

CHAPTER 1
TRANSVERSAL PERFORMANCE: SHAKESPACE,
THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS, AND
THE CRITICAL FUTURE

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The United States of America's immediate response to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon multifarious, but mainly it was horrific astonishment. The people of this country wanted to know who was responsible and why the attacks were perpetrated. They also wanted to know what the damage was and how to fix it. We know now that approximately 3000 people were murdered, yet the answers to the rest of these questions will remain uncertain and inadequate. The attacks were products of a vastly complicated history for which there can be no unmediated access, no singular or absolute truth, and therefore no totalizing resolution. Despite the strong desire for retribution and redemption, and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, nothing can undo what has happened. All attempts at restoration can only ever be adaptation, mimicry, and representation. Remains, organic and otherwise, can be processed chemically and/or altered imaginatively to fuel new life through assimilation, fabrication, and/or imitation. In some cases, a life's remains can achieve a powerful symbolic meaning that significantly influences not only the present, but also how we perceive the past, and where we see ourselves in the future.

Moving into the future, forever changed by the September 11 attacks, this introductory chapter considers the positive possibilities not for restoration, but for different kinds of learning and evolution for which the attacks have already become gateways. By analyzing the terrorist attacks as sociopolitical acts framed and executed in ways theoretically and affectively relatable to mass media, theater, music, dance, writing, and other modes of verbal and nonverbal social performance, I want

to address issues crucial to the future of critical inquiry and the particular Shakespeare-influenced “spaces”—past, present, future hypothetical, theatrical, social, cultural, political, historical, theatrical, textual, and critical discourses and coordinates—through which this book ventures and resounds. It is in such discursive, multidimensional “articulatory spaces,” Shakespeare effected and/or otherwise, that critical discourses coordinate interface, social performances are imbued respectively and relationally with meaning, subsequent communication transpires, and learning is achieved.

Negotiated diachronically and synchronically, articulatory spaces are always constrained by what I call “sociopolitical conductors.” These are mental and physical movers, orchestrators, and transmitters, such as educational, juridical, and religious structures, multimedia broadcasting and information sources, and the institutions of marriage and family, all of which promote or oppose partially or predominantly, and often contradictorily, the dominant ideology of the society in which they function.¹ The aggregate of a society’s sociopolitical conductors that support the dominant ideology I refer to as “state machinery,”² a concept that accounts for the singular and plural, human and technological influences that work tirelessly but ultimately futilely to manufacture societal coherence and symbiosis. An absolute state for both individuals (meaning humans individuated from other humans) and/or the society they comprise is never a real prospect as long as physical movement and change are constant realities, even though the quest for stable states and the fear of achieving them will nevertheless always stimulate solidarities and antagonisms among sociopolitical conductors with different views on what the ideal society and state should be. However manipulated by sociopolitical conductors with diverse views of the ideal world, discourse on the September 11 attacks, occupying certain articulatory spaces, will continue to influence the conductors themselves as it continues to impact all areas of critical inquiry, including the interdisciplinary fields of cultural anthropology, literary criticism, performance theory, and Shakespeare studies in which my own research concentrates.

Transversal theory

To more fully explain the way I would like us to think about the September 11 attacks, I will employ more concepts, in addition to “sociopolitical conductors” and “state machinery,” that were originally developed from my research on criminality and theater in early modern

England. These concepts are linked to my own theoretical approach, what I call “transversal theory,” that I introduced in my 1997 *Theatre Journal* article, “The Devil’s House, ‘or worse’: Transversal Power and Antitheatrical Discourse of Early Modern England,” and have developed in a number of publications, most recently my 2002 book, *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England*.³ Transversal theory guides the analyses of this book, and this book is an expansion of transversal theory and the concepts and powers that drive it. When I introduce transversal theory to my students, I frequently begin with the example, a hypothetical case, of an explosion unexpectedly occurring in the university classroom. I want to begin here with this example because of its relevant structural similarities, although obviously on a much smaller scale, to the events of September 11. The comparison, I believe, will enable us to examine crucial variables free from many of the immediate, personal biases that discussion of the attacks commonly invokes.

If an explosion unexpectedly occurred in the university classroom, and the teacher and other students were horribly injured, the once familiar and safe space of the classroom and, by extension, the university, would become, in an instant, radically transformed. If the cause of the explosion was ambiguous, though many students suspected foul play, it might render the students more damaged psychologically than if the source were obvious. The unidentifiable and mysterious is usually more terrifying than the readily discernable; an unknown enemy is always more difficult to comprehend, defend against, and fight. Whether the source of the explosion is uncertain or evident, the explosion itself would produce a drastic shift from familiar and safe to unfamiliar and dangerous, and this sudden transformation would have a disorienting effect on the students for some duration, at the very least. According to transversal theory, what I call the students’ “subjective territory” would have been altered.

Subjective territory refers to the conceptual and emotional spatial range from which a given subject perceives and experiences the world; this applies to all individuals living in a society who are, consciously and/or not, self-governing in accordance with their state-sanctioned conceptuality and emotionality.⁴ Put differently, subjective territory accounts for the individual human who has been subjugated conceptually and emotionally, that is, developed into a subject by the state machinery of any hegemonic society or subsociety (such as the university, criminal organizations, or religious societies); and thus the individual’s subjective territory, and corresponding self-government, reflects his or her socioeconomic positioning. Subjective territory reinforces the

society's sociopolitical conductors that work to inculcate individuals with the appropriate ideology, the ideology that in turn confirms for them their prescribed addresses, their subjective territory, within the society's hierarchical geography. The resulting determination is physical as well conceptual and emotional; physical constraints (such as traffic laws, ghettoization, and regionalization) influence the conceptual and emotional aspects of subjectivity, just as they are symptoms and extensions of these aspects.

Consider the constructed life experiences, the subjectivity, of people occupying specific social and class identities (male or female; rich or poor; Catholic, Jewish, or Muslim; and so on). Because of commonalities in experience and education, there is typically much interaction, overlap, and imbrication among subjective territories, hence creating a righteous feeling of homogeneity and universality that links a society's members. The system operates self-consciously symptomatically, with great efficacy: each individual's interiority is networked with triggers that set off feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety whenever their subjective territory is threatened. Threats result from inadvertently dissident wanderings and slippages willful conceptual and/or emotional border crossings, or challenges and disruptions imposed by outside forces, such as the destabilizing effects of a sudden explosion. When one moves outside of their subjective territory, conceptually or emotionally, and crosses into the subjective territory of another and/or into unidentifiable territory, and/or finds oneself disconnected from familiarity, one has engaged in what I call "transversal movements."⁵

Transversal movements are feelings, thoughts, and actions alternative to those that work to circumscribe and maintain a particular subjective territory. Most people engage in them to some degree, in one form or another, everyday. People most move transversally when they empathize or imagine they are empathizing with others. They may actually have no idea of what someone else is thinking or feeling, but they are nonetheless still thinking and feeling atypically in their attempt to empathize, "as if" they are someone else, which pushes them transversally. By occupying, if only imaginatively or ephemerally, the subjective territory of another one's own subjective territory expands and reconfigures. Empathy is also probably the most common way by which people venture into what I call "subjunctive space," the hypothetical space of both "as if" and "what if," which is an in-between space operative between subjective territory and what I have termed "transversal territory."⁶

In subjunctive space, unlike in transversal territory, the subject necessarily retains agency and can self-consciously hypothesize scenarios

and experiences, thereby self-activating her/his own transversal movements. These can work to stabilize, empower, and/or disempower the subject, which may lead to either further subjectification or further occupation of transversal territory. Chaotic and boundless, transversal territory is a mysterious, challenging, and transformative space through which people journey when they defy or surpass the conceptual and/or emotional boundaries of their prescribed subjective addresses, in effect subverting the hierarchicalizing and homogenizing state machinery of the governing organizational structure. People usually engage in and occupy transversal territory only transitionally and temporally. To reside permanently in transversal territory, rather than pass through it, would be to subsist without any kind of cognitive stability or control.

People can generate their own transversal movements or the transversal movements of others through emotional, conceptual, and bodily performances that provoke strong reactions, such as empathy, terror, fury alienation, ecstasy, love, abjection, trauma, or psychosis. Unconventional ways of thinking and behaving are both spurred by and generate what I refer to as “transversal power,” which fuels transversal movements. Transversal power, a fluid and discursive phenomenon that can be found in anything from terrorist acts to natural catastrophes to heart-wrenching poetry to philosophical inquiry, may not come from a recognizable source or with obvious purpose. It is unclear whether an individual, for instance, can generate transversal power internally, or if the individual instead harnesses transversal power already existent and in circulation: consciously and/or not, the individual taps into the power, either drawing it out or unleashing it. Whatever the circumstances of its activation, transversal power induces people to transverse and permeate the organized space of subjectivity, of all subjective territory, and venture into the inestimable space of transversality, where learning and metamorphosis can be dynamic and limitless.

With the example of the unexpected explosion in the university classroom, we can add to the equation, for instance, that it is likely that some of the students would suffer from traumatic neurosis, a debilitating mental disorder characterized by insecurity, confusion, anxiety, hysteria, or phobias. This is where the society’s monitoring mechanisms come into play. The clinical psychologists would be prepared to match the traumatized students with the appropriate template (they might refer to the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*) in hopes of curing them (stopping their pain) and thus restoring them to their prescribed subjective territories. The clinician seeks to relativize and normalize each student’s experience, strategically trying

to manipulate him/her with psychology, behavioral therapy, and/or medication into snapping back emotionally and conceptually, and, finally, physically, which would be demonstrated through the student's return to school and other "normal" activities. But reversal and restoration are never real possibilities. Once exposed to alternative thoughts and feelings, one can never return to the way one used to think and feel. This is the case for all experiences, but for those that inspire transversality, the effects are greater, and hence more likely to have significant lasting impact. Should any of the students exposed to the explosion develop a serious neurosis or psychosis, the parameters of the student's subjective territory would have been significantly breached, if not shattered. As a result, the student's subjectivity would most likely remain to a considerable extent in the transitional space of transversal territory.

Transversal methodology

When analyzing any thing, idea, or event, and especially something like an unexpected explosion in a university classroom, which necessitates transversal movement and increased potential for discordance and chaos, transversal theory calls for what cognitive neuroscientist James Intriligator and I have termed the "investigative-expansive mode" of analysis (also referred to as the "i.e. mode").⁷ This is a methodology opposed, for instance (to give a common example), to what we call the "dissective-cohesive mode" ("d.c. mode"), the interpretative strategy, often referred to as the "scientific method," which characterizes most dialectical argumentation. The investigative-expansive approach breaks the subject matter under investigation into variables that are then partitioned and examined in relation to other influences, both abstract and empirical, beyond the immediate vicinity. A chief objective of this expansive methodology is to contextualize historically, ideologically, and critically both the subject matter and the analysis itself within local and greater milieu. Mobile and vine-like, the investigative-expansive mode resists anything resembling predetermination or circumscription and requires continuous maneuverings and reparameterizations in response to unexpected, even sudden, emergences of glitches, quagmires, and new information as it deduces, trail blazes, follows off-beat leads, takes tangential excursions, while rigorously sprawling analytically.

Like the investigative-expansive mode, the dissective-cohesive mode also breaks down the subject matter under investigation into variables and then partitions them as a means by which to examine them discreetly. Conversely, the dissective-cohesive approach does this in

order to later reassemble the variables into a unified and accountable whole, such as a human subject, a social totality, or a deterministic history. An example is psychoanalysis' attempts to locate formulaically the subject firmly within its explanatory geography. Such preoccupation with discerning patterns and conforming them to a preexisting and inflexible model ineluctably "affirms" established parameters and finally demarcates investigation. Determination of this kind leaves little room and tolerance for innovation and/or deviation, since any variance may work to undermine the credibility and value of the analytic system. The d.c. mode may situate subject matter relationally within an environment and consider what I call articulations in "absent-spaces" as significant factors, that is, historical, subterranean, and/or apparently sourceless expressions, receptions, and experiences. Yet the overall goal of the d.c. mode is to gain a better understanding of what is believed to have been the subject matter's original whole or coherent presence and what that totality "should" be. It often does this at the expense of exploring or acknowledging the subject matter's teleological, diachronic, and/or synchronic interconnectedness to other objects and/or forces, in such forms as expressive, receptive, and experiential articulations, in both "present-spaces" and "future-present-spaces," the latter of which is subsequent to the former and thus less immediately occupied and observable.

Investigative-expansive analysis is a part of transversal poetics; it's transversal theory in practice. While in the throes of critical inquiry, the investigative-expansive thinker ("i.e. thinker") demonstrates the transversal slogans, "Become what you aren't" and "Meanings are vehicles," as she/he ventures processually through sundry recipes often written in incomprehensible languages, remarkable osmoses with unidentifiable substances, and hitherto unimagined becomings-others. Embodying the i.e. mode, i.e. thinkers are ready to abruptly shift courses and gears as terrains change across dimensionalities and temporalities, perhaps while contending with the daunting recognition that what was once there is gone, and what was least expected now looms large. Within the i.e. thinker's field of consciousness, notwithstanding the free-range of opportunities, certain variables are tracked and focused on as they move through space-time, although the scope, lenses, and emphases of observation and cognizance fluctuate. Among these are: (1) expectations, contexts, and coordinates of the analytical process itself; (2) degrees of agency and prospects of the researcher, probable audiences, and subject matters of the investigation performed; (3) varying affinities among, more than differences between, elements within both territories transversed and bypassed; and (4) future potentialities as compelling

impetuses, rather than just the past as reasoned motives, for scholarship in the present. Because articulatory spaces are vital to contextualizing and understanding how values assigned to subject matters in present-spaces have been fabricated through the traces of absent-spaces as potential avenues to future experiences, i.e. thinkers stress hermeneutic amplification in “future-present-spaces” (“The future is now, now, now, ...”) and vigilantly grasp the capricious waves between past and future on which they inquisitively surf. Such concentration on research expansion in future-present-spaces is consistent with transversal theory’s privileging of space over time, presupposing, as evidenced by the preponderance of spatial metaphors used in all vernaculars (such as, “I don’t want to go there,” “there” being an emotional rather than a physical place), that we exist first in space then in time, two-into-one, biunivocally, in almost instantaneous succession (“I am in my study; it’s 12:14 a.m”). It is the space–time progression that accounts for why it is easier to imagine and experience timeless space than spaceless time. (When was the last time you forgot what space you were in?)

Before moving on, I want to make clear that the i.e. mode’s simultaneous emphasis on present-spaces and future-present-spaces does not exclude, but rather promotes, investigation into origins, causes, and intentions since these are variables that contribute substantially to the “affective presence” of articulations (social, cultural, historical, ideological, fantastical, and so on) through absent-spaces that strongly influence the distribution of powers within a society.⁸ Nevertheless, the investigative-expansive approach does give primary attention to the relational positionings of most of the immediate expressions, receptions, and experiences, discerned by them and their environments’ presences and absences, as a means by which to situate the analysis and subject matter in space–time. Then, consideration is given to the specific critical enterprise’s implications for future-present-spaces rather than the more fuzzy and distant “future-absent-spaces,” which refers to all that is contained in the “now, now, nows” that cannot be uttered, and thereby observed, fast enough. (Like with the nighttime howls of an Irvine coyote, the “nows” echo away, and where the coyote goes nobody knows.) Future-absent-spaces are also what is conjectured, predicted, or anticipated, but with less probability of actualization than, say, vicissitudes in future-present-spaces. Although a somewhat arbitrary threshold measured in the wake of our struggling and failing senses, focus on future-present-spaces is more dependable, responsible, and practical than pursuing an absent truth that will always appear obfuscated by historical process, and consequently can only ever rear its recondite head phantasmagorically. Please welcome the ghost of William Shakespeare.

Shakespace

In this book, my collaborators and I elucidate and employ the i.e. mode in our analyses of Shakespeare's influence on and participation in sociopolitically informed readings, productions, and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and the historical-cultural contexts in which Shakespeare functions as an icon and avatar. With the chapters exploring different theories, texts, performances, themes, and media, the i.e. mode operates respectively in each chapter and altogether by expansive explorations into interconnected subject matters and multivariate parameters of investigative inquiry. For instance, in chapter 4 on *Coriolanus*, I explore representations of authority in both Shakespeare's play and Bertolt Brecht's adaptation, *Coriolan*, in light of their respective sociopolitical contexts. Rather than follow one line of argument and come to a totalized conclusion, such as that sovereignty in both plays resides ultimately with the commoners, I entertain a variety of leads, oscillating between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, and wind up making a number of claims subsidiary to an overarching argument, expounding on the purposefulness of ideological criticism of Shakespeare. Similarly, in chapter 8, Ayanna Thompson and I analyze representations of the character Ariel, moving across space-time via adaptations of *The Tempest* from early modern England through the English restoration to Cuba, Martinique, and the United States in the twentieth century. In our travels, we consider a mixture of political implications of Ariel's implementation in diverse productions, and suggest alternative employments for future performances. In these chapters, as in all the others, my collaborators and I engage with many manifestations of Shakespeare in often-conflicting transhistorical, sociocultural spheres, which I refer to as articulatory spaces.

Informed by transversal theory, "Shakespace"—Shakes (as in Shakespeare) space—is a term coined by Donald Hedrick and myself for the particular articulatory space through which discourses, adaptations, and uses of Shakespeare have suffused the cosmopolitan landscape transhistorically.⁹ Unlike most writers and other figures in history with mighty spectral presence, the spaces through which Shakespeare has passed from the sixteenth to the twentieth and into the twenty-first century as an icon have been extraordinarily diverse and numerous. Of all authors in Western history, only Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud could be seen as comparable to Shakespeare, given that they too have stimulated, occupied, and affected countless commercial, political, social, and cultural spaces; there is "Marxspace" and "Freudspace." Yet, only Shakespeare has been influential for four-hundred years

(he had a three-hundred year head start on Marx and Freud); only Shakespeare is consumed by people of most ages, especially nowadays, since he is mandatory reading at many levels of education in the West; and, because of Shakespeare's phenomenal status in Hollywood (with over twenty cinematic adaptations of his plays having been released between 1980 and 2002, not to mention one Academy-Award winning film about him, *Shakespeare In Love*), his popularity transverses class divisions. Furthermore, because Marx and Freud themselves often employ Shakespeare to support their arguments, they too are part of the imposing Shakespeare machine that in turn must always also inhabit their respective territories.

The Shakespeare-influenced spaces, however conventional, alternative, or sometimes both, is Shakespace, a term that accounts for these particular spaces and the time or speed at which they move from generation to generation and from era to era. Shakespace's unique functions as a resistor, generator, and conductor of transversal power are resultant from phenomena that within and passing through Shakespace are the epochal forces and transformations wrought by a multiplicity of influences: by early capitalism; by the great experiment of the new public entertainment industry in early modern England; by the interrogation of socially prescribed gender roles; by aristocratic and legitimization crises; by the desacralization of absolutist sovereignty; by cross-cultural collisions and relativizations deriving from exploration and colonization; by the scientific revolution and its confounding of official knowledge; and—to take this space into our own time—by the recursive force of the Western canonical tradition itself on Shakespeare's work.

The accumulation of these interacting forces gives additional transformative power to Shakespace, whether radical or conservative, and hence produces what is often read as the ideological complexity of any object of critical and political scrutiny. Both despite and because of the contradictory nature of Shakespace throughout history—from reactionary to complacent to radical—Shakespace has continued to expand into the twenty-first century as simultaneously the manifestation of and the inspiration for transversal movements across conventions' borders and outside of dominant sociopolitical parameters. It is through these transversal movements that Shakespace emerges as a culturally imaginable space where Shakespeare may function without class in both the socioeconomic and aesthetic senses of the word. This is because Shakespeare's cultural power, or Shakespeare-effect, resists and sometimes

transcends all classification that is either reductive or totalizing. Shakespace becomes, as it were, a socially and historically contingent playground on which class differentiation and class conflict sometimes slip transversally into an ambiguous space that makes possible, and in fact encourages, alternative opportunities for thought, expression, and development. Whereas Shakespace has certainly been, and frequently still manifests itself as, what I call an “official territory” (the ruling proprieties and legalities within a social body), and thus has worked to promote various organizational social structures that are discriminatory, hierarchical, or repressive (including structures in academia itself), it is most powerfully a transversal territory. It has radiated territorially as a transportive, transformative space in which dreams have been made, pursued, virtualized, and realized.

It is Shakespace’s transversal territories that this book most diligently pursues. Focusing on Shakespearean and spatially occupied/ conceived of-as-Shakespearean manifestations of transversality, my collaborators and I offer new readings of plays and the performances of plays in various media while at the same space–time employing transversal poetics as a progressive means by which to comprehend our collaboration with Shakespeare in the generation and unleashing of Shakespace’s transversal power, whether that be through the process of reading or performing Shakespeare. On *Othello*, in chapter 3, Joseph Fitzpatrick and I use the i.e. mode to explore numerous possible explanations for Iago’s actions and Othello’s response, including, with the help of Janna Segal, considering Desdemona as a willful agent rather than a passive victim in her own destruction; Iago emerges as a sociopolitical conductor for an alternative ideology that works in the context of the play to activate transversal power that ultimately serves rather than problematizes the Venetian state. In chapter 5 on Roman Polanski’s cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth*, I investigate expansively various agents of sedition, terrorism, transversality, and state power, from Macbeth to the witches to Charles Manson to the U.S. judicial system, while contextualizing comparatively the topicality of both the film at the end of 1960s radicalism and Shakespeare’s play at the height of early modern England’s witch craze. Venturing into yet unexplored Shakespace while simultaneously producing, expanding, and complicating already existent Shakespace, the chapters in this book present not only fresh analyses of Shakespeare’s plays, adaptations of them, and their critical contexts, but also theoretical models for further adventures in Shakespace.

Discourse on tragedy

At this point, in light of Shakespace, I want to consider what I call “Osamaspace.” Of course, it is probably many years too soon to measure the extent of bin Laden’s influence, but this is not my purpose. Like Shakespace, Osamaspace is an articulatory space marked by a dynamic of transversality, but unlike Marxspace and Freudspace, which are also transversally marked, the trajectory of Osamaspace is yet to be plotted, and can therefore be more easily manipulated. Already Osama bin Laden has prompted what is just the beginning of innumerable textual remains in the forms of articles and audiovisual recordings by him and about him, as well as posters, buttons, and t-shirts devoted to him and his terrorist network Al Qaeda. Countless children have been named after him, and “Osama” may become as popular a name as Mohammed. However, at this historical moment, these remains have minimal impact when compared with the atrocity he helped orchestrate on September 11, 2001. The attacks’ most prominent vestiges cannot be represented: they are the pain, loss, grief, and suffering experienced by all of the victims, from those directly injured to the families and friends of victims to the rest of the United States and to those sympathetic across the world. Thus, above all else, for much of the world’s population, bin Laden is associated with tragedy and horrendous crimes.

Bin Laden’s terrorist performance has been evaluated in tragic terms: the more tragedy he produced and continues to produce, the greater the terrorist (performer) he is. I want to provide an understanding of tragedy before discussing in detail my concerns with Osamaspace’s transversality, a space which in many respects operates in spite of its namesake’s own declared purpose: to combat U.S. foreign policy and to institute, through terrorism, and later by totalitarian means, a totalized Islamic state composed of all Muslim countries, stratified with overlapping subjective territories from the top down (dictator, upper echelon of clerics, men, male children, all females). Rather than seek to explain tragedy in the traditional Aristotelian sense, which is to say, how tragedy often functions in theater to arouse pity and fear in order to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions on the part of the audience, I want to consider tragedy, what I believe is the most heinous reality of human experiences, in relation to authorship, intentionality, and the link between ethics and celebrity status, as seen in the public’s desire for celebrities to do good. After all, it is precisely the link between ethics and celebrity status that works to produce mobile spaces of social power under the auspices of prominent cultural icons like Socrates, King Tut,

Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Shakespeare, Marx, Freud, Hitler, and Osama bin Laden.

Several factors determine the extent to which an action or event is a tragedy. First of all, as with any performance (defined here as a self-consciously presented expression for an intended audience), how the event is framed needs to be taken into consideration. Framing refers to the aesthetic, social, cultural, political, ideological, and historical context established for the performance, whether it takes place in a stage-play or during a sports game or at a particular venue, like in a courtroom, university classroom, chapel, theater, or a pub. The sociopolitical conductors that have worked to instill our biases and predilections shape our relationship to that context and thus to what is expected to happen there. In most cases, when the framing is less apparent and less understood, the potential for a tragedy-producing performance is greater. In other words, the more sudden and unexpected the injuring action, the more tragic potential it has. But framing also has to do with investment. The degree to which the audience invests itself in the damaging event and its victims emotionally, conceptually, physically, financially—in terms of space-time, energy, and emotion—directly affects the potential for tragedy; the greater the investment, the greater the potential for loss, the greater the potential for tragedy.

The investment formula of tragedy can also apply to the victim. The more the victim cares about her/himself and others, the more others care about her/him, the greater the potential for personal tragedy. Hence, tragedy depends largely on people's expectations. Expectations relate immediately to framing and, often at a distance, to the sociopolitical conductors that predispose us and negotiate our relationship to the frame. Already contextualized within a society's dominant perspective, that is, in relation to its official territory, framing provides contextualization, which occurs through layers of references, from the immediate to the remote (for instance, what would you expect from a production of *Romeo and Juliet* by students at a Southern Methodist high school in Houston?). The frame is the discernible, referential contextualization, providing a measure for evaluation, which makes explanation both possible and acceptable. The most powerful tragedies, however, like the most powerful performances, are those that shatter expectations, and consequently transverse established frames. Whereas an unexplainable performance might make it less powerful because it would be less identifiable and thus disinclined to arouse empathy, the less explainable the tragedy, the deeper we experience it and the more severe the impact.

For tragedy to happen at all, someone has to care, and the greater the social value the tragic victim possesses within a given society, the greater the tragedy for the society's members. According to life insurance companies, the value of a human life is determined by one's social responsibilities; for example, a parent is worth more than a childless adult. For the general population, nevertheless, social value is usually based on the potential to do good things, as well as on previously noted accomplishments. This is why it is often the case that people feel worse when the victim is a small child rather than an older person. The child has more potential, more time and chances in life in which to perform goodness. Should the child have already been acknowledged as precocious and likely to do much good, the tragedy is perceived as worse. But is such assessment multipliable or exponential?

Both quantity and quality need to be taken into consideration. People typically speak of casualties, and, in most cases, individuals within the collective pool of casualties that possess friends and family are seen as more valuable than those without.¹⁰ The death of one famous person, a celebrity who has made important contributions to society, and is thus known by more people (often in an imaginary relationship with them), is generally valued more than many unknown or less important people, regardless of whether they have friends and family; if there are many casualties, with a famous person among them, the masses have at least one victim they can identify and mourn for. The need to identify a victim, as a way of being included, can be seen as the inversion of the need for an author.

The notion of innocence, as directly related to sympathy and value, comes into play as well. The younger the person, the more innocent people ordinarily assume them to be. In addition to having more potential than an older person, injury done to younger people deemed more tragic the less "worldly" they are perceived to be. So, while innocent are not seen—because of their innocence—as more socially valuable than people who have already demonstrated their wisdom and made noteworthy contributions to society, the innocent are seen as society's responsibility. They are the ones whom the socially valuable need to care for and protect. After all, for many purposes, the more innocent people are, the more easily socialized and subjectified, and therefore the greater their potential to serve the official culture and state machinery. In chapter 9, on Julie Taymor's film *Titus*, Courtney Lehmann, Lisa Starks, and I show how the audience is implicated into taking responsibility through an act of bearing witness to the unbearable that renders the audience complicit in the horror, inducing abjection, paradoxically, as

a transversal passage to a new life symbolized ultimately at the film's end by the fact that Young Lucius survives the carnage and has ensured the survival of the more innocent, potentially more valuable victims, himself and Aaron and Tamora's infant son.

The unexpectedness or suddenness of an injuring event can relate to framing in another way. It is more tragic for someone to die suddenly from an accident than to die slowly over time. Sudden death resists the framing for both audience and victim that develops as both parties become accustomed to the prospect of death. The more prepared to die, the less tragic the experience or event of death. Prevention is also crucial to understanding tragedy. If an accident could have been easily prevented, but was not, then the tragedy is worse. Victims produced through ignorance are more tragic than victims caused by carelessness. Moreover, self-victimization through an accident happening while the individual is in the process of perpetrating a morally reprehensible act is less tragic than accidental self-injury occurring during normative affairs. Still it is more tragic if the accidental self-injury occurs while the victim is pursuing a noble cause. In cases of accidental self-injury, according to Aristotle's theory of tragedy, the more noble the victim, the more tragic the incident. But, for Aristotle, whose theory pertains specifically to tragedy in ancient Greek theater, this scenario would only work if the noble person were someone like ourselves; in other words, this person would have to be someone with whom we can identify. Nevertheless, Aristotle's theory does not apply to "real life." In fact, unless people have an actual (interactive social, not imaginary) personal relationship to the victim, the tragedy is perceived as less severe. However, when the victim is famous (someone with symbolic value), and therefore not someone with whom most people can relate on an interactive level, the tragedy worsens. Celebrities are privileged in this regard: their deaths have more meaning than the "average person's"; however, an "average person" can momentarily achieve celebrity status through a tragic death that is sensationalized in the media.

Oftentimes it is unclear who the most tragic figure is. Is the accidental death of a small child worse for the child or for the mother? From a different perspective, consider the lack of satisfaction the public experiences when a murderer commits suicide. Explanation is more elusive without an author, without available and specific accountability. In this case, attention to the victim, and any other members of the event's audience, as would-be sources of elucidation or causality frequently increases (as discussed in chapter 9, on Julie Taymor's cinematic adaptation of *Titus*). This brings us back to the self-value of the injured party.

The more we recognize that the individual values him- or herself, the more value we place on his or her life. Yet, the extent of the tragedy is often also determined by the degree of the damage done.

Entering into a subjunctive space to elucidate the argument, I want to consider a series of scenarios based on the “iffy” factors informing a tragedy. Should a girl slip on the street and only bruise her elbow, her tragedy is less severe than if she had broken her hand. If the girl had slipped on a banana peel accidentally left by someone else, then the tragedy is worse: it was both preventable and the result of negligence or carelessness, as well as sudden and unexpected. If the victim were a pianist, then the tragedy would be even worse. If the pianist were on her way to an important audition, then the tragedy would be still worse. If the banana peel were strategically placed by a competitor, then the tragedy would be substantially worse: there would be an author, an identifiable enemy testifying to a failure in “humanity” (a tragedy in itself), compounded with the tragic damage. If the pianist were an eight-year-old who was so skilled that she was going to audition for Julliard, then the tragedy would be worse. If the pianist were going to audition for the opportunity to make money for her family, to save them because they are poor and starving, then the tragedy would be worse still. As this example shows, there are endless possible variables that can be combined to increase the social value of even the most seemingly accidental tragic event. Authorship, as we have seen, is nevertheless always crucial to the assessment.

If the audience were to later find out that the pianist only got as far as she did because she had sabotaged the pianos of her peers in a preliminary competition, then the tragedy would be much less severe. It would be up to the audience to determine whether the tragedy was fortuitous and an appropriate punishment: whether or not it was a tragedy at all. But how can it be a punishment if it was not self-consciously administered by someone or some people, perhaps representing an institution (like the U.S. government), who have evaluated the situation and passed judgment? Who would be the author of the punishment? Pursuing the issue of authorship, in this case the authors of both the tragedy and the punishment, I want to return to the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the radical expansion of Osamaspace that they have generated, an expansion that has tested the limits and increased the scope of countless subjective territories.

Responses to the September 11 attacks have been, and will continue to be, profuse and contradictory, and there is no end to what can be done, especially since “doing” can take many forms. The attacks, as well

as everything related that has occurred in their aftermath, invite discourse that can work to commandeer Osamaspace, transposing it into a relativistic terrain of learning and tolerance rather than of terror and hatred, converting it into a conductor through which transversal power can fuel movement outside of the subjective territories that resist making the acknowledgment and respect of difference common ground. Osamaspace can work to disseminate an understanding of social identity and cultural difference that is not dependent on negation or opposition, but rather on the positive recognition of intersections and disparities.

To see both this negation and positive recognition happening, one needed only to watch *Oprah* and *Nightline* during the weeks after the attacks. In my view, because of the diverse perspectives they give voice to, these shows are among the most conscientious and purposeful on network television. To see an opposing model, where Osamaspace is conflated with JesusChristspace, one need only turn to the Christian Broadcasting Network's *700 Club*. After the attacks, two of its leading spokesmen, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, shared their views. Falwell lamented, "God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us probably what we deserve," to which Robertson declared, "Jerry, that's my feeling." Falwell continued: "I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the A.C.L.U., People for the American Way . . . I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped make this happen'" (Dunne 180). As offensive and absurd as this sounds to me, I remind myself that Falwell's views are shared by many people in the United States, and that even President Bush invokes the ridiculous notion of "pure evil" as the driving force behind the attacks, rather than encourage exploration into why people gave up their lives to injure America, and why millions of people support bin Laden and Al Qaeda.

In terms of both national and personal tragedy, for most United States citizens the attacks are among the worst events in history. They occurred on an unusually beautiful September morning. In New York, people were moving about their business with the quintessentially upbeat verve that has long distinguished that city—my hometown—from all others. Nationwide, Americans felt relatively safe compared to people in other parts of the world. A terrorist attack, much less an "accidental" airplane crash into the World Trade Center, was among the furthest things from their minds. Also in this category of distant thoughts was what life might be like under Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

In fact, because Shakespeare is taught regularly in schools across the country, it is more likely that on September 11 Americans were thinking about life in Elizabethan England than in contemporary Southwest Asia. Basically, for most Americans, the attacks were framed such that they were unexpected and came suddenly.

The circumstances of the September 11 attacks provide evidence illustrating the complex relationship between the sociopolitical function of authorship and the subjective and subjectifying elements of tragedy. The attacks were logistically elaborate, and therefore preventable. Most of the people killed were directly involved—because of their white-collar occupations—in the capitalist socioeconomic system that works to sustain all the freedoms and luxuries the United States has to offer and is accustomed to. (People would have responded very differently if the planes had crashed into San Quentin Prison.) With subjective territories radically different and opposed to those of most Americans, the terrorists immediately responsible for hijacking the planes and crashing them into the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and onto the ground in Pennsylvania valued their mission more than their own lives. This willingness to suicide was especially shocking for Americans; a self-consciously executed suicide mission has never been an acceptable option for the Christian-influenced American military. The American people and everyone supporting them throughout the world had no opportunity to learn from the terrorists themselves why the attacks were executed; they received no statement from a terrorist organization claiming responsibility; they had little terrorist-connected material, in the form of personal evidence, from which to glean meaning. With no obvious enemy, or author, against whom to retaliate, the United States had to put a name to the faceless enemy.

While these authorship-related lacks are not in the same category of damage as the human losses suffered, the overall tragedy was exacerbated by their absence. Without access to an author's intentions, say in the form of a separate recorded statement (written or spoken), for interpretive resolution we must look to the immediate text itself (in this case, the available material substantiation that the attacks occurred), the contexts of its reception (in this case, people's responses to the attacks), and the environments from which it sprung (in this case, the political situation in the United States vis-à-vis the rest of the world). The subject matter needs to be synthesized, analyzed, and presented. It is only through discourse that such a resolution can be achieved; and only through performance can resolution be demonstrated. (If people don't act happy, then why should we believe that they are?)

Critical inquiry

The trend in literary criticism over the last twenty years has been to approach the author problem much like I just described. Critics first contextualize a given literary text both historically and culturally, and then analyze it as an expression of its moment, rather than of an individual author's intentions. In most cases, we have no unmediated access to authorial intention, and even if the author had stated her intentions, we have no way of knowing if what was stated is true, and thus the author is not considered a reliable source for deducing meaning.

The higher the stakes, the more pressing this authorship issue becomes. Consider cases of slander, copyright, plagiarism, and intellectual property. To take the issue further, what if someone commits a violent crime, but claims that it was not her/his intention, then are we to believe the person or look to the damage done in order to determine intention, and thus responsibility? Of course, this has been a major concern in legal studies for a long time, and I raise it here only to give perspective, from a related area of inquiry, to our comparison of more quotidian issues of authorship ("What did Shakespeare mean?") with more serious ("Why did bin Laden author—if he in fact did author—the murder of thousands of innocent people?"). Moreover, just as one of the goals of literary criticism is to determine which works of literature are good and which are not, we must ask what comprises a successful act of terrorism, how successful must it be to be terrorism, and does this have anything to do with authorial intention or our understanding of the terrorist act?

If a woman claims that a male coworker regularly harasses her sexually, and this terrorizes her, this is her experience. Regardless of either the coworker's intentions or his awareness of her terror, the woman is the victim of sexual harassment, and the coworker the terrorist. The coworker's actions reinforce a patriarchal ideology by which women and men learn that sexual objectification of women in the workplace is acceptable and should be tolerated, even if the governing legal system stipulates otherwise. The coworker's subjective territory is the product of the same patriarchal ideology for which it is a conductor, working to promulgate terror among a vast population of women across the world. In return, the terror promotes the ideology, working to further objectify and disempower women. Who, ultimately, is the author of the woman's terror?

Actions are symbols of ideology, just as symbols are the objects of actions. In the lexicon of critical theory, the September 11 attacks can

be seen in deconstructionist terms. The World Trade Center has long been a symbol of capitalism and America's power, but despite the word "Center" in its name, it is by no means the center of the capitalist socioeconomic system or U.S. power structure. While this building has been an important symbol, it is one among many, and it will soon be replaced by another symbol. As explained by Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist philosophy, through a process of "supplementarity," each sign used to replace the center of any signifying system is in fact a supplement to an always already absent center.¹¹ In other words, the capitalist socioeconomic system has never had a center, only symbols of centeredness, like the World Trade Center, and therefore, as long as the system continues to function, there can always be more symbolic centers. When the system fails to produce these, it will fritter away.

Long after September 11, Osamaspace continues to occupy conceptual centrality in the capitalist West, still saturating dominant media with discourse on biological terrorism, supplanting commentary on, say, American sports. Shortly after the attacks, anthrax was mailed anonymously to key governmental and media locations, infecting and killing many people. The search for the author of those mailings, and the letters they also contained, is still nonstop, insofar as the cases remain unresolved, even though their headliner status has long since dwindled. The mailings' authorial specters dissipated and have been suffused by other specters, such as the authors of the suicide bombings in Israel, Bali, Riyadh, Casablanca, and elsewhere. Again, we have terrorist performances without identifiable authors. Through an ongoing analytical process, we try to situate the terrorism, like most subject matter of critical inquiry, by locating its individual and communal sources in history in hopes of constructing a narrative that makes sense; and what makes narrative sensible, is agency, responsibility, intentionality—in short, authorship. Events often occur happenstantially, such as slippages spurred by surges of transversal power, and therefore as symptoms without motives. Afterwards, in their wake, people construct a narrative explanation, extrapolated from apparent evidence of the event's source. The narrative is then, retroactively, imposed on our present-space perspective on the past-present, now absent-space. The story generated helps people come to terms with the event, however tragic or joyous, and these terms depend on onus: someone or something must be responsible, and the more totalized and singular those sources, the more comfortable people's relationships to them.

American society's compulsion to attribute responsibility to individuals rather than to groups (a social clustering of otherwise individuated

humans) reflects its desire for celebrity personalities, which is a byproduct of each member's own wishful aspirations, which are, in turn, byproducts of the capitalist socioeconomic system's dependence on the concept that the best individual will prevail. The focus on individual authors that is the mainstay of modern thinking about human performance reflects the predominance of monotheism. But bin Laden will not suffice as our all-purpose author of terrorism, operating as both center and supplement; he cannot be in all places at once, and he is not solely responsible for the September 11 attacks and other terrorist acts committed by Al Qaeda. If another author is not discovered or manufactured (such as Saddam Hussein), then, according to the dominant paradigm, there can be no sense, no resolution.

On the horizon

In my view, the methodological paradigm needs to shift transversally, and the quest for individual authors needs to be displaced by a quest for a more comprehensive account of both causality and responsibility. I have tried to show, among other things, that in the aftermath of the tragedy of the September 11 attacks, the future provides an especially powerful opportunity for learning and evolution. History has led to a critical juncture, but it does not necessarily determine the future. The irony of the ethics/celebrity nexus reveals that as we struggle to understand Osamaspace, the subjective territories it supports, and the issues of authorship, tragedy, intentionality, and social value that manipulate it, we must confront the parameters of our own subjective territories and the ideologies that inform them. We are moving transversally, and this can be productive if, rather than attempt to snap back, we conduct the power and perform transversally by trying, for instance, to understand the Taliban's ideology and goals, their treatment of women, and their support of Al Qaeda. By empathizing with our attackers and/or asking ourselves subjunctively "what if" we were them, we can see our own country's destiny as linked to a past that we have tried to ignore, a past of imperialism and self-centeredness, which is no longer viable on practical or moral grounds. In accounting for bin Laden as a coauthor of moral activity, we become ourselves open to examining not only our nation, but ourselves as coauthors and as sociopolitical conductors; we can come to understand our preferred convictions with greater awareness and responsibility: the role of coauthor is our own, and the narrative continues. There is no guarantee of positive reconfiguration, but there is the transversal power of recent events that can be harnessed to effect change.

Taking the idea of coauthorship further, I want to stress the fact of collaboration always present but seldom acknowledged in all modes of expression, especially in my own profession as an academic researcher and critical theorist. Ideas are everywhere around us, meandering with the ebb and flow of the historical moment, often synthesized and conveyed to us through mass media, colleagues in other fields, our students, friends, and loved ones. Trends in literary-cultural criticism mutually reflect theoretical trends in other disciplines as well as social, cultural, and political trends at large (consider similarities between the “uncertainty principle” and the “affective fallacy” or chaos theory and poststructuralism). Transversal theory in particular encourages the getting outside of one’s subjective territory synchronically, diachronically, and fantastically in order to interact and merge with the subjective territories of others, pushing the limits of emotional and conceptual ranges. This is why transversal thinkers often pursue collaborations with others, wanting to foster transversal movements, dynamic evolution, and increased intimacy and community.

Transversal poetics works investigative-expansively on as many levels as possible, from artistic expression to focused research to casual communication with peers. Of course, there are practical and personal factors: there are only so many people with whom one can comfortably and effectively work. Transversal methodology, like all critical approaches, is collaboratively pursued and affected. All scholarly work, whether single authored or collaborative, contributes to the greater field of research in a given area, as well as to other fields, in effect becoming a part of the cumulative research and culture it affects—a never-ending process (a consequence today becomes tomorrow’s cause). Nevertheless, as deconstructionist theory has emphasized, under scrutiny each single-authored or collaborative work has an indeterminate source, ultimately lacking a single author or seed of conception, and, as such, testifies to the decenteredness and multi-voiced, processual nature of creativity and critical thought. Transversal methodology acknowledges and capitalizes on this situation, yet it does so without forgetting that when the deconstructionists’ rhetorical dust settles discursively or continues discursively to cloud the air, no less than a phenomenon remains: human beings experiencing idiosyncratically fields of consciousness and possessing degrees of agency and potential peer on.

This book, the bulk of which I wrote in collaboration with other human beings, seeks to exemplify transversal poetics. It develops transversal theory in a number of ways, refining and expanding on theories and terms already disseminated, thereby demonstrating the value of collaboration and the transversal approach to critical inquiry. The

repetition of explanations of theories and terms in many of the chapters allows each chapter to stand alone as an independent essay, while at the same time working to make the book cohesive. The intentional repetition has far-reaching potential: the chapters can be used individually, such as in college courses, by scholars, and by film and theater practitioners, making the book more purposeful, usable, and accessible to diverse audiences. As such, this book is a model for future approaches not only to Shakespeare and the “spaces” through which Shakespeare travels transhistorically, but also for academic approaches to communication within and outside academic communities. By facilitating discourse among authors, and generating a conception of author-as-simultaneous-audience, this book expands the conception of authorship beyond the confines of single-handed scholarship, beyond the concept of self, and into the conceptual and emotional, non-delineated transversal territories that I envision as a new poetics and aesthetics for the critical future.

Notes

1. I coined the term “sociopolitical conductors” as a corrective to Louis Althusser’s ahistorical concepts of “Ideological State apparatuses” and “Repressive State Apparatuses” that have informed much scholarship, particularly of cultural materialists and new historicists, in the field of early modern studies. The term “sociopolitical conductors” accounts for the historical specificity of sociopolitics and conditional states of both dominant and counter-hegemonic machinations for prescribing ideologies, whereas Althusser reduces these conductors to a binary system of an ideological-repressive monolithic state, and simultaneously does not acknowledge the similarly functioning, often multiple and contradictory ideological machinations of non-state promoting entities (see Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971]: 127–88). From a more classical Marxist standpoint of theorists like Nicos Poulantzas, Althusser’s division of the state is problematic not only because of its ahistorical qualities, but also because it “diminishes the specificity of the *economic state apparatus* by dissolving it into the various repressive and ideological apparatuses; it thus prevents us from locating the state network in which the power of the hegemonic fraction of the bourgeoisie is essentially centered” (*State, Power, Socialism* 33). For a detailed discussion on sociopolitical conductors, see Bryan Reynolds, “The Devil’s House, ‘or worse’: Transversal Power and Antitheatrical Discourse in Early Modern England,” *Theatre Journal* 49.2 (1997): 143–67, and Bryan Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
2. I also coined the term “state machinery” as a corrective to Althusser’s conceptual apparatuses. State machinery is in many ways a departure from as well

as a fusion of his “Repressive State Apparatus,” which governmental mechanisms, such as the military and the police, that work to control our bodies, and his subsidiary “Ideological State Apparatuses,” the inculcating mechanisms that work to control our thoughts and emotions. “State machinery,” a term indicating both singularity and plurality, makes explicit the multifarious and discursive nature of “state power,” which are forces of coherence, whether acted consciously and/or not by or upon “individuals” (mean-ing humans individuated from other humans) or “groups” (a social clustering of otherwise individuated humans) that prevents the misconception of the sociopower dynamic as resultant from a conspiracy, historically determined or not, led by a fully organized or monolithic state. This is not to say, however, that conspiracies do not occur and take the form of state factions. On the contrary, this must be the case for the more complex machinery to run. Incidentally, it should also be noted that my conception of “state power” as any force from any source that works to consolidate social entities (work-ing toward the creation of a society) differs from that of more classical Marxists like Nicos Poulantzas, who maintains, “When we speak for exam-ple of *state power*, we cannot mean by it the mode of the state’s articulation and intervention at the other levels of the structure; *we can only mean the power of a determinate class* to whose interests (rather than to those of other classes) the state corresponds” (*Political Power and Social Classes* 100). For a detailed discussion on “state machinery” and “state power,” see Reynolds, “The Devil’s House,” 143–67, and Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*.

3. For more on “transversal theory,” see, in addition to the texts mentioned in the foregoing notes, Bryan Reynolds and Joseph Fitzpatrick, “The Transversality of Michel de Certeau: Foucault’s Panoptic Discourse and the Cartographic Impulse,” *Diacritics* 29.3 (1999): 63–80. I am indebted to Félix Guattari for the terms “transversal” and “transversality,” which I have adapted for my purposes. In the section on “Institutional Psychotherapy” in his collection of essays entitled, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics* (1971–1977) Guattari uses these terms to discuss the phenomenon of group desire: “Transversality in the group is a dimension opposite and complementary to the structures that generate pyramidal hierarchization and sterile ways of transmitting messages. Transversality is the unconscious source of action in the group, going beyond the objective laws on which it is based, carrying the group’s desire” (22). While Guattari’s use of the term is incorporated in my own, I extend his definition of transversality to conceptuality and its territories, and allow it to apply to the existential processes of individuals as well as of groups. Incidentally, Guattari borrowed the term from Jean-Paul Sartre, who speaks of “consciousness” as being composed of “‘transversal’ intentionalities, which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses” (*Transcendence of the Ego* [New York: Noonday Press, 1957]: 39).
4. I would like to take the opportunity this note affords me to differentiate briefly my concept of subjective territory from concepts of the subject and social identity that have dominated much critical theory over the last twenty years, particularly those formulated by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, who emerged influentially on the academic scene in the 1980s with the

publication of their *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), and continue to maintain, as they state in their preface to the 2001 edition, their same views in the twenty-first century (vii).

For Laclau and Mouffe, whose theory of subject formation comes predominantly from Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject, like desire, is predicated on lack and can only establish itself as a subjectivity through a common grounding and knotting together of equivalential identifications (subject positions with a recognizable and/or persuasive degree of sameness) into a singular “nodal point” (derived from Jacques Lacan’s *point de capiton*—in English literarily, “quilting point” [Lacan 268–69]), which is an empty signifier capable of partially fixing and centering the substance of a range of floating signifiers, and thus creates and endeavors to sustain a fully achieved social identity (112). The nodal point, as Slavoj Žižek explains Lacan’s formulation, “*as a word*, on the level of the signifier itself, unifies a given field, constitutes its identity: it is, so to speak, the word to which ‘things’ themselves refer to recognize themselves in their unity” (95–96). By extension, through linked equivalential identifications, society is also pursued by hegemonic forces. However, according to Laclau and Mouffe, such “suturing” together of seeming equivalences can ultimately never produce either a subject, an individual, or a society because there are always antagonisms from without that work hermeneutically to “overdetermine” (a Laclau-Mouffeian borrowing from Freud) the presence of some of the sutured social identities and social positions vis-à-vis others. This causes either their condensation or displacement, and thereby transfers the interpretive focus onto another set of equivalencies so as to fixate another nodal point, and so on. Laclau and Mouffe’s sense of stepping-stone subject formation is much like Jacques Derrida’s theory of *différance*, which accounts for the phenomenon that a signifier has significance given that it is a product of difference, but that its significance is simultaneously un-stabilizable and always deferred because it can never achieve absolute meaning as a transcendental signified (Derrida 289–93).

Unlike Michel Foucault, who sees antagonism as internal and “never in a position of exteriority” to power relations of a particular society (93–96), Laclau and Mouffe argue that “antagonisms are not *internal* but *external* to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter’s impossibility of fully constituting itself” (125). As Žižek eloquently summarizes:

The thesis of Laclau and Mouffe that “Society doesn’t exist,” that the Social is always an inconsistent field structured around a constituted impossibility, traversed by a central “antagonism”—this thesis implies that every process of identification conferring on us a fixed socio-symbolic identity is ultimately doomed to fail. The function of ideological fantasy is to mask this inconsistency, the fact that “Society doesn’t exist,” and thus to compensate for us for the failed identification. (127)

But for Laclau and Mouffe it is not only society that is negated, but also the identifiable human agents who might have sociopolitical power should it

be possible for them to be members of a society. Laclau expresses this concept succinctly:

The question of *who* or *what* transform social relations is not pertinent. It's not a question of "someone" or "something" producing an effect of transformation or articulation, as if its identity was somehow previous to this effect. [...] It is because the lack is constitutive that the production of an effect constructs the identity of the agent generating it. (Laclau 210–11)

Articulated in the space of "everyday life," should you want a mechanic to work on your car, you might as well solicit anyone to assist you, because it is impossible for you to know who is or is not a mechanic until a person demonstrates his/her mechanical skills, and even then, we might ask: How skilled must he/she be to be a mechanic, and who is qualified to make this evaluation? Of course, we might respond to such queries with: Would seeking a state-certified mechanic at a state-licensed automobile repair shop increase the odds of her being skilled enough? Empirically, if what appeared to need fixing appears to have been fixed by the mechanic, then chances are it was. Within the relevant, local interpretive community, agency was identified and meaning was achieved, as predicted by the preestablished parameters of the quest for car repair. Transposing this example to one more in line with Laclau and Mouffe's political agenda, we might ask: Doesn't the revolutionary potential of individuals, perhaps measured by past expressions of dissidence, matter when pursuing alliances for the revolution?

Alternatively, as will be further explained in this introduction, transversal theory and methodology are all about potential. They work discursively to empower social identities and groups recognizably striving—conceptually, emotionally, and/or physically—to transcend their subjective territories. The idea of totalized or absolute subjectivities, identities, societies, or states is an obvious impossibility insofar as movement and change are fundamental to the world's existence. Subjective territory, very different from the always already lacking and failed subject for Laclau and Mouffe, is not an ahistorical phenomenon continuously manifested, expanded, and discombobulated through just antagonism, but a space socially, culturally, and politically generated and maintained through antagonisms as well as other conceptualizations and experiences, including growth, evolution, curiosity, imagination, kindness, empathy, desire, passion, and love. Subjective territory—unfixed, mutative, and permeable—is a conceptually and emotionally constrained, multidimensional space through which individuals, that is, actual humans with social identities and varying degrees and kinds of agency, navigate their consciousness and presence within specific social, cultural, and historical parameters of space–time. For more detailed discussions of the differences between my concept of subjective territory and other theories of identity formation, including the work of Laclau, Mouffe, Žižek, Guattari, Althusser, Bourdieu, Greenblatt, Lacan, Deleuze, Jameson, and Paul Smith, see Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*; and Bryan Reynolds and Janna Segal, "The Reckoning of Moll Cutpurse: A Transversal Enterprise," *Rogues in Early*

- Modern English Literary Culture*, ed. Craig Dione and Steve Mentz (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming 2004).
5. For more on “transversal movement,” see the texts mentioned in notes 1–3.
 6. For further discussion of “subjunctive space,” and in relation to the “Mary/Mollspace” of Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*, see Bryan Reynolds and Segal, “The Reckoning of Moll Cutpurse.”
 7. Conceived of by Bryan Reynolds and James Intriligator, the “investigative-expansive mode” was first introduced in print by Bryan Reynolds and Joseph Fitzpatrick in their article, “The Transversality of Michel de Certeau: Foucault’s Panoptic Discourse and the Cartographic Impulse,” *Diacritics* 29.3 (1999): 63–80. Bryan Reynolds thanks Janna Segal for coining the catchy abridgement, “i.e. mode.”
 8. For discussion of “affective presence,” beyond the coverage in this book, see Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*.
 9. See Donald Hedrick and Bryan Reynolds, “Shakespace and Transversal Power,” *Shakespeare Without Class: Misappropriations of Cultural Capital*, ed. Donald Hedrick and Bryan Reynolds (New York: Palgrave/St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 3–47.
 10. While recently visiting a friend in her hospital room, the hospital pastor paid us a visit. Urging us to have our friends pray for my ill friend, the pastor explained that studies have proven that the more people who pray for an individual, regardless of whether or not the individual is aware of the people praying for her, the more likely God is going to cure her. In fact, he explained, it does not matter if the people know her because, for God, they need only to know of her and see her as worthy of their prayers. Apparently, according to the studies cited by this pastor, God values people more who are valued by others. Although I am not a believer in a Judeo-Christian god, or of any god(s), I did find this account fascinating. But most of all I found it disturbing, especially as I watched the pastor visit room after room each day as I visited my friend, and wondered how he made people feel when he told them that God’s verdict on their life is commensurate with how many friends and fans they have. To read about case studies on the power of prayer, see, Larry Dossey, *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993) and *Prayer is Good Medicine* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996); Bill Banks, *Three Kinds of Faith for Healing* (St. Louis: Impact Christian Books, 1989); and Gordon Lindsey, *Prayer & Fasting: The Master Key to the Impossible* (Dallas: Christ for the Nation, 1971).
 11. For more on Derrida’s concept of “supplementarity,” see the chapter entitled, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–94.

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