivalrous) and hostile sexist (anti-feminist) largely male voters are less likely to vote for Clinton because she is not viewed as sufficiently "feminine," 2. As a gender group, women are more likely to see Clinton's non-traditional female characteristics in a positive light and therefore vote for her, 3. Clinton has trouble courting a male vote since she, more than any other female politician, cannot negotiate the double-bind mentioned previously.

Studies have shown that negative media has an influence on judgments of women politicians' likability (Bligh et. al. "Competent"). Other findings reveal that women with similar credentials are less likely than comparable men to view themselves as qualified office-seekers (Fox and Lawless). Such evidence reminds us that female politicians need to be watchful in monitoring their media depictions. Also, this rejection of ambitious women (especially the ambiguously-female Clinton) often plays itself out in the public and the media in pornographic and violent images. Clinton has been the brunt of a large number of such misogynous images.

Claim 3: Women are more likely than men to be referred to in violent and pornographic ways that detract from their seriousness as candidates and politicians.

Karrin Vasby Anderson claims "that political culture and campaign journalism during the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign was 'pornified.'" She examines journalism, videos, online, political pop culture, and campaigns to reveals how pornographic images and narratives penetrated the 2008 presidential election and argues that "the emergence of the pornification frame signals a backlash against the gains women have made in the U.S. political system" (327).

Cartoon images of Clinton "were more likely to be unfavorable...[she] was more often presented as ugly and small in size than was Obama...[she] was shown perpetrating violence more often than the male candidates...[and] she was also portrayed as the recipient of particularly gruesome violence" (Zurbriggen and Sherman 223). While racial issues appeared in the 2008 Campaign, sexist cartoon images strikingly dominated total negative portrayal of candidates. Zurbriggen and Sherman also note that "Clinton was...the only candidate drawn as a monster, including references to her being a serial killer, various witches, a variety of 'undead' figures" and conclude that "Hillary Clinton is still perceived by the sampled cartoonists as a

threatening figure, resulting in much more negative evaluations of her, both generally and specifically, compared to the male candidates” (240-41). I wonder if such negative reactions to Clinton and portrayals of Hillary in image and language are due more to Clinton’s perceived gender-ambiguity or to her complex history with Washington and with the American public. The fact remains that Hillary Clinton, more perhaps than any other female politician of her time, attracts fearful and angry voters who cast her in the role of usurper and “Other.” Continued studies comparing race and gender in media images and reportage for high-level political campaigns may tell us more about how race and gender play supporting and competing roles in U.S. politics.

In “Sexualizing Sarah Palin: The Social and Political Context of the Sexual Objectification of Female Candidates,” Caroline Heldman and Lisa Wade find that in our “new era of objectification,” the Objectification Theory (as described by Heflick and Goldenberg: in which a “strong emphasis placed on women’s appearance...leads them to internalize observers’ perspectives and chronically monitor themselves in terms of how others would evaluate their appearance”) is alive and well. In fact, an increase of both objectification of women and the internalization of this objectification by women “may also help explain the recent stagnation in U.S. progress towards gender equity in political representation” (156-57). While Heldman and Wade see the fault primarily with female sexual objectification becoming increasingly “ubiquitous and normalized,” especially due to the Internet, I would further suggest that various New Media within the past two decades has created a virtual environment in which sexist stereotypes are played out for the voting masses in a way that was impossible when theories of female objectification first developed in the 1970’s; also that this increase in objectification is part of a larger social transformation of reality into hyper-reality.

While Sarah Palin is the focus of Heldman and Wade's research, I would contend that Hillary Clinton as a global, public, and media-driven figure is the most important example of a controversial female leader and political thinker within a hyper-reality and New World Order in which feminist agendas and media transformation of reality work in tandem. Both public support for Clinton and backlashes against Hillary as "ubermensche" underscore my claim that a media-generated and "virtual" Hillary is more tangible to her supporters, distractors, fans, and critics than is the real woman. To exemplify the virtual Hillary, I will analyze the "Hillary 1984" political ad from the 2008 presidential primary campaign and follow with details on what this political ad and Hillary indicates for feminism and future concepts of "reality."

"Hillary 1984" (analyses)

I would like to analyze the infamous Hillary 1984 ("Vote Different") mash-up ad from the 2008 presidential campaign in order to indicate how traditional notions of gender and political-economic power are rearticulated by appropriation of tropes from the original Apple ad of 1984. I want to suggest how indicative of our cultural fear of powerful women (especially politicians) as anomalies, usurpers, and socialist "others" that political media are and how close readings can explore ways to reengage and re-appropriate negative tropes. Sexist, dehumanizing representations can be resisted by articulating how women in politics are attacked by using tropes to imagine them as "other"—in this case, Hillary Clinton as not fully human and not fully "American." This infamous attack on Hillary Clinton came from the political left, but employed tropes and tactics used against Hillary by the political right.

A review of the Apple's iconic 1984 commercial (introducing the Apple Macintosh personal computer, directed by Ridley Scott, and nationally aired on television during the 1984

Super Bowl football game) is germane here since the Hillary 1984 ad is a nearly identical appropriation and mash-up. My focus will be on politics and gender for a hypothetical politically & media-savvy viewer.

[Apple "1984" ad YouTube video](#)

In the Apple commercial, based on George Orwell's *1984*, hordes of mindless citizen consumers trudge through industrial tunnels towards a "cinema" to watch a Big Brother, Hitleresque figure drill them. A healthy, sexy young woman wearing a bright uniform, in contrast to the grim prison/Holocaust wear of the masses, flees from thought police (with connotations of human-cyborg & Star Wars Imperial Storm Troopers) and begins to swing a large brass hammer in Olympic track-and-field manner. A looming Big Brother intones:

Today, we celebrate the first glorious anniversary of the Information Purification Directives. We have created, for the first time in all history, a garden of pure ideology—where each worker may bloom, secure from the pests purveying contradictory truths. Our Unification of Thoughts is more powerful a weapon than any fleet or army on earth. We are one people, with one will, one resolve, one cause. Our enemies shall talk themselves to death, and we will bury them with their own confusion. We shall prevail!

The runner hurls her hammer through the screen image, which explodes in a rush of light, smoke, and wind, stunning the benumbed masses. A portentous voiceover reads words scrolled: "On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like 1984."

Since the ad appeared during a Super Bowl game, one can assume that male middle-America was the primary audience (given that only in the past 20 years has the Super bowl

turned into a family pastime). Early computer culture was very male-dominated and radically independent, so an anti-authoritarian stance would connect with its viewership. The setting is blue and grey, stark and dystopian, but there is a machine-like beauty reminiscent of the movies *Metropolis* and *Blade Runner* (released in 1982) that pulls the viewer into the hypnotically edited rhythm of the short film.

The Big Brother figure is appropriately menacing in the sort of aging, emasculated way that intellectual cult figures associated with *1984* have been. Here we have a classic interpretation of Orwell's post-human [Big Brother is always a screen image] with little direct connection with IBM, the intended target (though Microsoft would later be seen by many as Big Brother). What's odd is that a disembodied Big Brother image, in opposition to the robustly human body of the female liberator, is representational of the sort of computer-based person for whom the ad is intended. And the sexy liberator (one imagines as a fantasy figure for the typical computer "geek") means that a male viewer projects onto a female body both a desire for liberation and a sexual desire. Taking note that this ad appeared during the Reagan Era, it shows an empowered female overthrowing a simulated patriarchal/socialist figure as a means to embody the dreams and desires of a male-controlled computer industry. Ironically, however, the female liberator representing early Apple Computers Inc. appears to be a soldier for the sort of cowboy capitalism that 20 years later undermined worker incomes and sent global behemoth Apple Inc.'s manufacturing overseas.

"Hillary 1984" is on the face of it a subtle appropriation. Since the ad is not noticeably visually altered other than through the superimposition of Hillary's face onto the screen in place of Big Brother, the viewer may instantly be taken back first to the Apple ad and second to

notions of Big Brother and dystopian images. It runs 01:14 minutes versus the 01:04 of the original ad.

"Hillary 1984" ad YouTube video

The auditory portion of the video is almost completely different since it consists in excerpts from speeches given by Hillary on her possible presidential campaign and the need for “dialogue” and “conversation,” backed by industrial sounds from the original ad. While images are unchanged, the alteration of Hillary as Big Brother modifies the context, message, and audience of the ad-film. A stable close-up shot of a frighteningly benign Hillary rattling on about herself (the mouthy female?) is intercut with shots directly from the original commercial.

*One month ago I began a conversation with all of you and so far we haven't stopped talking and that's really good...I intend to keep telling you exactly where I stand on all of the issues...I'm looking at how to help you and other people who are hardworking like you and I've really been impressed by how serious people are...because we all need to be part of the discussion if we're all going to be part of the solution...I don't want people who already agree with me...I want honest serious hardworking patriotic people who want to be part of a team, the American Team...I hope you've learned a little bit more about what I'm believing and trying to do...and really helped this conversation about our country get started [scroll "This is our conversation" on the screen] I hope to keep this conversation going all the way to November 2008... *explosion**

Downward scroll the words ““On Jan. 14, the Democratic primary will begin. And you'll see why 2008 won't be like 1984” and we're left with open-mouthed workers to be won over by the unnamed Obama.

Big Brother here is transformed into Hillary playing both male and female gender roles. As replacement, she suffers the fate of female politicians by going against gender norms and therefore being less likable. As a looming woman, Hillary seems to be an otherworldly and inhuman usurper of our ultimate male power position in the modern age, the U.S. presidency. The duel frames of 1. Reagan Era upstart capitalism in reaction to the threat of a Soviet techno-state and 2. Obama's implied non-female and non-socialist position as candidate serve to place Hillary as evil matriarch representing the duel threats of (an ironically inferior) technology and of global socialism. The fact that Hillary is quelled by a young, right-wing version of female voters only adds to the irony and deceptiveness of the video.

The tensions between a virtual Hillary (as depicted in the political ad) and a human Clinton work in conjunction with the tensions that Baudrillard in his final book, *The Intelligence of Evil (or the Lucidity Pact)*, finds between two antagonistic trends in the hyper-realization of the simulation: Integral Reality and The Duel Form (21). To understand women in politics now is to gain insight the structure of reality/post-reality itself. Baudrillard's famous distinctions on the historical orders of simulacra form the basis of my model. In a sense, Hillary (though not Clinton) might be designated the Goddess of such a realm. At this point, I shift into a more ambitious mode to address certain revisions for the interpretation of public sphere events via media depictions in relation to quickly shifting constructs of reality and the posthuman.

Public Sphere—Public Space (Orders of Simulacra)

Baudrillard speaks of the progression of the three orders of in his seminal *Symbolic Exchange and Death*:

Three orders of simulation, parallel to mutations in the law of value, have succeeded one another since the Renaissance: 1 The counterfeit is the dominant scheme of the "classical" epoch, from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution. 2 Production is the dominant scheme of the industrial era. 3 Simulation is the dominant scheme of the present phase of history, governed by the code. Simulacra of the first order play on the natural law of value; those of the second order play on the commodity law of value; and those of the third order play on the structural law of value. (Baudrillard "Selected" 135)

My model employs both Baudrillard and DeLuca & Peebles to the effect: Public-Sphere1, Public-Sphere2, Public-Screen1, and Public-Screen2.

- The Symbolic Order was organized as a fixed system of signs in reference to an objective reality, which I here read as Public Sphere-1 (the object as object). The Symbolic Order is merely historical in our present age.
- First Order Simulacra aim to create ideal images of nature as replicas, but an objective reality remains beneath. I read this order here as Public Sphere-2 (the object as subject). The First Order is today anachronistic.
- Second Order Simulacra appear with mass production and the replication of prototypes so that the reproduced is just as authentic as the prototype. This corresponds to my Public Screen-1 (the subject as object) since we still recognize material reality, but not as superior to or detached from a Virtual Reality. The Second Order is now referential and sentimental, not actual.
- Third Order Simulacra appear when reality is dominated by simulations, objects that have no prototypes. The model for this order is the Internet-as-matrix, where pure simulation

instigates Baudrillard's Death of the Real. This order is Public Screen-2 (the subject as subject) beyond which an objective reality is no longer referenced or recognized.

DeLuca and Peebles make use of a binary model of public sphere (physical action) and public screen (perceived media image) to analyze protests in Seattle. While such a model is in accordance with folk psychology, it simplifies a transhuman subject within Virtual Reality space. Expanding their model allows greater flexibility in critiquing political actions and images in relation to each other and allows for phenomenological and ontological depths lacking in a binary model, which assumes that actions occurring within "objective" reality are simply recorded by mechanical means to be transmitted into a media "reality."

Actions that take place in a Habermasian public space occur for themselves, so there is no need of a recording (or Second Order simulation) in which images reflect an objective reality—and DeLuca and Peebles appear to assume this "public space" is the case. However, actions that are captured as images using digital technology are no longer complete *in* themselves but now bear a relation to technological capture that demands they be *for* themselves (insofar as action-images are perceived as new realisms detached from a traditional concept of reality). Object and actions for themselves as *capture* I refer to as Sphere-2 and Sphere-3. The object-as-subject designates a state of capture; the subject-as-object designates a state of release; the object is arrested as image to be released as subject; the subject is released by image to be captured by object. Once this arrest/release is complete, the subject remains in/for itself only. This freeing is the Third Order simulacra that exist within a Virtual Reality of pure subjectivity. Here I must admit that where Baudrillard finds the death of transcendence, I hope to find a new transcendence. Where he finds the "supremacy of the object," I see a possible transcendence located in Fourth Wave Feminism, a new kind of political activism guided by a spirituality &

social justice heralding a post-human state of pure technology-based subjectivity. The feminine here appears from outside the destructive conflict between subject and object, between human and technology. Let me review some basic concepts that bind together Baudrillard with my sphere/screen model.

Public sphere/public screen: I begin with DeLuca & Peeples' use of the terms "public sphere" and "public screen," but where they venture from the traditional Habermasian "sphere" or physical space to indicate that the screen (as in TV or computer screen) may be an outlet for political action and representation as image or "a necessary supplement to the metaphor of the public sphere for understanding [the] political scene" (381), I go further to claim that the public screen is indicative of an ontological shift from Modernist-based notions of "reality" to a technology-derived concept of Virtual Reality drawing on Baudrillard. I appropriate the term "public screen" to mean a public simulational space (or real-time Public Space) that is no longer a two-dimensional image generated by a computer monitor as an electronic visual display, but is rather a parallel universe and dimensionless hyper-space that supplements (or replaces) the defunct metaphor of the public screen. I agree that Habermas' conception of the public sphere errs in privileging dialogue and fetishizing reason (DeLuca and Peeples 382). Modernist, commonsense notions of a "reality" based in a long-outdated Newtonian physics are now replaced with conceptions of media spaces operating as interstices within which public discussions, event scenes, CGI spectacles, and digital transitions occur.

Image, Symbol, Simulation: DeLuca & Peeples rightly imply that both image and spectacle function as visual reportage, that media images "have intensified the speed of communication and obliterated space as a barrier to communication," (395) but they don't go far enough in recognizing that "remediation and hypermediacy" are the "ground of Being" (386) in not only

the conceptual and metaphorical senses, but in the functionally real sense as well. For today's cybercitizen, the image is internal and a-symbolic, eviscerated in its simulation since operational political events are no longer reported, but rather occur outside space-time in a dimensionless immanence that is disconnected from the modernist grounding of Being. Therefore, a "symbol" occurs—insofar as metaphor is no longer possible in such a sphere of pure information—only as signal, cipher, code, or algorithm.

Reality/Virtual Reality/Hyperreality: "Reality" in Baudrillard's writings after *Symbolic Exchange and Death* indicates the physical world expressed symbolically, semantically, and semiotically as fundamentally a Western modern principle. While the terms Virtual Reality and Hyperreality are used synonymously by Baudrillard in his more visionary "theory fiction" of the 80's and 90's, I prefer the term "hyperreality" as more indicative of computer environments melding with human perception.

Gender, Female, Women: Despite the overdetermination of these terms and the contention that surround them, I mean gender to indicate persons functioning according to socially defined roles, female to mean biologically-based human, and women to indicate a political-social body in opposition to patriarchal and hegemonic bodies. Women's bodies and voices and images, therefore, now serve to de-gender an Old World Order in which the fe/male was always at odds with itself (c.f. Judith Butler's acts of biological sex).

Post-human, Transhuman: While the two terms are sometimes inappropriately used synonymously, the posthuman usually refers to that evolutionary "species" which may succeed historical, biological Homo sapiens. The transhuman, in contrast, indicates for me Homo sapiens engaged with contemporary neuro-biological scientific research, neurological technology,

computer networks, and AI innovations. And while the idea of the transhuman may elate, the fear of the posthuman will always disorient.

Baudrillard's Integral Reality: fear of a Female New World Order

Baudrillard, in his final book, *The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact*, recognizes two antagonistic trends in the hyper-realization of the simulation: Integral Reality and The Duel Form. He summarizes and expands on the idea of simulation by claiming that we are now in an age when of a unification and totalization of hyperreality is held in check by an underlying tension or dualism, an intelligent evil that attempts to prevent this Integral Reality. Baudrillard writes that “behind the eclipse of the ‘objective’ real is the rise of Integral Reality, of a Virtual Reality that rests on the deregulation of the very reality principle” (17) so that what remains for us are two antagonistic trends, “Integral Reality: the irreversible movement towards the totalization of the world./ The Duel Form: the reversibility internal to the irreversible movement of the real” (21). What I propose is that a Fourth Wave Feminism whose goal to integrate now fragmented socio-political and socio-economic bodies be identified as the Feminine Other behind this Integral Reality and celebrated as opposing the mutually destructive binarisms of gender and language. For me, therefore, Hillary Clinton as global leader and meme-presence becomes iconic of such a movement, allowing me to find good where Baudrillard finds “evil.” If a public screen Hillary is seen as a threat to the public sphere Clinton (and here I admit that my own dichotomous terms break down) and specter of a Female New World Order, it’s only because “there is no way for us to guess how this contradictory double movement will work itself out” (Baudrillard *Intelligence* 21) and because imbedded sexism in politics and in political media insure that—for now—images of powerful women will be mostly read (and misread) as gender-inappropriate Goddesses of Totalization.

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