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FROM A POLITICS OF DISGUST TO A POLITICS OF THE BODY

1. Bodies and boundaries

Though materially enclosed by the skin that envelops it, the tentacles of the human body extend beyond its visible surface. Its identity is marked by borders created by social norms, cultural taboos, and political ideologies that establish its place in the world and the spaces through which it may safely move. Noting this, researchers in the fields of psychology and the humanities speak of disgust as protecting body boundaries rather than the body (Miller 1997, xi). This is not to dismiss the role the skin envelop of the body plays in individuating it, but rather to see that it situates the body within specific extended spaces that establish its communal identity, its status within its community, and the status of its community among other communities. Disgust does not create these boundaries. It follows the script given to it. Once enlisted by the dictates of this script, however, it plays a role in legitimating them.

The very existence of disgust attests to the vulnerability of the human body and its boundaries. If our bodies were invulnerable and its boundaries were secure the protective mechanisms of disgust would serve no purpose. When it is a matter of the biologically given body disgust reactions are directed at non-human organisms. When it is a matter of culturally created body boundaries, they are unleashed on other human beings. Here the experience of another people as contaminating, or as posing an existential threat can enlist disgust's vomit out and/or destroy mechanisms to contain or eliminate the danger. At the extreme, as in Nazi Germany, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia, disgust's revulsion fuels the genocidal project of destroying those seen as threats to racial purity, religious integrity or nationalist ambitions. Less extreme, as in the case of the colonial racism described by Frantz Fanon, it is deployed to create a class of sub-human people who are allowed to live so long as they submit to their oppression.

When the Nazis determined that Jewish bodies poisoned the spaces inhabited by blond hair blue eye bodies, it called on disgust to materialize the ideology of the master race. When it was only(!) a matter of stigmatizing Jews as a threat to Aryan purity Nazis pursued a vomit expulsion policy. They re-drew the boundaries of Jewish existence. Removed from German towns and cities, Jews were confined to ghetto where conditions of poverty, hunger, filth and disease, transformed bodies that belonged in the world into bodies whose presence was repulsive. As the disgust emanating from these spaces did the job of defining Jews as a repugnant contamination the stakes were raised. The stench from the ghetto legitimated the idea that Jewish existence anywhere was intolerable. Protecting Aryan purity with disgust vomit expulsion tactics no longer sufficed. The Final Solution left only one available space for vomited out nauseating Jewish bodies – the crematorium.

The Bosnian Serbs in the former Yugoslavia were more discrete in their disgust tactics. Again it was a matter of reconfiguring body boundaries. Here intersecting Muslims and Christians places were transformed into exclusive Bosnian-Serb Christian enclaves. Rather than taking the trouble to create repulsive Muslim bodies to legitimate these newly established body boundaries, Bosnian-Serbs used the disgust language of purity and danger to justify them. Invoking the disgust vomit reflex that cleansed the body of poisons, they called their genocide an 'ethnic cleansing'. Relocating Muslims was said to be necessary for the health of the Serbian Christian body. Mass graves and witness accounts, however, show that as in Nazi Germany, what began as a disgust vomit policy devolved into a murderous destroy machine.

There was nothing dissembling about the Rwandan genocide disgust tactics. In a country where Hutu and Tutsi lived together in families and as friends and neighbors, a propaganda machine worked overtime to create body boundaries enforced by machetes. Evoking the disgust triggered by dismembered bodies, Tutsi men's bodies were hacked to pieces. Destroying their bodily integrity in death made the point that their repulsiveness made them unfit for life. (Circular reasoning, to be sure, but emotionally effective). Tutsi women, degraded by public rapes, became living objects of disgust as their filthy and half naked living bodies were marched through towns and villages. Reduced to disgusting sex objects in death, their publicly displayed mutilated genitals pro-

duced lasting nauseating images that overwhelmed the claims of their living bodies' right to exist.

Body boundaries, as evidenced by these genocides, are mutable. What were once crossable boundaries, Jewish assimilation into mainstream German life, Bosnian Muslim and Christian neighborhoods, Hutu and Tutsi families, neighbors and friends, become uncrossable borders in a relatively brief period of time. Legitimizing these transformations is critical to the politics they serve. They must not be seen as arbitrary or ideologically expedient but as always already there waiting to be revealed as the solution to perceived assaults on racial (racist) or national (nationalist) integrity. Disgust is not the only enabler of these boundary transformations. In lining them with sensory offensiveness, however, it gives them an intimate, experiential, reality. Your objectionable existence nauseates me. My nausea reifies the truth of the new boundaries that disqualify you from claiming a rightful place in the world.

As an ally of the politics that distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate bodies, disgust displays a capacity to rank bodies along a hierarchical grid where some bodies are deemed better than others. It is in recognition of this ranking ability that disgust has been identified as a moral emotion (Miller 2004, 2). In this context calling disgust a moral emotion does not indicate that its judgments reflect critically arrived at concepts of good, bad and evil, but rather that in endorsing its society's moral codes it displays the capacity to assess where one and others belong in the world. Further, this ability to determine who is and is not disgusting, includes an awareness of the dangers of being ostracized as disgusting if one violates their social world's norms. My disgust, in policing others, also polices me (Lewis 2016, 275).

Of all the moral emotions, shame or guilt for example, disgust is unique in that it uses the body to institute a 'morality' of the body. It is not a person's behavior that is judged but the way that their body meets or falls short of an ideological constructed image of a legitimate human body. Those bodies that meet the criteria set by this image are deemed fully human and worthy of moral praise. Those that do not are marked as physically and morally repugnant. The repugnance is not abstract. The presence of these obnoxious bodies triggers a disgust recoil that gives the boundaries between human, sub-human and disposable inhuman bodies an undeniable immediacy.

The above examples of Nazi, Bosnian-Serb, and Rwandan genocides are part of the larger history of the ways that disgust, under the banner of protecting ‘real human’ bodies from perceived dangers, has been weaponized as an instrument of racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, colonial, and genocidal violence. As evidenced by this history, in becoming a moral affect aligned with regimes that rank the bodies of certain people as less than fully human, disgust has become an ally of a politics immoral violence (Kelly 2011, 16, 124).

This paper argues that disgust’s current ‘moral’ role as an enabler of this politics need not be its last word. It pursues this idea by examining the psychology and neurology of disgust, the existential experience of disgust as described by Frantz Fanon, the bodily experiences that contest disgust’s current demarcation of body boundaries, and the phenomenology of the macabre allure. Drawing on these resources, it finds that disgust can speak for a politics of the body whose boundaries reflect a recognition of the humanity of vulnerability insofar as it they reflect the realities of the porous body and are an expression of the risks inherent in opening ourselves to each other. As a protector of vulnerable boundaries susceptible to exploitation this politics of the body would direct disgust’s revulsion toward those who turn vulnerable bodies into victim bodies. Unlike an argument that reaches a conclusion that is logically guaranteed, this argument leads to an existential conclusion. It points to a possibility that may or may not be realized.

2. The becoming of disgust

Though researchers agree that the visceral revulsion of disgust is a protective behavior, they do not agree on much else. Some say that it is a universal affect that appears early in infancy. Supporting Darwin, who identified it as one of the six basic emotions (Miller 2004, 2), they find that of all the core emotions, disgust is the most immediate and requires the least cognitive ability (Lewis 2016, 287). Calling disgust the most sensory of the emotions in that it can be triggered by the sight, smell, touch, or taste of anything that would be in contact with the body in a noxious way, Carolyn Korsmeyer finds that this immediacy means that disgust is aroused below the level of consciousness (Korsmeyer 2018, 216). This immediacy is said to be evidenced in the gape face, an automatic bodily appearance of disgust that is present at birth and

remains an identifiable and involuntary cross-cultural expression (Kelly 2011, 64). Though the disgust face is said to be universal, what triggers it is not. Not knowing the particulars of your cultural universe, I will not know what revolts you. I can be certain, however, that some things in your world are marked as repulsive and will evoke your disgust.

This account of disgust's early appearance and the gape face is disputed by those who find that disgust emerges only as the child becomes attuned to social norms and the judgments of others. Rejecting the idea that disgust operates at the pre-conscious level, they argue that disgust is a cognitive emotion whose resemblance to infantile avoidance behaviors is superficial and misleading. The error of those claiming that disgust appears in infancy is said to be that they mistake instinctive fear reactions from learned disgust ones (Herz 2012, 79). What is important for our interest in the politics of disgust is that though fear and disgust are said to be distinct in their origins they come together and reinforce each other in adult life (Herz 2012, 41).

The idea that disgust is a human moral affect, rather than a core emotion, is defended on several grounds. Kelly appeals to biological conditions. According to him, what makes disgust specifically human is that it integrates two mechanisms that are separate in other animals, food rejection and the parasite avoidance. This integration was made possible, he argues, by the cognitive structure of the human brain (Kelly 2011, 45-48). Others defend the idea that disgust is an adaptive affect on the grounds that it is the last emotion children acquire, appearing around the age of five, after the effects of acculturation and social learning have taken hold, and once cognitive abilities are established (Rozin, Haidt, McCauley 2016, 823; Herz 2012, 46, 49). On this account, disgust's biological origins respond to social imperatives.

William Ian Miller challenges this reactive account of disgust. Disgust, he says, does not merely respond to social imperatives, it participates in creating them. Insofar as these imperatives reflect the distinctive ways that humans are social and cultural creatures, disgust is not merely dependent on acculturation; it is involved in the creation of the cultures through which we express our humanity (Miller 1997, 11). On this account, disgust creates figures of distaste that predispose us to experience certain things and people as foul and as contaminating threats. Now the distinction between fear and disgust is muted as images of disgust are

deployed to create and intensify fear. As the Nazi, Bosnian-Serb and Hutu genocides indicate, once disgust intensifies fear, containing the threat is impossible. It must be destroyed.

3. The existential experience of disgust: Frantz Fanon

Miller's claim that disgust's powerful image making capacities influence the ways we organize and internalize many of our attitudes toward moral, political and social issues (Miller 1997, 18) is evident in Franz Fanon's account of being confronted by the white boy's «Mama see the Negro! I'm frightened» (Fanon 1952, 112). Fanon's description of the impact of these words evokes Sartre's account of 'the Look' in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1943, 340-363).

In Sartre's vignette of a park encounter, one person, simply by being there, negates the other person's universe. The one who is looked at becomes a thing in the other person's universe – evicted from their place as a subject in a world of their making. This eviction is not, however, permanent. As described by Sartre, the Look inserts us into an intersubjective, ongoing, and indecisive dialectic of vulnerability. By looking at the stroller in the park, the person sitting on the bench incorporates them into its world. By returning the Look the stroller inserts the bench sitter into its world. Because the person on the bench and the stroller engage in mutual thievery neither of their worlds are permanently destroyed. As vulnerable to each other's assertion of subjectivity, neither is permanently objectified by the other.

It is notable that Sartre gives no account of the body of the person on the park bench or the person passing by. He takes no account of the place each occupies in the institutionalized power hierarchies of their world or of the affects used to enforce the boundaries created by these hierarchies. If one of the persons in the park is ranked as morally inferior and if their inferiority is depicted as revolting, the dialectic is upended. Sartre's imaginary scene of embodied intersubjective vulnerability becomes a utopian impossibility in Fanon's world where racist ideologies enable white colonists to flee their vulnerability by permanently freezing the colonized within their gaze¹.

In Fanon's world of colonial racism, the Look looks quite different. Though now it is a matter of words, not stares, what is crit-

¹ For an extensive discussion of this flight, see Bergoffen 2016.

ical is that Fanon cannot return the gesture. The possibility of mutual thievery is foreclosed. Institutions that mark the boundaries of his body and create the spaces through which he may and may not move, by foreclosing his ability to occupy the position of a subject who brings meaning to the world, degrade his humanity. The disgust attached to his degradation keeps these boundaries viscerally alive.

Disgust's role in the existential impact of the Look, here enacted in the boy's words, becomes visible as Fanon describes the ways that his body schema is overridden by a racial epidermal schema that becomes internalized as self-disgust. As a body schema, Fanon's body exists «a manner of expressing that my body is in and toward the world as a posture toward a certain task» (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 102-103, 142). As a body schema he takes a cigarette out of a pack and lights it with ease (Fanon 1952, 11). The effortless with which he inhabits his cigarette smoking body, however, is overrun by historical-racial forces (Fanon 1952, 111). It crumbles under the weight of a racial epidermal schema infused with the cultural and social dimensions of the space-time continuum that decide how and where his body lives, moves and acts (Fanon 1952, 112)². Now his body's navigation of the world is coopted by «the white man who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories» (Fanon 1952, 111).

These stories are captured in the boy's words, «I'm frightened». As a feared and frightful body, Fanon's life will be lived within the boundaries set by whites. «In America Negroes are segregated. In South America Negroes are whipped in the streets and Negro strikers are cut down by machine guns. In West Africa the Negro is an animal» (Fanon 1952, 113). In Martinique Fanon is given back to himself as bad, mean and ugly animal (Fanon 1952, 113). Why is the little boy afraid? The animal will eat him up (Fanon 1952, 114). As the white boy becomes a white colonial man his fear of Fanon as the animal that might eat him up will dissipate. He will respond to Fanon with disgust. He will be among those who utter «the catch phrases strewn over the surface of things – nigger underwear smells of nigger», he has «the Negro's *sui generis* odor» (Fanon 1952, 116, 129). The child's fear of getting too close to a dangerous animal will morph into the adult's disgust that throws the body into recoil if the stinking animal gets

² For a reading of Fanon's account of his body-schema as a critique of Merleau-Ponty's account, see Murphy 2008.

too close. The power of this disgust is critical. It contaminates Fanon. The white disgust at his repulsive body becomes his «shame and self-contempt. Nausea» (Fanon 1952, 116). When Fanon describes himself as walled in, we need to feel the space within which he is confined as permeated by the repugnant smells that keep others away from him and make him nauseous to himself. They are disgusted by him. He is disgusting to himself.

Fanon is clear: what is at stake in confining him to a despicable body is his status as a person. These disgust body boundaries are not designed to protect him from poisons. They are created to excise him from his humanity.

4. The neurology of disgust

What do we gain by inserting the dynamics of disgust into Fanon's descriptions of being a Black body in an anti-Black world? How does this reading impact our understanding of the meaning of this world and our strategies to combat it? What do we learn when Fanon says that he was hated, despised and detested, by paying attention to the ways that being detested, whose synonyms include being repulsive, is a party to the fact that he is hated and despised?

One disturbing answer to this question lies in the neurological experiments of Harris and Fiske. Recalling Kosmeyer's finding that disgust operates below the level of consciousness, Harris and Fisk discovered that though prejudicial and ethnocentric judgments are not always or necessarily associated with disgust, when they are, the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), the area of the brain associated with higher level social interactions with other people fails to activate. Kelly finds this aspect of disgust particularly troubling (who wouldn't?), for it indicates that the mechanisms of disgust used to dehumanize and destroy certain people and peoples, though ideologically provoked, are not ideologically manufactured. When oppressors use the language of disgust to dehumanize their victims as uncivilized, dirty, barbaric and animalistic they are tapping into the neurology of disgust to activate their claims (Kelly 2011, 30, 125).

This unsettling neurological account of the role disgust plays in the politics of dehumanization though confirming those who argue that disgust operates at a pre-conscious, pre-cognitive level, does not, according to Lisa Feldman Barrett, mean that the neurology of disgust is intractable. According to her, the emotions are

complex neurological systems that respond to experience and to the ways that experience is interpreted (Barrett 2017). Developing this idea she speaks of the education of the emotions – an ongoing feedback process where experience rewires an affect that as rewired interacts with and reinterprets experience. On her account, understanding the emotions is not a matter of deciding between biology or socialization but of deciphering how each impacts the other.

Barrett's account of the education of the emotions means that the neurology of disgust noted by Harris and Fisk, though established, is not intractable. Given new experiences and conditions, it can be re-wired. The fact that disgust responds to different images of the body and different ideas of threats to it, and the fact that disgust itself creates compelling images, in short the fact that disgust, is an historical response that takes up a biological reaction, means that the current alliance between disgust and fear can be broken and that the genocidal and racist violence unleashed by this alliance can be mitigated. Michael Lewis' account of Maron's evolving disgust responses is instructive here.

5. The case of Maron: The education of disgust

Michael Lewis' description of Maron's disgust responses as an infant, a child and an adolescent can be read as an account of the education of disgust. When given a sour food soon after birth, Maron's father sees his son's facial reaction as an expression of disgust. At the age of five, Maron says, «How disgusting» when he sees his brother throw up. Again, his face registers his disgust. At thirteen, watching a TV news report showing a Vietnamese army officer holding a pistol to a prisoner's head and shooting him, Maron's face and his words say, «That's disgusting» (Lewis 2016, 273).

However involuntary and inarticulate the infant Maron's disgust face may have been, it is read by his father and sent back to Maron an apt response to certain foods. At first the meaning of Maron's disgust face is in the hands of his father. Later he will come to own it himself. Lewis does not tell us how Maron's father reacted to his infant's disgust face. It is highly likely that he said and signaled in some way that he (the father) understood that what his son was experiencing was disgust. In this way Maron learns that what he feels has a name – disgust – and that there are situations where this feeling is appropriate. As Maron grows older

his disgust face continues to communicate his feelings of disgust to others, and he learns more about what it means to feel disgusted. By feeling disgust in situations that meet his community's standards of disgusting behavior, his gape face expresses his commitment to these standards. It says: I am one of you. Further Maron learns who belongs to his community by whether they display the gape face when they should. From this perspective the obvious avoidance and aggressive disgust behaviors need to be understood within the horizon of their communicative and communal meanings. Even before Maron can speak, the disgust face initiates him into and binds him to a community where the speech act «That's disgusting» speaks of a shared condemnation of an object, event, or person (Ahmed 2004, 94).

Maron first learns that the revulsion he experiences is disgust from his intimate, caring father. His father's closeness supports the distance Maron takes from the disgusting object. From the very beginning, disgust plays a role in the process where the 'we' of his community formed. When Maron utters disgust at the sight of his brother's vomit, it is, I think, safe to assume that he is also sympathetic to his brother's suffering. In rejecting the vomit, he is not rejecting his brother. He is learning the difference between an action that is disgusting and a disgusting person. This distinction is at work in the final account of Maron's disgust Watching a T.V. news report where a Vietnamese army officer raises a pistol to a prisoner's head and shoots him dead, Maron says, That's Disgusting. Saying That's Disgusting, not He's Disgusting Maron's disgust is directed toward the act of cold-blooded murder not the soldier as a person. Were the soldier identified as a disgusting barbarian, he could, as in Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* be abused and murdered with impunity (Coetzee 1980). As fully human, the soldier in the news report can be tried but not tortured.

In developing the 'we' to which he belongs from his father and himself, to others in his family and finally to the victim and the soldier in the news report Maron shows how disgust can become a moral emotion engaged in creating the idea of a 'we' of humanity where disgust is directed at the actions of those who treat others as expendable.

The little boy who greets Fanon with «Mama see the Negro. I'm frightened» is sitting beside his mother. Like Maron and the rest of us, he learned how to experience his emotions, their proper

and improper expressions, in the early intimacies of family life. His mother's silent presence, or at least in Fanon's account we do not hear her saying that there is nothing to fear from the Negro, is a comfort in several respects: she approves of his fear; her white maternal body will protect him; he is safe so long as he remains near her ideologically.

In learning to see the Negro body as repellant the boy's disgust challenges Maron's 'we'. It fosters the tribalism that once had important evolutionary benefits insofar as in distinguishing between us and them it initiated people into specific in-group cooperative communities and separated them from groups with different and sometimes different and opposing goals (Kelly 2011, 112). The fact that maintaining and multiplying the boundaries between Northern Ireland's Protestants and Catholics, who used disgust language to characterize each other, has been crucial to securing the peace negotiated by the Belfast Good Friday peace accords may be seen as current evidence for these evolutionary benefits (Keefe 2019). The problem with the «good fences make good neighbors» role of disgust is that it comes at the price of stigmatizing the neighbors as anything but good. By fostering and encouraging the human predisposition to see the world in prejudicial tribal terms, the violence unleashed by the mobilization of disgust in today's racist, sexist and anti-Semitic versions of tribalism far outweighs its use as a force for communal cooperation (Kelly 2011, 23, 103, 193).

The possibility of diverting disgust from its alliance with tribal-like violence lies in what Jonathan Hardt and Clark McCauley speak of as disgust's preadaptation proclivities, its ability to be recruited for new functions. They identify this co-opting of an existing system for a new function as a significant factor in biological evolution and cultural transformation (Rozin, Haidt, McCauley 2016, 815-816). This suggests that far from being cemented to current versions of tribalism and its accompanying violence disgust can be recruited to protect the boundaries of distinct human communities without seeing people of other communities as threats simply because they are different.

Disgust's dynamic proclivities, evidenced in the ways that its original function of protecting the body from the dangers of poisons and parasites was recruited to support body boundaries created by ideologies of purity and danger indicate that its expressions of revulsion, like the diverse body boundaries it has

served, are malleable. Given disgust's unique status as a bodily affect, the body itself may enlist disgust as an ally of boundaries that speak for the 'we' of humanity.

6. The ambiguous body

The effort to disable the alliance between disgust, fear, and violence will require re-imagining the bodies and boundaries. In today's tribal politics, the dangers to the body and its boundaries are grounded in the idea of an impregnable body with closed borders whose purity must be protected by any and all available means. The vulnerability of the body is acknowledged insofar as preserving its 'purity' requires vigilance. It is denied insofar as it is denigrated as an impediment to its dignity.

This image of the body as a self-contained enclosure with unbreachable, invulnerable borders is belied by the body itself. Its porous skin, its eyes, ears, nose, mouth, anus and genitalia open it to the world and draw it to others. These openings pull us, as embodied, to the pleasures of being engulfed in a world of colors, sounds, tastes, and smells. They lead us to the touch and feel of others for whom we care and who care for us. The female body is especially clear here. The vagina that makes impregnation and birth possible is the most dramatic voice of the body's openings as sources of love and life. The lactating breasts speak of the life sustaining power of its warm flows. It is as open and vulnerable that the body is lived and alive.

The open body is not an argument against the dangers of vulnerability. Disgust is not wrong. We are and can be threats to each other. Ontologically, the perils of being embodied are, as the Look makes clear, inescapable. They are only intolerable if, as Fanon shows, we create a world where the dynamic of mutual vulnerability is foreclosed. SARS, Ebola and most recently Covid-19 are spread through particles that take advantage of the biology of the porous body. Here the fact that we are pursuing protective measures that use the body's porousness as an antidote to these vulnerabilities reminds us that the body is ambiguous – as dangerously vulnerable it is also life affirming and resilient.

The nurturing breast, the threat of disease, and the perils of bodily mutilation remind us that body speaks in more than one voice. In sounding our finitude it is vulnerable to wounding and death. As a source of life, it draws us to the pleasures of being among others. The lived body's desire to be recognized in its sin-

gularity, captured in images of boundaries, and its desire for companionship, friendship, and intimacy, portrayed in images of boundaries crossed by the outstretched arm, the open hand and the caress, reveal that living our finitude is not merely a matter of confronting our mortality but also a matter of recognizing the ways that others complete our lives. The life of disgust in showing us how it has become an enabler of immoral violence, also shows us how disgust, in its focus on the body can become the voice of the ambiguous body where its revulsion is reserved for those who destroy our intersubjective bond to assert their subjective superiority. Xorje Olivera may be heard as speaking for this voice.

Tapped as a prospective juror in the Harvey Weinstein case, Olivera said that he supported #MeToo, a movement that weaponizes accusatory shame, and that knowing women who were sexually assaulted, he was aware of their suffering. Going further, he said that he could not be an impartial juror because, «I personally felt nothing but disgust even by being in the same room as him, I just felt very icky» (Chung 2020). Weinstein's moral failures make Olivera's skin crawl. Here the #MeToo movement provides the re-interpretation of sexual assault that educates disgust to redirect the revulsion traditionally leveled at the woman who 'asked for it', to the assailant who victimized her. Here it is not the humiliated body that evokes disgust, but the person who violated the body's vulnerable openings who is experienced as revolting. Olivera's revulsion, like Maron's, is not used as a dehumanizing tool. It is invoked as a call for justice.

7. The phenomenology of disgust: The aesthetic pause

The body does not play a prominent role in Aurel Kolnai's phenomenological account of disgust. Unlike others who identify it as a moral affect, Kolnai describes it as an aesthetic emotion (Kolnai 1929, 39, 44). It is not, he says, focused on the subject who experiences the arousal but on the object of arousal. Its aesthetic attention is unique in that it is characterized by the paradox of a «macabre allure» where disgust is attracted to the object that repulses it (Kolnai 1929, 42). This aesthetic tension, exploited in the «art horror» of movies and stories can, Kolnai says, become an invitation to pay closer attention to the qualities of the revolting object and through this attention put its offensiveness in doubt.

Following Kolnai, Korsmeyer, speaks of disgust's invitation to attend to its object more closely as creating the space of the

pause. She cites audience responses to horror films as one instance of this space. Though audiences are repelled by the disgusting scenes before them, they do not turn away. They are fascinated. Korsmeyer attributes this fixation to the fact that the disgust evoked by horror films and other aesthetic repugnant objects is experienced as an impetus to pause before recoiling (Korsmeyer 2018, 220-221). Getting us to linger in the pause, disgust gives us the time to initiate a ranking system that distinguishes non-threatening strange/stranger bodies from dangerous ones. Thus it is not a matter of choosing between accounts of disgust that see it as a subjective moral emotion or an aesthetic object oriented affect but of seeing that it is the subjective interpretation of the object that arouses disgust that determines how it will be judged. Kolnai and Korsmeyer, by introducing us to the macabre allure of disgust, show us that if there are neurological triggers of disgust these triggers can be paused long enough to be defused.

Kolnai's descriptions of the macabre allure that by inducting us into the pause of curiosity derails disgust's revulsion may be read as one direction Barrett's education of disgust might take. Olivares speaking for the voice of the body points to another mode of education. Here the revulsion is inescapable. Having been educated by #MeToo, however, it is directed toward those who exploit the vulnerable boundaries of the sexual body.

Whether the proclivities of disgust take these or other routes to become an ally of a body politics of embodied vulnerability, or whether it continues to embolden ideological politics that reject the humanity of some to protect the purity of others cannot be predicted. Knowing that disgust is a dynamic bodily emotion, however, is a source of hope; for the body in its desire for intimacy and as attracted to others in their diversity is not a friend of claustrophobic boundaries of purity. This does not mean that it abandons the desire for secure boundaries or that the protective dynamics of disgust are rendered inoperative. Linda Alcoff, for example speaks of her rapist's invasion of her body boundaries as repulsive (Alcoff 2018). In this instance and others like it, and unlike the ways that disgust infiltrates Fanon's body boundaries, disgust is doing its job of identifying danger.

Keeping protective disgust from becoming destructive disgust remains an ongoing challenge. It requires strategies of resistance that understand the ways that disgust has become an ally of oppressive and genocidal violence, and that uses this understand-

ing to defy it. As we create these strategies and put them in place, we should not, however, overestimate the impact of defanging the politics of disgust. The ideologies it serves has other tools at their disposal. Depriving them of one of its tactics, however, can mitigate their impact – and that is not nothing.

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