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