

# Affecting Art and Theory: The Politics of Shame and Creative Academic Performance

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## Abstract

In this paper, the author explores their experience of integrating art-making into the academic conference presentation. This practice moves beyond the limitations of the traditional presentation by developing a dialogue between content and form. It is also productive in transgressing the norms of white, middle-class academic decorum and transforming shame into pride.  
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## Résumé

Dans cet article, l'auteure explore son expérience de l'intégration de la création artistique dans le cadre de la conférence universitaire. Cette pratique va au-delà des limitations de la présentation traditionnelle en engageant un dialogue entre le contenu et la forme. Elle est aussi productive de par sa transgression des normes du décorum universitaire bourgeois et blanc et sa transformation de la honte en fierté.

“What do you regard as most humane? To spare someone shame.” (Nietzsche 1974, 274).

“One is an artist at the cost of regarding that which all non-artists call ‘form’ as content, as ‘the matter itself.’” (Nietzsche 1967, 433).

In the spring of 2014, I presented a paper tentatively titled “Performing Theory” at the Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes annual conference during the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences.<sup>1</sup> The intention of the paper was to explore productive relationships between performativity and academic theory. I asked the question: “How does academia already make use of the performative and how can this be made more explicit through an active integration of art-making into specifically feminist academic knowledge production?” (Cameron 2014). I replied that the traditional academic presentation is already always performative even if it does not explicitly understand itself as such. The stylized presentation of the academic lecture or conference talk “produces a series of effects,” the primary of which is to “consolidate an impression” of academic legitimacy (Butler 2011).<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the academic lecture or conference talk is stylized through the use of common tropes: the performer/author outlines their purpose; situates their argument or organizing question within a body of literature or a disciplinary debate; works through a few key arguments or conceptual ideas; provides proper substantiation; uses visual materials in an explanatory manner only; and speaks clearly in a sober fashion and appears well groomed in professional clothing. Additionally, quantitative and empirical research is subject to the demand that its results be reproducible, that its methods be transparent, and that its findings be clearly articulated. But perhaps most significant, at least for the purposes of this paper, is that the presenter position the content of their speech as the most salient aspect of the presentation. These tropes, particularly the last, indicate that form is only of secondary importance in the traditional

academic presentation. The function of the traditional academic form, it would seem, is to render form invisible; it is often adopted unconsciously as if it held no consequence for the reception of content.

My intention in “Performing Theory” was to deliberately foreground embodiment through a play on form. After providing an introduction to the topic and informing the audience of my purpose, I screened a short video of a pre-recorded lecture exploring the relationship between art and theory. My brief lecture adhered to standard academic conventions; it was a formal exploration of the theme that used established academic theorists to ground its arguments. The presentation of my chosen theme, however, was anything but standard. While speaking to my audience, seated upright in a chair behind a desk, hands folded in front of me against a plain white background, my speech was regularly interrupted by taking long swigs from a one litre bottle of water. When my water had been consumed, I placed the bottle between my legs, off screen, and filled it with urine. I finished my lecture and set the bottle back on the desk in plain view of the camera.

This active integration of performance art into the traditional academic presentation went over well with my audience. My panel, aptly titled *Epistemological Challenges*, was poorly attended, as is common at early morning sessions, but those who did attend were generous in their reception of my work. One audience member even approached me afterwards to tell me that they loved my presentation and that I had “made their Congress.” Despite this positive affirmation and the fact that the worst comments I received were neutral, I had mixed feelings about the presentation after the fact. When I returned to my hotel room and was finally alone on the night of my talk, I experienced an odd combination of shame and pride. Upon reflection, I realized I frequently experience these feelings in close proximity to matters concerning my creative work.

In order to understand how these two seemingly oppositional affects might be felt simultaneously vis-a-vis the same object, this paper looks closely at the traditional academic performance as well as alternative, creative forms that productions and presentations of academic knowledge might take. I begin with an exploration of the traditional academic presentation and its tendency to avoid foregrounding embodiment and “unnecessary” expressions of emotion. When these un-

spoken rules of decorum are not adhered to, presenters can feel impelled to experience shame. In the second section, I look at the tendency of feminist performance art to highlight embodiment and affect in a manner that pushes back against shame and calls forth new reading practices and modes of audience engagement. I close with a discussion of alternatives to the traditional academic presentation. Drawing on the relatively new field of research-creation, my intention is to foster diversity in the academic form and resist the institutionalization of feminist scholarship through the nurturing of academic relationships with embodiment and affect.

### **The Limitations of the Traditional Academic Presentation**

Privileging content over form is not just common to the traditional academic presentation, but to academic texts in the humanities and social sciences as well. Journal articles and books often adhere to the aforementioned tropes that position form as a mere vehicle for content. But form, as I will argue, continues to be integral to the reception of academic content. Feminist texts tend to be more aware of this than those produced in historically well-established disciplines. Two examples include works by Gloria Anzaldúa and Ann Cvetkovich. Queer cultural feminist theorist and poet Anzaldúa, originally published *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* in 1987. It is a semi-autobiographical text, exploring her experiences of being caught between cultures and nations. As a Chicana woman, Anzaldúa had to negotiate the Anglo American, Spanish Mexican, and Indigenous cultures located in what was once northern Mexico and is now the state of Texas. She investigates these palpable, but invisible, borders by moving seamlessly between personal narrative and discussions of colonial history, pagan mythology, and political economy. More significantly, for my purposes, she moves, sometimes mid-sentence, between poetry and prose and between Spanish and English. As Anzaldúa (2000) explains, “[u]ntil I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate...my tongue will be illegitimate” (81). Here, we find that choosing an unconventional form is an integral part of her anti-colonial, feminist practice.

A more recent example of a feminist text that makes use of autobiography is queer literary scholar Cvetkovich’s (2012) *Depression: A Public Feeling*. In this

text, Cvetkovich uses memoir-as-methodology to perform her political commitments; memoir becomes the means through which she adheres to the “activist principle of presenting criticism in the form of a productive or alternative suggestion” (78). Her unconventional form further helps to nurture the reader’s investment in the text. Having empathized with how she felt during her episodes of depression, we find we already have an emotional interest in the more theoretical chapters. This points to form’s intimate connection to questions of affect; empathy and investment are never purely cognitive affairs.<sup>3</sup> Seen here, how an author or artist chooses to present their work is as important as what is said in terms of the affects it has on audiences.

Feminist theory has not just been effective in acknowledging form’s impact on content. It, along with other areas of study focused on social justice such as critical race, Indigenous, and disability studies, has also been effective in addressing questions of embodiment. But focusing on how the specified body is read and understood within the social and specifically within academic spaces has not been standard in the humanities and social sciences. The tendency is to assume that listeners and readers can have unmediated access to content as if the embodiment of the presenter was of no consequence. When embodiment is not taken seriously, it does not simply fall into insignificance, but remains silently acknowledged. For legal scholar Patricia Williams (1998), this is of negative consequence. She explains that the imperative in liberal democracies is to treat markers of social difference, particularly race, as if they were an obscenity. This refusal to see race, as if we already live in a post-racist society, she warns, inadvertently reproduces the material conditions of racism. By leaving race “unknown,” the manner in which race is closely coupled with political and economic inequalities is left unaddressed. Put another way, the conditions that enable “race” to exist encourage it to remain silent so that both racial categories and the material conditions under which they exist can be reproduced.

There is also a tendency to devalue expressions of emotion or affect in traditional academic work. While it could be argued that the standard academic presentation has the advantage of improving the comprehensibility of theoretically complex content, this premise shuts down inquiry into relations between affect, content, and form. A societal imperative to avoid expres-

sions of emotion is explained by queer cultural theorist Sally Munt (2008). The demand that we be emotionally self-contained stems from the assumption that healthy people should be able “to manage ‘their’ emotions within the individual self” even while our “everyday experience is one of extreme permeability” (13). We are constantly absorbing affects as they circulate in our environment, she continues. This ruse of affective or emotional impenetrability is exactly that—a ruse. Further, the illusion of the emotionally bounded self has been historically tied to the masculine ideal while feminine subjects have been discursively situated as porous (13). In this way, we could argue that the traditional academic performance is a masculine form of being marked by affective sterility.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the traditional academic form and its sidelining of embodiment and affect coincides nicely with the imperatives of the neoliberal university. According to affect theorist Melissa Gregg (2010), the “modern white-collar workplace relie[s] on perceptions of competence and professionalism for its functioning” (186). This necessitates proper psychological and emotional “control” of the self in the face of increasing workloads and decreased institutional supports (187). According to Gregg, this demand for self-control obscures the extent to which academic labour is already deeply affective.<sup>4</sup> But the affective relationships academic workers have to both their working conditions and the content of their labour must be repressed. Here, it does not matter what you feel; what matters is what you produce. While feminist and affect theorists understand that affect is productive, this is not the case elsewhere in the academy where emotion sometimes reads as an impediment to rational contemplation and the production of objective outputs.<sup>5</sup>

When we are open about our emotional investments and affective attachments, when we are overt in the discussion and display of our embodiment, what are the consequences? We may experience shame. Psychologist Marilyn Sorensen (2006) explains that, while guilt arises on account of having done something wrong, shame is connected to feelings of *being* wrong. We may be the wrong type of thinker, the wrong type of academic, or even the wrong type of subject. For femmegimp theorist Loree Erickson (n.d.), shame is a common experience when one fails to measure up to standards that are not one’s own (7).<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, socially

and economically marginalized subjects are most likely to be affected by shame in this manner.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Munt (2008) says shame is characterized by asymmetric transference; it involves an objectifying gaze that cannot be returned with equal force. Within academia, this dynamic might be exacerbated by gendered dualisms that create false distinctions between emotion and reason. Insofar as women and racialized folks have historically been associated with the emotional side of this dualism, it stands to reason that presentations performed by these groups would be more closely policed. Even the smallest exhibition of emotion, in some disciplines, might elicit the shame of not doing academia “right” and might therefore throw one’s academic credibility into question. In my own case, I may have experienced shame on account of the fact that I was not the kind of theorist who could just be happy delivering a standard presentation.

### **Feminist Performance Art and Affective Transformation**

In this section, I look closely at feminist performance art. Comparing feminist performance art to the traditional academic form is somewhat precarious insofar as it is based on a characterization of both genres. Art too can tend towards formulaic delivery and can uphold the neoliberal imperative of marketability and sales. There are, however, tendencies that make sketching a distinction tenable. Performance art, as is not uncommonly argued, resists commodification in its time-based momentary existence. Only the documentation, and not the work itself, can be sold. More significant to my argument is the unique relationship between feminist performance art and questions of embodiment and affect. Instead of repressing displays of the body and expressions of emotion, feminist performance art deliberately foregrounds them. Here, the feeling/thinking body’s socially constituted specificity is actually accentuated. As articulated by feminist art historian Amelia Jones (1998), performance art is precisely that domain which “places the body/self within the realm of the aesthetic *as a political domain*” (13).<sup>8</sup> In opposition to more traditional academic presentations, the performing body exists for artistic and intellectual contemplation and is, as such, crucial to audience reception. For Jones, this has feminist implications. There is no room for a gendered Cartesian dualism when the artist is po-

sitioned as mind and body simultaneously – when the artist is situated as both the subject of intentionality and as the object of analysis (1, 8).

Foregrounding embodiment, in this way, affects the politics of shame. Munt (2008) borrows Charles Darwin’s understanding that shame involves “a strong desire for concealment” from the gaze of others (5). Similar to Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous position that “hell is other people,” Darwin argued that attention can incite shame as we evaluate how it is that others evaluate us.<sup>9</sup> For Darwin, we are particularly weary of the evaluative gaze of our personal appearance and moral conduct (Munt 2008, 6). A significant way we experience evaluations of personal appearance is on the basis of embodied difference. The body is only ever seen within its specificity, but, yet, we are brought into existence through discursive terms that were never of our own choosing (see Butler 1997). Put another way, we do not choose the social codifications through which we are publicly known. Here, shame may arise from feelings of misrecognition or, alternatively, as a desire to conceal that which cannot be concealed. Evaluations of personal appearance are prevalent in art forms that foreground the body, particularly those that foreground the female/femme, nude, or sexualized body as is common in feminist performance art. The feminist performance artist is further evaluated on the basis of her moral conduct. She is suspect for moving against established social convention in the articulation of new ideas. Further, she is frequently criticized for being narcissistic. Given our culture’s long history of feminizing narcissism, as observed in the work of Sigmund Freud, this is not surprising. Here, a women’s physical appearance, whether it remains a central concern to her or not, becomes a basis for moral evaluation; female/femme subjects are judged as morally deficient for falling short of the beauty ideal, but are also deemed wanton when adhering to it too well. This is why Jones (1998) maintains that flagrant narcissism, or what is often perceived as such in feminist performance art, might operate as a defence against shame. By positioning themselves as objects to be looked at, female artists trouble the classic “to-be-looked-at-ness” of women. And, in doing so, they simultaneously resist two vectors of shame as organized around appearance and morality.

The tendency of feminist performance artists to invite difficult evaluations points to the transformative

potentials of shame. For Munt (2008), “[s]hame has political potential”; “it can provoke a separation between the social convention demarcated within hegemonic ideals, enabling a re-inscription of social intelligibility” (4). And this, she continues, has radical potential in “instigating social, political and cultural agency amongst the formerly disenfranchised” (4). Put another way, examinations of personal shame experiences can alert subjects to the fact that their shame may not originate in deficiencies of the self. By doing so, it mobilizes the shamed against exclusionary hegemonic ideals in the interests of rearticulating social convention. Munt points to the example of reappropriating the epithets dyke, fag, and queer as terms of pride against a culture that would hold them as marks of shame (24-25). This transformation of shame into pride is facilitated through creative production and reception. “Art and literature,” Munt explains, “are a symbolic conduit for the reorientation of emotional states, the intensification of existing emotions or the movement from one affective condition to another” (214).<sup>10</sup> Performance art, for instance, throws off the shame associated with embodiment. When the body is deliberately centred and exposed, the politics of shame surrounding concealment and “obscenity” are rendered inert. This is why I feel the incorporation of performance art might have positive implications for academic work. The movement from shame to pride in performance art talks back to the shaming tendencies of traditional academia by highlighting how the reception of content is dependent upon form even when that form is nude or urinating into a water bottle.

Borrowing from Jones (1998) again, we find that foregrounding embodiment and affect also shifts conventional reading practices. Traditional art history and criticism attribute stable meaning to the object of analysis. Performance art makes this reading strategy difficult; it “destabilize[s] the structures of conventional art history and criticism” (5). By deliberately staging embodiment, both the bodies of performer and audience are marked as contingent and this, in turn, exposes a lack of clear perspective in all acts of interpretation (5, 9). According to Jones, this is even more apparent in the case of non-normative bodies for they have greater access to revealing the incoherence of the modernist subject and the interestedness of all interpretation by presenting knowledge from non-privileged points of departure. Feminist work by female/femme subjects

further exposes reader interest in its “feverish solicitation of spectatorial desire” (40). Opportunistically playing on the to-be-looked-at-ness of women, this work “eroticize[s] the interpretive relation to radical ends by insisting on the *intersubjectivity* of all artistic production and reception” (5). It is interesting the way this was reflected in the kinds of questions that were asked of me both during my panel and afterwards in private conversation. In addition to seeking clarification, audience members offered their own interpretations of what they had seen. No one engaged in the academic tendency to argue with my work or to attempt to position their own perspective as dominant. This intersubjectivity of viewing wherein audience members are themselves implicated in the process of meaning making further enables art to operate as a tool for the reorientation of emotional states of viewers as well. If performance art can help transform shame into pride for practitioners as well as audiences, this would certainly explain the feminist fandom performance art receives.

But here, we might inquire into how it is that the very thing that causes shame, foregrounding embodiment and affect in academic presentations, could simultaneously operate as its antidote when presented in another forum. My answer has to do with the context of reception. My Congress presentation was given in an unusual space: on the one hand, receptive to unconventional work in its anti-oppressive orientation and, on the other, designed and geared towards standard academic delivery. I had the privilege of speaking to a feminist audience. Our longstanding relationship with the catch phrase “the personal is political” means that explicitly dealing with embodiment and affect is, to a certain extent, to be expected. It ought further be acknowledged that Women’s and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes included a cabaret performance that year, thus strengthening the discursive space for integrations of artmaking into the academic environment. Yet, the transformation of shame into pride was not fully successful. Despite what was otherwise a positive reception, I presented a performance art piece in what was still an academic forum. And while academic feminism has been more open to alternative forms beyond scholarship produced in other areas of the academy, it has certainly not been immune to institutionalization. Since the first women’s studies program opened its doors in 1970, women’s, gender, and sexuality studies

has become a respected member of the academic community.<sup>11</sup> The cost of increased institutional legitimacy, however, is often standardization. This is perhaps why it is that my own writing in this very article continues to adhere to standard academic practice despite my claim that I am trying to do otherwise.

### Practicing Performative Academic Feminist Theory

Here, I want to argue for the continued importance of exploring incorporations of performance art into academic presentations in order to resist the institutionalization of feminist scholarship and to retain what was originally so radical about women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Using creative methodologies to produce feminist scholarship reinvigorates the area's commitment to interdisciplinarity. Art historian and visual artist Natalie Loveless (2015b) concurs: "research-creation re(con)figures our approach to disciplinarity" (53). Communications scholars Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk (2012) further argue that it reconfigures our relationship to the university. Research-creation acts as an "epistemological intervention into the [university's] 'regime of truth'" (6). This kind of work that not only tolerates, but encourages the use of creative practice in the communication of theoretical ideas can be termed "working *practicetheoretically*" (Loveless 2015a, 41). Here, as Loveless explains, "the practice in theory and the theory in practice [are] differential only in the context of a particular moment of production" (cited in Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, 20). Theoretical knowledge is not produced through "but as creation" (19). This is to say, the project is not one of explaining creative work through theory or interpreting theoretical work through creation. Research-creation, rather, asserts the "theory in practice" and the "practice in theory" "without collapsing one into the other" (Loveless 2012c, 101).

There are, of course, many theorists engaged in research-creation in a manner that recognizes form is not extraneous to the articulation of content, theorists who understand that the actualization of certain ideas necessitates methodological flexibility. Here, a lack of fidelity to any particular mode of production becomes a mark of fidelity to the idea the thinker/artist is trying to work through. Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, wrote theory as art and art as theory by using poetry and prose to articulate his philosophies. Fast feminist Shan-

non Bell (2014) provides another example, this time through integrating theory with photography and videography. In "Shooting Theory," she argues that political theory cannot be thought within language alone (39). By actively shooting philosophical concepts, such as Emmanuel Levinas' idea of "facing the elemental," Bell creates new theory through the creation of new modes of doing theory (39). Another example can be found in critical theorist and intellectual historian Martin Jay's (1993) discussion of feminist theorists who explicitly embrace the performative. These kinds of practitioners/thinkers are explicitly theatrical in the staging of their arguments; they remain mindful of the "performative as opposed to [the] constative dimensions of truth claims" (28). Like performance artists more generally, performative academic feminist theorists are deliberate in their staging of embodiment; they perform the specified body in relation to the content of the theory they are thinking through. In doing so, they decenter the universal subject of knowledge found in the traditional academic presentation (30). This is an anti-oppressive practice because it moves against the more conservative tendencies in academia to erase or marginalize the body while allowing it to silently continue to speak itself into existence. Jay cites Judith Butler, Jane Gallop, Avital Ronell, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as examples. I would add to this list queer theorist Judith/Jack Halberstam for her refusal to resolve the ambiguity of his name. She clarifies that he is not transitioning even though she increasingly goes by Jack (Sexsmith 2012). Nor does he attempt to police other people's pronoun use: "[a] lot of people call me he, some people call me she, and I let it be a weird mix of things" (cited in Sexsmith 2012, n.p.). This ambiguity is significant in that it reflects a refusal to resolve gender ambiguity in her theoretical work. Here, we might say that Halberstam is engaging in a "performance of theory" (Peggy Phelan cited in Jones 1998, 14).

Fascinated by performative feminist theory and frustrated by the monotony of the traditional academic presentation, I decided to actively try my hand at research-creation by borrowing from my experience as performance artist. Incorporating body-based gestures into the formal lecture enabled me to make an important argument regarding the persistence of embodiment in seemingly disembodied practices such as theorizing and thinking. My academic labour was accompanied by

attending to the body's needs through acts of hydration and urination. In this way, the body could not be ignored nor could its mere presence be rendered obscene in the face of my more overtly "obscene" actions. But the specificity of how I attended to the body's needs was also intended as a comment on the materiality of the body as it exists in time. Producing large intellectual works does not happen overnight. Looking back on my own experience of completing my doctorate, I am struck by the dramatic changes my body and psyche underwent; I began bright eyed without a line on my face and finished with upper back problems and a history of depression. Urine-making is, of course, also a time-based process that witnesses change. The body is different at the time of elimination than it was at the time of taking water in—even if only imperceptibly so. This is what I hoped to translate in my unconventional exploration of the materiality of the immaterial labour.<sup>12</sup> By communicating in a time-based, embodied manner, I anticipated that the embodied, time-based character of academic thinking would not remain unthought.

I now want to return again to the question of why I experienced shame despite the fact that the audience reception of my work was positive. Shame, as I have established, only occurs when we perceive that we have fallen out of line with the social ideal. But this presupposes that an internalization and naturalization of social ideals has already taken place. Here, we find that shame is tied to processes of object cathexis. To cathect with a person, object, or idea is to develop an attachment as based in identification; we tend to cathect to objects that either reflect characteristics of the self or that reflect characteristics that are missing in the self.<sup>13</sup> For shame to occur, then, there needs to be an identification with the desirable/undesirable in order for the stigmatization of falling short of the ideal to have an emotional impact on us, in order that we might recognize the properties of the undesirable as associated with the self.<sup>14</sup> Read in this light, my shame had something to do with beliefs I continued to hold regarding academia and how unconventional presentations are received. Academic conventions, it seems, are deeply ingrained even when not strictly enforced.

The identification-based character of shame highlights the importance of finding strategies to interrupt damaging attachments that incite shame and that can, in turn, inhibit a thinker/artist's intellectual/

creative curiosity. Here, I am interested in possibilities for practicing modes of being that help in the formation of new cathexes. Cvetkovich's (2012) work on habits is informative. In *Depression*, she talks about crafting modes of daily living that work against a culture that would nurture depression. When it comes to shame-inducing social ideals, developing habits that contravene those ideals constitutes a practice of resistance. Attachments are formed anew and old bonds of identification are broken; or, as philosopher Blaise Pascal (2015) entertains, if you want to believe, get on your knees and pray. Within the context of the neoliberal university, the establishment of new habits can contribute to, what Loveless (2015a) terms, a "contemporary queering of the academy" (42). In my own case, I am attempting to do so through an integration of performance art into the academic form. And while this might not be full stop cure for shame on an individual level, over time and with enough participation, it might change academia enough to provide some social relief. Relief might also be found in research-creation's tendency to challenge the gendered, raced, and classed specificity of proper academic decorum. "[T]he result," we could use Jay (1993) to confer, "is to empower previously marginalized people, who were in some sense at a disadvantage when the rules of decorum were set by others" (32). But, of course, this is not to say that the previously shamed subject suddenly steps out from under power because decorum disappears. It is rather that social law is rewritten so that subjects become formed through power in new and different ways—as embodied, feeling thinkers, I would hope, who perform content through form.

## Conclusion

Halberstam (2011) argues that disciplinarity, including the power of the formal academic disciplines, operates in the interests of normalization (7). This includes privileging productive outcomes over the kinds of experimental inquiries that might nurture new ideas and modes of thinking, but that may also sometimes result in failure (6). In an academic climate of decreased university funding and increased reliance on contract faculty, those amongst us who have yet to win an elusive tenure track position might avoid experimentation all together. Here, engaging in work that carries less risk, but that more easily aligns with the dictates of the neoliberal university, is a potential way to mitigate

the shame of institutional exclusion.<sup>15</sup> Despite this unequal access to alternative methodologies, I think it is important to continue championing research-creation. As I have argued, form always shapes the reception of content even when content operates under the pretence that it is not the case. Research-creation recognizes this close relationship between form and content and the importance of affect and embodiment in the expression of both. Overt displays of emotion are no longer considered improper academic comportment. The circuits of shame accompanying the explicit body are interrupted. Simply put, affect and embodiment cannot compromise research outputs when research is understood as already creative and creative work is understood to always take place, in part, through emotion and the body.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Congress is a yearly conference that brings together many Canadian academic associations in the humanities and social sciences. In 2014, it was held at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

<sup>2</sup> Academic legitimacy is read onto presentations that adhere to standards of knowledge set out by the academy. And these standards, in turn, are partially met through how they are delivered.

<sup>3</sup> Cvetkovich's (2012) use of affect in *Depression*, from which I borrow in this paper, allows for ambiguity between affect, emotion, and feeling. Many affect theorists, conversely, draw clear definitional lines between the three. Brian Massumi, for example, conceptualizes affect as "precognitive sensory experience" and emotion as the "cultural constructs and conscious processes that emerge from them" (cited in Cvetkovich 2012, 4).

<sup>4</sup> For Gregg (2010), academics are forced to do the affective labour of developing "psychic strategies appropriate for positions and workloads that have no definitive beginning or end" (187). This is part and parcel of contemporary "production cultures of knowledge work" (183).

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud's (1989) notion that repression is always a failure provides an interesting reading of the suppression of affect in the standard academic form. He argues that the repressed always returns in disguised form as an "unrecognizable substitute" or symptom (26). Here, we might consider that repressed emotional attachments or affective investments could result in the development of academic symptoms. The competitive need to vigorously defend one's position while discrediting all others may be about more than the validity of one's argument; it could be an amplified return of repressed affect.

<sup>6</sup> It is also the case that we feel shame when we fail to live in a manner that is congruent with our own system of valuation. Shame, in this case, has positive, productive proclivities. As explained by Munt (2008), it alerts us to the fact that a personal law has been transgressed and we are provided an opening for corrective measures.

<sup>7</sup> As Erickson (n.d.) explains, shame operates as a social harm that silences and isolates the historically oppressed. It is a strategy of normalization that urges bodies towards uniformity (9).

<sup>8</sup> Jones (1998) actually makes this comment with regards to body art. Body and performance art are closely related, but while body art does not always involve performance, performance art always makes use of the body.

<sup>9</sup> See Jean-Paul Sartre's play *No Exit* (1958).

<sup>10</sup> Munt (2008) explains this through the work of Tracy Emin who transforms shameful personal narratives into acts of defiant survival.

<sup>11</sup> The first women's studies course was offered at the University of Kansas in 1960 and the first women's studies program was established in 1970 at San Diego State College (now University).

<sup>12</sup> I might mention here that there were certainly shortcomings in my presentation. If I were to record the video component again, I would concentrate more on this particular dynamic of the presentation. The lecture I actually performed focused too much on Nietzsche's understanding of the relationship between art and theory.

<sup>13</sup> Freud (1991) describes this, respectively, as narcissistic and object-choice identification insofar as we always choose those objects that reflect our own ego ideal (88, 96).

<sup>14</sup> Munt (2008) similarly argues that affect, and shame specifically, is "organized around issues of attachment and detachment" (22).

<sup>15</sup> Munt (2008) explains that shame has the ability to consolidate discourse (28). In this way, experiences of shame resulting from one's status as adjunct faculty can indirectly increase the value of full-time faculty positions despite their indirect reliance on contract labour. Collective organizing, of course, can help transform this shame into pride by fighting inequality in the two-tiered university system.

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