Space of Appearance 10.7

**\*\*\*NEXT MEETING ON THE 21st AT 20 COOPER UNION ON THE SECOND FLOOR\*\*\***

* Next Week: No class
  + 1,000 word writing
    - Collaborative goal for end of class: everyone participates and creates a synthesizing conceptions of political spectacle
    - This writing will help determine the final project
    - 3 Things:
      * Give me 3 key words (don’t develop) to organize around
        + Ex: movement
      * What interests you?
        + This is how you imagine this relating to the class’s ideas.
        + Don’t need to use the keywords in this
      * Links to videos that show political spectacle
        + Start analyzing how do these spectacles work?
        + Important to look at the spectacles of politicians and those interrupting the power
        + Efficacious or Failure: Think of people who are forming power and those trying to interrupt it
  + **Class at 20 Cooper on the Second Floor on the 21st** 
    - Theatre Group from Cuba: two women who are doing a performance that night if interested!
* Reflection on Boal
  + “people who think that they’re comfortable are missing something” -DT
* Exercise: Stage a tableau of Butler’s critique of Arendt
* Reflection on Posts:
  + Close Reading from Comments: Natality
    - “When we are born”
    - Man was created and before it was nothing
      * Um… his mother?
    - Beginnings and birthing: false ideations, and you have to erase a lot for this to be true
  + Butler Can disagree but rely on Arendt heavily
    - We are in conversation with each other constantly
    - Must engage even if you disagree with foundational texts/works
    - Important to think generously
    - Arendt saw the space of appearance as so liberatory
      * Versatile, in our own hands
      * Butler rightfully calls attention to the idea that the grounds have already been laid, then we have divisions that keep us out of the space of appearance
        + These spaces are already gendered and racialized and etc.
* Arendt
  + Saw herself, in a sense, as a philosopher
    - Couldn’t quite get past body versus mind separation
  + Distinctiveness
    - We are distinct but as beings we are equal
    - Speech and the Action
      * Undervaluing of the physical body in action:
        + The body doesn’t distinguish itself, distinction is in speech
    - Web of human relations when bodies are together (through speech)
  + Plurality
    - Necessary condition of politics
    - 30,000 foot overview of politics
      * Doesn’t really take into account the materiality of bodies, the particular nature of bodies
    - The many doesn’t make a plural
      * There have to be more to think of identification with a plurality
    - Used in Arendt’s writing to distinguish that you can not be political as one person
  + Meaning of the action lies with the storyteller or Historian
    - Some versions of the story put the end at a later place
      * Example: Christopher Columbus
        + Died before knowing he discovered the Americas
        + Historian on Columbus in the 1600s would have one story to tell, 1900s would have a different story
        + The story can outlive or last the person, but what if the reverberations never stop
    - Where’s my Roy Cohn? Reflection
      * Many political performances that we see now, had their beginnings long ago and continue their lives now
    - Every country has its own story of their being and how they continue to proliferate
    - Temporality- special and temporal frameworks: where do we place these?
      * What came before and what do we imagine will come after?
      * What is being planted to live on in the retelling of the story? What is it drawing on?
        + What is getting actualized
      * Befores and Afters
  + Power as distinct from force and violence
    - Power is a potentiality, never centered around one person or an institution
      * Thus, power is always possible
      * Total-impotence is impossible: we are never completely without power
      * It is diffuse and within the group

ADD HERe

* Butler
  + Ideas Shifted Over Time: Start out thinking of body as a social construct
    - Where is the psychical body in this theory?
    - The body is not just discursive
    - Discursive and performative (and pre-performative)
      * Materiality of the body that allow and sustain the materiality of the body
  + DT Personal Confusing Moment: Interchange of Performance, performativity, performative
    - Part of it is not a close reading on her part
      * Performativity doesn’t exist in J.L. Austin’s
  + Distinction between democracy and principle of popular sovereignty
    - We “know” that just because of a country says it is democratic doesn’t mean it actually is
    - Thinking through Puerto Rico:
      * Democracy isn’t working for the people, but working for the powers that be
  + Self Determinism
    - Ability to make changes, force
  + Identity and Identification
    - To narrow yourself down to one thing is an act violence on yourself
    - The thing we need to focus is outside of identity politics, we have to organize around the things most of us have in common
      * That is why Butler supports the Occupy movements of the 99%
  + Embodied actions do their own kind of work
  + Digital sphere makes us part of the space of appearance
  + What is the particular force of the body?
    - Bodies signify an excess of discourse (pg. 8)
      * Gathering is a plural form of performativity
    - Already taking the saying as a foundational source
      * PS starts with the body
      * The body expresses way more than people give it credit
    - For the political assemblies she speaks of:
      * You can’t make a claim for mobilization if you can not yourself mobilize
        + We need to think about the how and why: material conditions

What are the things that need to be in place? What are the kinds fo politics that become rehearsed and practiced?

Like the Boal exercise: there is something we want to happen and we need to visualize it and create the bridges to make it happen

* + - * Your own body is on the line, the stakes are clear to you and everyone around you
        + Makes the stakes evident and creates a power
      * Must act politically with each other
        + There is always a relata
        + What is it when we can say “we” and step outside of the identity markers that bind us
    - Condition of precarity is differentialy distributed
      * Must act according to the precarity that we live with
      * Not equality as emancipation as a goal, but as equally livable
        + Livable interdependency should be a precondition of living

Not really what we call democracy right now

* + Lack of shelter: social failure
  + “I must appear to others in ways I cannot know” and “The body is constructed through constructions it cannot inhabit”
    - “Even as located beings, we are always elsewhere. Constituted in a sociality that precedes us”
    - Diana’s example: can have opinions about things you haven’t experienced
      * Who constitutes the right to speak and intervene?
      * If you speak there is a balance of claiming your own position in speaking from a particular place.
    - Obligation and responsibility that we owe each other is is not linked to the separatory identity politics
* Arendt vs. Butler’s visions of Equality
  + Arendt:
    - Equality as sameness
    - Equalizing factor in politics: made equal to serve a purpose
  + Butler
    - Equality as performative, a performing towards a goal
      * Where bodies find each other and perform equality
      * The ways we treat each other with equality, practicing freedom
    - Differentiating the goal from the practice of equality
      * In political assemblies, the body is important because we are all in the assembly with conditions of equality
        + This is a precondition of these assemblies
* Recommendation:
  + Short Story by Ursula La Guin: *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*

Think about how Butler and Arendt think of equality