

## Introduction



*Shannon Lundeen*

THE ESSAYS IN THIS collection are a tribute to the significance of the work of Teresa Brennan. Although the body that she so gracefully and vivaciously inhabited is gone, Teresa Brennan's intellect, spirit, and energy are very much present in her scholarly work and the engagements with that work in this volume. Throughout her work, from her first book *The Interpretation of the Flesh* to her most recent, *The Transmission of Affect*, Teresa develops an original and revolutionary notion of energetics that she applies to some of the most pressing social issues of our time: relations between men and women, our relation to the environment and pollution, contemporary diseases, and globalization. Like her life, her work is not traditional or ordinary. It shakes things up and gives us new insights into our most profound relationships with each other, to time and space, and to global capital. Her work has transformed feminist psychoanalytic theory, economic theory, and the way that we conceive of the relationship between psychoanalysis and social theory. The essays in this volume demonstrate the importance and creativity of Teresa Brennan's life and thought and the gravity and significance of our loss.

Alice Jardine opens the volume with an essay that traces the development of Brennan's thought from her first book, *The Interpretation of the Flesh* (1992), to her last, *The Transmission of Affect* (2004). Although a constant interlocutor, collaborator, colleague, and dear friend of Teresa's, Jardine had not read one of Brennan's books until after her death in February of 2003. As Brennan's thoughts turned from the individual psyche and its interpersonal relations to a social psyche and its global implications, Jardine turns from the Teresa she knew in private and personal exchanges to the public and scholarly Brennan revealed in her publications. Jardine notes that in their personal exchanges, Brennan had always been plagued by the question "What is to be done now?" (p. 2) and she finds that the development of Brennan's thought over the course of her oeuvre was driven by this same question. For those unfamiliar with the extent and breadth of Teresa Brennan's thought and

scholarship, "A Surplus of Living Attention," provides an astute and comprehensive introduction to Brennan's work.

In her first book, *The Interpretation of the Flesh* (1992), Brennan lays the groundwork for what she calls the "foundational fantasy" and in her chapter, "Living A Tension," Kelly Oliver examines the conceptual and theoretical trajectories of this fantasy throughout Brennan's subsequent texts. The foundational fantasy begins with an infant's hallucination that it is both self-contained and in control of its primary caregiver. As an illusion of self-containment, the foundational fantasy grounds the myths of the ego's bound-ness, of women's tractability and corresponding notion of femininity, and of the inexhaustibility of the earth's resources. It may seem, based on her analysis of the foundational fantasy, that Brennan advocates strategies of mobility over and against strategies of containment. However, Oliver points to those places in Brennan's work where her assessments of attempts to bind and contain things, energies, people, resources, etcetera become ambivalent. Oliver examines and critiques Brennan's simultaneous calls for economic self-containment, on the one hand, and personal mobility, circulation, and exchange of psychic energies and affects, on the other. It is the latter, the intersubjective exchange of energies and affects upon which Brennan's theory of the drives is based, that Oliver hails as "revolutionary" in Brennan's work.

One particular phenomenon that Brennan focuses on throughout the development of her drive-theory is the projection and exchange of negative affect. According to Brennan, negative affects, which always come from outside rather than from within, have dire and dangerous consequences for the world at large: their constant projection and escalating circulation accounts for the depletive nature of global capitalism as well as the historical development of an exhausted and exploited feminine position. Although she notes that Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect is radically significant for psychoanalytic theory, feminism, and economics, Oliver challenges and unsettles Brennan's associations of negative affect with what is outside and positive affect with what is inside in light of Brennan's own critique of psychical, physical, and energetic containment in psychoanalytic theory. Oliver argues that in the face of all-consuming forces of globalization and the normalization of the "feminine position" for women, Brennan seems only to offer us repression of the negative. Exploring the implications of Brennan's concept of the foundational fantasy and understanding of the drives for ethical and feminist theories, Oliver points us to the lack of strategies of resistance in Brennan's work and charges us to "acknowledge the positive effects of the transmission of affect in relationships that create a surplus of living attention and energy" (p. 22).

In the third chapter, Robyn Ferrell takes up the figure of time difference to explore the theme of geopolitics of philosophy that Ferrell sees as central

to Brennan's work. Contextualizing her essay within a "time of globalization," as a fellow Australian, Ferrell explores what time difference in this context means for differences between the U.S. and Australia, between 1993 (the year Ferrell first met Brennan and Brennan's second book, *History After Lacan*, was published) and now, between herself and Brennan. "Time Difference" situates Brennan's work, specifically *History After Lacan*, within the history of Australian materialism in order to explore the political and scholarly tensions created by Brennan's work in the Australian academy which, she contends, is often "obscured by the supposedly international forum of philosophical work" (p. 25). Systematically working through the theses that Brennan puts forth in *History After Lacan*, Ferrell illuminates Brennan's theoretical objectives in an entirely new way by closely attending to differences not only of time but also of place and space between Brennan's innovations in psychoanalytic theory and the canon of Australian materialism.

In the fourth chapter, Anne O'Byrne relates Brennan's work directly to that of Heidegger. Brennan acknowledges her indebtedness to Heidegger's undermining of the subject's privileged place in ontology. But as O'Byrne delineates in "Heidegger after Brennan," she frequently distances herself from Heidegger's level of abstraction and his privileging of the ontological over the ontic. Although this is a familiar critique, O'Byrne insists that Brennan's particular critique of Heidegger is novel in its focus on three points: 1) the foundational fantasy; 2) the foundational fantasy's relation to technological development; and 3) the figure and role of the mother in the foundational fantasy (p. 34). Elucidating the connections between Brennan and Heidegger, O'Byrne details Heidegger's work on generation as well as his critique of foundations and explains the way in which his work on these concepts proved to be both a springboard for Brennan's development of her theory of the foundational fantasy as well as an object of her critique. Reading Heidegger *after* Brennan, O'Byrne argues, compels us to take a new look at spatiality and origin which, in turn, leads us to a new reading of "generation" that takes us beyond Heidegger's conceptualization of generation as disembodied. Although O'Byrne provocatively challenges certain components of Brennan's reading of Heidegger, she uses Brennan to develop a richer account of Heideggerian concepts. Placing Brennan in dialogue with Heidegger as well as contemporary Heidegger scholars, O'Byrne ultimately provides a rich account of Dasein's spatiality that is informed by Brennan's "fleshy" conceptualization of the process of generation.

In the fifth chapter "Repressed Knowledge and the Transmission of Affect," Susan James invites us to investigate modern philosophical discussions of affective exchange in order to compare such discussions to Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect. James discusses the way in which Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect, which holds that affects are

transmitted from one person to another through the body (primarily through hormonal exchanges), directly undermines a masculinist notion of a self-contained and independent subject who is shored up by the dualisms of subject/object and mind/body. Brennan's argument suggests that we have repressed the fact of transmission in order to maintain this notion of the self as a discretely-bounded, autonomous subject. To overcome this repression, we need to cultivate what Brennan calls discernment, as James explains it, "the power to feel with our bodies the difference between transmitted and non-transmitted affects" (p. 48). Like Oliver, James is concerned with both the role of repression in Brennan's theory as well as the function of the inside/outside dichotomy in structuring her discussion of the various modes of affective transmission. James critically examines Brennan's notions of discernment, repression, and affective transmission against a backdrop of debates about "passionate exchange" among modern theorists such as Spinoza, Malebranche, Hume, and Smith. Similar to Oliver's contention in chapter 2, James suggests that Brennan places too much emphasis on the transmission of negative affects and sacrifices any concern with the transmission of positive affects. James offers us a historical narrative of the discussion of the transmission of affect that she believes is missing from Brennan's account and in so doing she aims to clarify Brennan's positions on the ego, its repressions, and affective transmission.

Sustaining the discussion of Brennan's work on the transmission of affect, Charles Shepherdson, in "Emotion, Affect, Drive: For Teresa Brennan," details the way in which Brennan's theory of affect both builds upon and departs from Freud's notion of affect (as developed in "Mourning and Melancholia") and Lacan's notion of affect that is connected to the concepts of drive and *jouissance*. While James uses the terms *affect* and *passion* interchangeably in the previous chapter, Shepherdson introduces a distinction between affect and emotion that he maintains arises as a conceptual consequence of Lacan's understanding of the distinction between the symbolic order and *jouissance*. Although Freud did not employ this distinction in his work, Shepherdson argues that calling attention to the border between *jouissance* and the symbolic leads to an understanding of *affect* as (what Freud would have called) a charge of energy and *emotion* as a symbolic phenomenon. With this distinction in mind, Shepherdson asks of Brennan's theory whether it is affect or, in fact, emotion that gets transmitted between subjects. Moreover, Shepherdson asks how, in Brennan's theory of the drives, we are to distinguish symbolic transmission from the transmission of *jouissance*. Working through Brennan's understanding of the exchange and intersubjective transmission of energies, Shepherdson demonstrates the way in which her work could be sharpened by a distinction between affect and emotion where language and the flesh are inextricably linked.

Kalpana Rahita Seshadri's "After Teresa Brennan" continues the previous two chapters' critical examination of Brennan's theory of the exchange and transmission of affect. Originally written as a response letter to Brennan regarding her manuscript of the now posthumously published *Transmission of Affect* (2004), Seshadri's essay is as theoretically incisive as it is personally moving. Seshadri carefully attends to what she sees as Brennan's "stunning" and "surprising" interventions into and revisions of the psychoanalytic theory of affects, namely Brennan's discussion of the relationship between affect and ideas and the intersubjective functioning of affects. Yet she also enumerates what she believes to be weaknesses in the manuscript which, Seshadri maintains, emanate from Brennan's failure to see the death drive as producing anything that is not negative. Seshadri suggests that a more nuanced understanding of the death drive might lead Brennan to conclude that negative affects and drives do not always function to thwart positive personal and political intersubjective relations but instead produce and encourage them. Throughout the letter/chapter, Seshadri rigorously questions the implications of Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect for philosophical and psychoanalytic concepts ranging from intentionality to the unconscious.

In "Ubuntu and Teresa Brennan's Energetics," Drucilla Cornell develops the sense of ethical responsibility that emanates from Brennan's plea to create an economy of generosity that would undermine the economy of scarcity through which global capital operates. A generous economy would demand a new way of living together and a new way of utilizing and replenishing the earth's resources on local and global scales. But what sort of ethical imperative would compel us to devise such an economy? Cornell brings our attention to the South African concept of *ubuntu* which, she suggests, provides us with a notion of ethical responsibility that is in line with Brennan's call for an economy of generosity. Designating humanity as interdependent, interactive, intergenerational, intercorporeal, and communal, *ubuntu* is an ethical configuration that, Cornell claims, is unparalleled in the Western philosophical canon. Because it confounds any notion of self-containment or self-generation, Cornell argues that *ubuntu* has the capacity to undermine the necessity and pervasiveness of the foundational fantasy and to illuminate the way in which we might begin to create an economy of sustenance and generosity.

In Gillian Beer's chapter, "What's Not Seen," she shifts our attention to Brennan's endeavors to undermine the dualism of mind and body that, among other modern philosophical tenets, shores up the foundational fantasy. Beer concentrates on the way in which literature and poetic thinking work to rebut the mind-body split and she outlines the places in Brennan's work where this is evident. Drawing a connection between Brennan's work on vision and the literary dimension of thought, Beer argues that in their call to what is not there and in their dependence on what is not seen, vision and literature work

in similar fashion to confound the boundaries between the mind and the body, knowledge and experience, intellect and matter. Beer contextualizes Brennan's disruption of the mind/body split within a centuries-long debate that has garnered the participation of thinkers from a number of various fields and academic disciplines ranging from ethics to neuroscience. Exploring the relationship between knowledge, death, experience, and writing, Beer invites us to see Brennan's writing—scholarly, literary, and poetic—as something that “holds experience steady past death and allows it to find expression in an assurance [for which] the mind-body split cannot account” (p. 105).

In the tenth chapter, Jane Gallop continues this discussion of the connection between writing and death as it appears in and is elicited by reading Brennan's last book, *The Transmission of Affect*. Brennan's last manuscript was not yet “finished” at the time of her death. In “Reading Brennan,” Gallop explores how this fact resonates with the way in which Brennan thought about writing and finishing. While in the third chapter, Ferrell brought up the question of time difference in relation to Brennan's writing in the Australian academy, Gallop raises the question of enough time in Brennan's life and work. There, she traces the connections between Brennan's scholarly work on time (her preference for speed), her attitude toward time (never wanting to be rushed, always assuming people and planes would simply wait for her if she was late), and her anxiety over “finishing” (she rarely thought a book or paper was finished and oftentimes her assistants had to forcibly take her “unfinished” books away from her). In a critical analysis of Brennan's preference for speed, Gallop offers an insightful and instructive account of the connections between this privileging of rapidity and the labor of writing, death, the blockages of the foundational fantasy, and Brennan's theory of the transmission of affect.

The final chapter of this volume, “Can We Make Peace? For Teresa Brennan,” is an essay that Julia Kristeva has dedicated to Teresa Brennan. Kristeva originally presented the paper in 2002 at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Forum of the Universal Academy of Cultures in Paris. In her essay on whether we can, in fact, make peace at a time in which conflict and terror are so prevalent around the globe, Kristeva tenders a response to the question that Jardine tells us in chapter 1 was ever-pressing for Teresa: “What is to be done now?” Thus, Kristeva's contribution properly rounds out this collection on Brennan's life and work by returning us to one of the primary questions that fueled her projects. Kristeva turns to the Catholic tradition, to Freud, Kant, and to Arendt and explores the answers offered by each as to whether and how we can make peace. She argues that what we suffer from most today and what keeps us in a perpetual state of conflict and unrest is the loss of the language of life: “The love of life eludes us; there is no longer a discourse for it” (p. 121). Renewing the desire for life is essential, Kristeva maintains, for envisioning and more

importantly, imagining peace. According to Kristeva eliciting the desire for and love of life can be accomplished by doing what many of Brennan's texts have done, by inscribing the question of peace into philosophy, literature, and the arts.

As the last contribution to the volume, Susan Buck-Morss's essay offers Teresa and the readers of this volume a eulogy that resonates with the radical political thinking that Brennan has always embraced. "A Eulogy for Teresa Brennan" offers us an epistemological manifesto for a different kind of thinking and writing on the part of progressive intellectuals. The essay issues an inspiring call to the readers of this volume for the production of rigorous political thought combined with activism. Since, for Brennan, activism does not have to be separate from but rather can be imbued in writing, Buck-Morss's piece is a fitting tribute to a public intellectual who was committed to going beyond writing to change the world.

## CHAPTER ONE

# A Surplus of Living Attention

## Celebrating the Life and Ideas of Teresa Brennan



*Alice A. Jardine*

The point is that in order to act upon the world, any being needs an identity, and living attention from within if not from without.

—Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh*

### Introduction

LET ME BEGIN WITH a confession: Over the course of my twenty years of friendship with Teresa Brennan, I lived and breathed her books; but I fiercely resisted *reading* them, until after her death. I have asked myself why and have yet to come up with a satisfactory response. But I am not alone, a lot of folks resist reading the books or looking at the art of their nearest and dearest friends. I mean, what if you hated it! Can deep friendship ever really recover from that? But the best reason I can come up with so far is that for twenty years I felt as if I *was* reading them. Teresa and I lived and talked and breathed theories about the world; and yet even as we analyzed everything and everyone in our lives, daily, for twenty years, I resisted reading her books. That is, until that very day in February of 2003 when I left her already cold, abandoned body in that strange South Florida funeral home. That was the day I began to read her books. Everything. Every word. In chronological order. From the “Foundational Fantasy” of *The Interpretation of the Flesh* (1992), through her diagnosis of the “Social Psychosis” dividing our world violently into the “servers” and the “served” in *History After Lacan* (1993), then on to the deadening effects of techno-capital’s race to destruction in *Exhausting Modernity* (2000) toward all the ways in which we are killing ourselves not so softly in *Globalization and Its Terrors* (2003). I have only recently emerged

from the clarity and hope of the last book completed before Teresa's murder, *The Transmission of Affect* (2004). I have now read them all—one of my ways of mourning no doubt.

But my reaction goes beyond the personal. I have been stunned by the cumulative vision of these books, an unexpected gift of insight offered to those of us still committed to making the world a better place. I am sorry that it took me so long to read them; but then, maybe that's in part why I was able to garner such a surplus of living attention from Teresa while alive.

So what do I do with these books? Where do I start with these volumes of self-assured prose, this forthright insistence on the imperative of the big picture, the grand meta-narrative, this utter disregard for disciplinary boundaries, this fluctuating emotional intensity, moving back and forth seamlessly between *Star Wars* jokes and the most intricate and serious complexities of psychoanalytic, economic, and political theories? How do I proceed when the living voice has unexpectedly gone silent, almost as if in defiance of the theory itself? What is to be done?

Work is to be done. Self-assuredly. Insistently. With living attention. Exactly what she would want us to do.

I am going to attempt to work through, chronologically and somewhat summarily, what Teresa always called "her theory." Her theory of what, you might ask? Of nothing more and nothing less than what we always called "the fix the world is in." "Work through" is too strong. I am neither a philosopher nor a political theorist, but rather a student of literature and the arts. What I'm going to do here then is to tell a story. I'm going to tell the theoretical story I have read in the five published books as inflected by my experience of her surplus of living attention. Those readers who know me and my work will understand that I am not (even as a storyteller) naïve enough to present my theoretical fable as Teresa's theoretical truth. But it is a beginning. It is one way of enticing all of you to read more of Teresa Brennan. It is my way of asking what was always Teresa's and my primary question together: *What is to be done now?*

### The Interpretation of the Flesh

Teresa has argued that the formation of femininity and the energetic exploitation at work on the interpersonal level between men and women are intrinsically linked. In the first instance, we are talking about the *micro*-cosmic concerns first outlined in *The Interpretation of the Flesh: Freud and Femininity* (1992). There she takes Freud's "riddle of femininity" very seriously and proposes a radical metapsychology of her own invention, one meant to address the economic, spatial, and interactive levels of psychic organization. In short, she argues that in order to become subjects and act upon the world, men have resorted to "unloading," projecting all negative affects and aggressions upon

some “other”—even beyond the infantile fantasies of destroying the mother—in such a way that the process of positioning that “other” to acquiesce to the projection has historically required the formation of a *normative femininity*: the normal (read: pathological) state of Western Womanhood.

Women have largely been forced to passively accept that projection in exchange for recognition (identity) and security (protection). Teresa asks: What if feminism has been largely the rejection of that projection, allowing many women to begin to dump Western femininity’s historically negative effects on our curiosity, our intelligence and our activity? What happens then as women’s demands for recognition and their needs for security undergo radical historical and geographical transformations? Teresa was acutely attuned to the necessity of thinking through both the gains and the losses—the unsettling consequences—of the end of “true patriarchy.”

### History After Lacan

Teresa argued that the “foundational fantasy” she described on the psychological level in her first book has, over time, triggered a more general social psychosis in the West, which is now predominant and threatening the entire globe. The psychological fantasy of woman at the core of the foundational fantasy, having triggered a more generalized social psychosis involving the massive exploitation of energy at the socio-historical level, has particularly, over the twentieth century slowly but surely divided the world into the “servers” and the “served”—an untenable equation on an untenable scale. In this second instance, we are talking about the *macro-cosmic* social psychosis that Teresa began to outline in *History After Lacan* (1993).

The central character in this social psychosis is the ego, “an ego which is just as social and collective as the psychosis it underpins” (Brennan 1993, 3). The “ego’s era” began in the seventeenth century and continues today, but its processes have accelerated and expanded right along with technology and capital. In fact, sexual difference (at the core of the foundational fantasy) has, over time, been homogenized across race, religion, and class, flipping over into a world-wide, historically unprecedented division between the shapers and the shaped, the aggressors and the pacified. We all get caught up in this generalized psychosis no matter how hard we resist because of the power of the ego’s insistence on “fixed points”:

In *The Interpretation of the Flesh*, I wrote that the ego depends on fixed points because it depends on its identifications with others, and ideas, to maintain its sense of its individual distinctness, or identity. These identifications involve the image the ego receives from the other, an image which remains still or constant in relation to the movement of life. Psychically we need

these fixed points, but they also hold us back . . . In this book I argue that the fixed points of the psyche are paralleled and reinforced by the construction of commodities in the social world: psychical fixed points block the mobility of psychical energy; the technologically fixed points of commodities, unless they are constructed with care, block the regeneration of nature and natural energy. (ibid., xii)

. . . [T]echnological expansion . . . is the means whereby the ego is able to secure the “reversal” in knowledge, as it makes the world over in its own image. It is also, and this is critical to the dynamics of the ego’s era, a means of generating continuous economic insecurity and anxiety over survival in the majority, and guarantees their dependence on those identified with the dominant ego’s standpoint. (ibid., 44)

Through the proliferation of fixed points and the speeding up of capital’s expansion via the development of technology, the profit imperative creates a spatio-temporal speed-up in the production of commodities. That speed-up then binds more and more energy to the commodities produced. Since nature is the ultimate source of all value and energy, the constantly increasing speed of capital—and its production of commodities as “fixed points”—diminishes nature at an unbelievable pace. This speed-up alters *physis* itself in the process, “adjusting” the inbuilt logic of nature and the spatio-temporal continuum to suit the will of ego-era capital. The value and energy of *nature and its space* is attacked in the name of *technology and its time*:

The point here is simply that in order to satisfy the demands of large-scale production, more and more of nature has to be destroyed. In this sense production under capitalism is consumption, not production; it gobbles that which is already there, and gives nothing back but waste. Its form of transforming labour is not the same as that which marks other modes of the production process, in that capital is only concerned about reproducing the natural substances that are the irreplaceable conditions of its own existence . . . (Brennan 1993, 138)

Everything speeds up, even so-called “natural” processes. We breed pigs that get fat so fast, they can’t walk; young turkeys get such huge breasts, they can’t mate. The cloning or artificial engineering of animals and plants speeds things up even more; we consume more, faster, easier. This elaborate phantasmatic frenzy, this speeding up at all levels does not, paradoxically, lead the West toward its stated goals:

The price paid for speeding things up is a price paid by overall productivity, and hence overall long-term profit. There should be a decline in long-term profit to the extent that commodities embody less real substance, and this they must do as they become degraded of substance. Take the giant, airy

American strawberry. Genetically recombined for improved size, and grown from degraded soil, it looks great and tastes . . . like nothing. In the medium term, even its comparative price has fallen. It is a symptomatic postmodern commodity: seeming wonderful, yet it has literally less substance, and hence less value. None the less, its price increased in the short term with the speed of its deceptively luscious production. (Brennan 1993, 141)

By the end of her second book, Teresa has begun to ask more direct questions about how this speedy, toxified environment literally gets inside subjects who then act in strikingly similar ways to reproduce it—subjects who seem to be overcome with what she calls “unremittingly controlled willfulness” working frantically to produce a “grey mirror of sameness.” This question begins to point toward what many see as Teresa’s most academically radical theory, that of an *interactive economy of energies*—energies that spring up not only inside but around and through the individuals through which they course. Here she challenges all of us in the academy to lose our elitism and pay more sustained attention to history and culture beyond our own fixed points of reference:

Now the notion that there is a conative, energetic force coursing through and activating individual subjects and their living environment is not new. It was with us before, and is appearing now. In its naturalistic form, it enjoyed a certain popularity in the guise of pantheism, Romanticism, *Naturphilosophie*. It attained some respectability in Spinoza’s name. Today it is prominent in the cosmic consciousness theories that inform the New Age culture, and which spill over into the theories of the German Greens . . . In New Age culture especially, the idea of a connecting force survives, but it survives on miserable arguments, and is always assumed to be good. The idea also survives in popular culture, where notions of energetic connections between beings are seen as both beneficent and malign. The idea has returned in a series of blockbuster films (‘May the force be with you’) and in writers ranging from Arthur C. Clarke to Toni Morrison. Morrison’s *Beloved* was revolutionary, ahead of academic time, in writing of psychical feelings and forces which were not self-contained but crossed between individuals. (Brennan 1993, 81)

### Exhausting Modernity

So far, Teresa has argued that the psychical fantasy of woman, triggering the massive social psychosis of the Western ego’s era, moving everyone toward the desire for a form of willful subjectivity and instant commodities to be delivered at one’s immediate command—a desire that has in turn led to violent levels of ethnocentrism and ecological devastation—has led to the need for nothing less than a *permanent state of war*. “[For . . .] we shall [all] continue to want to be subjects. We will want to be subjects even against our wills,

because there is a politics of exhaustion being played out in relation to the fantasy on a global scale” (Brennan 1993, 186).

In the third instance, we are talking about a politics of exhaustion that Teresa began to outline in *Exhausting Modernity: Grounds for a New Economy* (2000). Already, in *History After Lacan*, the world Teresa described was getting more scary and the necessity as well as possibility for resistance more insistent and more explicit:

[In this world] we will want to be subjects to garner the energy needed to move—whether it is through the attentive recognition and labour of others, or those expensive “labour-saving devices.” The consequence of living in the high tech built environment is that one almost has to be a subject to repel its deadening effects. As I hope I have shown, these deadening effects are deceptive: the world from which they emanate appears to be a world of more rapid motion, with a rapid pulse that can for a time be taken as energy itself, as it speeds up one’s conscious tempo. But the price of this temporary excitement will be paid somewhere. Even if it is not paid by the subject who benefits, the deadening effects of this environment more and more make each and everyone an object. That is what lack of love, in Eagleton’s terms a political as well as personal affair, will always do. So will lack of connection. (Brennan 1993, 186–187)

According to Teresa, one must fight this lack of connection at every level—from the challenges of interpersonal life to the efforts of organized resistance. The struggles on the inside must match the struggles on the outside; both call for an *alteration of scale*. This is the “new economy”—the truly third way—that Teresa articulates with a sense of impending doom because, she argues:

[M]odernity is producing a more complete and final form of death. Its victorious economy, capitalism, is turning biodegradable life into a form in which it can generate nothing. Once this is plain, it will also be apparent that judgement, in one sense of that term, is anything but metaphorical. One of the most ancient senses we can give to the idea of “judgement” is, “that which rights the balance.” By binding more and more of life in a form in which it cannot reproduce life, capitalism, and a complicit modernity, disturbs an ecological balance. How that balance is righted remains to be determined. But there are now few on the planet who dispute that the balance needs to be corrected in this beleaguered present. (Brennan 2000, 2)

It is here, I think, that Teresa comes the closest she has so far to revealing her most private and controversial cards—her unflinching optimism due mostly to her unflinching belief in a God(dess), a fascination with the histories and stories of world religions equal only to her bitter disappointment in the modern Christian Church.

The rise of capital, the downgrading of nature, the victory of death over life, of the Devil over God, as the Foundational Fantasy is intensified through modernity. This is the dark vision that leads Teresa back once again to her daring theory of the relationship between energetics and economics as being a different pathway for “thinking our way out of this mess”:

It is in this time [the past three centuries] that a modern and profoundly Western economy has made omnipotent fantasies into realities. My argument here is that while the fantasy pre-exists modernity, its force in the social order is intensified by modernity. The modern economy, and any social order in which the religious and other ethical constraints on the fantasy are removed, increases the extent to which that fantasy is acted out socially. Hence it increases the extent of commodification, and, accordingly, the significance of money. In turn, the fantasy’s social enactment increases its hold over the human psyche and the power of the desires born through that fantasy. In explaining this dialectic, we are drawn first to energetics, then to economics. (Brennan 2000, 9–10)

Teresa goes on to underline, what for me, in many ways is her most important argument: that for any theory to have strong, sustainable explanatory power for a large number of people, *it must have experiential appeal*. Why do middle-aged men leave their middle-aged wives for ever younger women? Or, more generally, why can’t any of us wait? We kick the vending machines (lightly perhaps), yell at the waiters (even if only under our breath), endlessly upgrade the internet connection (late at night, when no one’s watching). We the consumers, as the producers of modern capital, make it all happen but we want it to happen more quickly, more seamlessly, more automatically. All that takes is money. So we work harder. So why is everyone in the first world so exhausted?

This is a world where inertia, exhaustion and the sense of running hard to stay in the same place mark everyday life. They are as much a mark of the present depression as environmental degradation. There is a terrible tiredness around, a sense of having no energy, or of energy departing. In fact one can only understand this experience, and the connections between psychological myths and fantasies and the course of capital, if one takes energy into account . . . (Brennan 2000, 11–12)

### Globalization and Its Terrors

Toward the end of her third book, Teresa begins to move slowly toward our own very present moment and its enactment on a global scale of what she has described thus far. That enactment she calls *globalization*.

It is in her fourth book that Teresa begins, I think, to address her critics' accusations of ethnocentrism. This was an accusation she could never understand given her personal and intellectual preference for residing in non-Western countries and her conviction that most if not all of her most valued concepts come from non-first world cultures—most centrally, her embrace of human subjectivities that are not excessively defined by the Western subject/object paradigm, it's necessarily ego-centered fantasies, its violent acts of emotional dumping, and its repression of what she will come to term “the transmission of affect.”

According to Teresa's argument, it is clear that the force of the “foundational fantasy” is greatest in the West, not so much because that's where she was born, but because of the specificities of the history of the foundational fantasy's reproduction and exponential growth in capitalistic modernity. She was convinced that, while one can still even today, experience other forms of being outside of the so-called first world, Western subject/object models can take hold quickly enough anywhere—whether in Asia, Africa, South America, or (her favorite defense and illustration) Eastern Europe, as capital moves in new and different directions, often to the direct detriment of those embracing it in the hope that their lives will improve. In the fourth instance, Teresa provides what she calls her “empirical companion book” to all the others: *Globalization and its Terrors: Daily Life in the West* (2003). This “empirical volume” proclaims its function loudly, right on the cover of the book:

It has long been realized that the poorer countries of the South have paid for the unstoppable onward rush of globalization in the exploitation of their natural and human resources. Recent events have made it clear that there is a price to be paid in the West as well . . . the evidence already exists showing that globalization has for years been harming not only the poor of the Third World but also its alleged beneficiaries in the affluent West . . . the speeding up of contemporary capitalism—in which space is substituted for time—means that neither the environment nor the people who live in it are given the opportunity to regenerate . . . this leads directly to pollution-induced, immune-deficient and stress-related disease.

There is another paragraph in this clever marketing come-on (i.e., globalization is really about “you” not “them”):

*With much talk of religious judgment on either side in the current global conflict . . . global reasoned analysis combined with local action counters economic exploitation. Left to itself, such exploitation produces environmental catastrophe, turning judgment from a prophecy to a probability.*

This explicit political and spiritual outing of where Teresa is headed theoretically continues for some two hundred pages via a grueling, minutely documented compilation of the ways in which we in the West are killing ourselves—not needing terrorism in the slightest to bring the consequences of globalization home. With an archival skill that I never knew she had, and the collective skill of her research assistants no doubt, Teresa documents the slow death of our biosphere as a result of the process she has theorized up to now. She documents first the bad news most of us already know: the pollution of our air and creation of unstable climates through global warming (mainly through the deregulation of fossil fuels), the increase in our exposure to UV radiation, our unsafe water and toxic food supply—all of this speeded up exponentially by the increased ease of movement across old, state borders through new trans-corporate initiatives such as the most familiar NAFTA or GATT. She demonstrates once again how these initiatives have led *directly* to cuts in health care, pensions, education and more—with the inevitable global feminization of poverty so obvious to anyone who pays attention. (As Teresa points out, of the 1.3 billion people living on one U.S. dollar or less daily, one billion are women.)

But Teresa doesn't stop there. Like all good feminists, she brings us back, over and over again to our bodies. She digs up the statistics in this, her "empirical book": Chronic illness is now the central health issue of the advanced Western world. In the U.S. alone, 96% of home care visits, 83% of prescription drug use, 66% of physician visits and 55% of emergency department visits are for epidemic chronic conditions. Auto-immune diseases are increasing. Cancer and other chronic illnesses are escalating. One has less money as well as less time to repair the damage of staying in the race.

What can we do about this situation? It is not clear to me that we can do anything. But, Teresa is an incorrigible optimist because of her spiritual convictions and the ways in which they inflect her political beliefs. She acknowledges that today's world is at war. The economic war on the South by the North is going global and military, she says, and the "South" has engaged in return. She describes compellingly what she sees as two large, universalist ideologies, both appropriate to expansion, both ultimately fed by capital, both reviling liberated women and uncloseted homosexuals (i.e., those not willing to play the Foundational Fantasy Game), both claiming that the Judgment is at hand; the Apocalypse is now.

[A]t a certain cumulative point, fossil fuel emissions really will destroy the life of the future. As they do so, aided by other aspects of Western capitalism, they bring into being the blood-red moon, the boiling seas littered with dead fish, the plagues, famine, and drought, the people who have to pay for water: all listed in the apocalyptic events of the Book of Revelation. Global

warming, the thing responsible, is mentioned as marking the end-time in Judaism's *Ein Yaakov*, insofar as it warns of great heat. To read Revelation and similar texts as visions of this future, here and soon, is to begin moving prophecy from the sphere of the inexplicable. As Freud noted, there are visions of probable futures in dreams and involuntary conscious images. Einstein added that everyday life in space and time is in some ways a fantasy. Freud attempted to find a rational line of cause and effect in accounting for premonitions and was unsuccessful. But that does not mean these things lie forever beyond human ken, anymore than the cause and effect leading to environmental disaster is beyond the reasoning of those prepared to read. The coincidence of the Protocol and the texts of apocalypse exists, I suggest, because reason is godlike and because God also works by reason and in fact is reason, even though much of this reason has remained beyond the comprehension of human creatures . . .

By following its deductive chain, by reaching the conclusion that the environmental disasters prophesied in various religions are our own work, this book seeks to persuade those whose reason led them [away] from faith that the metaphysical issues of religion are in fact issues for the here and now, and that the coincidence between the prophesies of the religions of the Book (and the West) and the realities of climate change is great enough to require an explanation. This argument also seeks to persuade those whose faith leads them to acts of suicide that they are perpetuating and expanding negative emotions and affects (fear, anger, the anxiety and pain which interfere with thinking) of which they are also victims. But it has begun by drawing attention to the coincidence between the prophesies of Kyoto and those of Revelation, prophesies which are common, with different stresses, to the three religions of the Book. I take the coincidence of human-made catastrophe and revelation as indicative of the way that humans are invested with more decision-making power than customary models of religion allow. If human beings have this much agency in shaping their fate, we should assume that the deadlines we set ourselves for reversing course are judgments whose day has indeed been determined—by ourselves. (Brennan 2003, xix-xxi)

Teresa argues that we—all of us North, South, East, and West of whatever faith, gender, class, color, or sex—must stop and *go back* out of a desire to keep living. We should be guided in going back, not by nostalgia, but by what Teresa called—not joking at all—The Prime Directive:

*The prime directive: we shall not use up nature and humankind at a rate faster than they can replenish themselves and be replenished . . . if we live by reason rather than faith, this is the inevitable conclusion. If we live by faith, we might reasonably recognize that the only judgment inflicted upon us is our own. (Brennan 2003, 164)*

## The Transmission of Affect

I don't know about you, but for me, it's really hard to know what to do and where to start, with such a huge directive, especially from beyond the grave. It is clear to me that, characteristically, Teresa decided to go back to the beginnings of her theory—to the Foundational Fantasy, to the Western Social Psychosis, to her theory of energetics and what she sees as the death-driven exploitation of energy today, that of the earth, of entire human groups and individuals. She decided to go back to the ego, to disconnect it and its subject/object paradigm increasingly in control of the planet. Thus, in the fifth instance, we have *The Transmission of Affect* (2004). This was the book she was working on just before being hit by a speeding, out of control, and still unaccounted for car.

I am not going to spend a lot of time on this fifth volume, in part because this book, strangely unfinished, was clearly her first best effort to answer her favorite question, "What is to be done?" in accord with the Prime Directive. For Teresa, the first thing we have to do is prove the relativity of the Imperial Ego and work toward a realignment of its functions more in accord with the goal of protecting life than spreading death. Above all, we must educate, argue and act, with those we love as well as with those we hate (or who hate us), to begin to cut the juice, to starve the logic of total war. Uncharacteristically, but ambitiously, Teresa turns to science—biology, chemistry and physics—and especially to neuroscience and endocrinology, to prove that the transmission of affect is all around us in the North, South, East, and, yes, even the West if we are willing and able to discern it. The social enters the biological. That is "the new paradigm" she represents to us:

What is at stake with the notion of the transmission of affect is precisely the opposite of the sociobiological claim that the biological *determines* the social. What is at stake is rather the means by which social interaction shapes biology. My affect, if it comes across to you, alters your anatomical makeup for good or ill. (Brennan 2004, 74)

From the "entrainment" of hormonal, electrical, magnetic connections ordering everything from group psychology to "interpersonal depression" or ADHD as disorders of attentive energy, Teresa passionately but rationally argues for a new education of the senses and "a lifting of the burden of the ego" so that the social psychosis currently in charge of the world's fate can be decoded and undone.

Just before her voice went silent, Teresa implored us to give language to that which works toward life, to not be afraid or intimidated or self-censoring in our efforts to speak for life and put a stop to the increase in death all around us today. I give her her own last words:

If it yet seems that with the resurrection of the body, I have resurrected the specter of demons to be struggled against and overthrown, this is also true. But once it is recognized that these demons are familiar affective patterns that can be undone, that these affects can be countered whenever we refuse them entry, once, in short, that they are understood as forces in human affairs that can be cleaned up and transformed, converted back into living energy as they are released from distorting blocks of inertia and repression, then they have no power to whip up the superstition, anger, and anxiety that prevail when their capabilities are inflated. They have power only when we see them, hear them, think them, as well as smell and touch and taste them—and then grant them admission. Their power to torment us exists only as long as we permit it to exist. It is our living energy these demons thrive on, and it is only theirs when diverted through ignorance from the drive to love and create into the pathways of war, exploitation, and death. Of that we cannot speak, thereof we must learn. (Brennan 2004, 163–164)

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