



# My Father, The Outside, Technologies of Seeing: Notes Towards a Cabinet of Faces

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## ABSTRACT

This work is both an exploration of processes of facialization as well as an experiment in alternative methodologies for scholarship that lie at the fuzzy, leaking cross-sections of philosophy/theory & literature/lyric/creative writing. Through a combination of lyric, confessional autobiography; fragmented & associative arrangement of short sections; & interrogation of a variety of theoretical texts, I compose not so much an argument-as-such as a patchwork of conceptual & affective blocs that resonate alongside one another to present an experience of rupturous faciality. In particular, I turn toward a concept of the face that is both processual ([de-]facializations rather than a stable face) as well as rooted in a concept of rupture or effacement. I think through the face as a site of processes that undo a stable sense of self or other, allowing for a leakage between subjects that troubles & re-articulates the self as fluid, under construction, & contingent. This concept of faciality is (un)grounded with the principal interlocutors of Warwick Mules, Deleuze&Guattari, Reza Negarestani, & Bishnupriya Ghosh at the same time that it is produced through a poetry that contemplates the relationships that persist between myself & my face, my father & his face, myself & my father's face, & the face-to-face relations that we have out in the world.

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*I have a face. My father  
has a face. I have a face &  
it looks a lot like  
my father's face. My father's  
face is holier than  
the average face, not unlike  
Ernst Herbeck's face ("some mouth  
is disqualified/or operated on"<sup>1</sup>).*

( )

I want to write to you about faces. About faces & the mouth. About writing & my father & his face, the way it is perforated & his eyes. Can I tell you this, how much my father's face meant alienation & how much my face is unlike his? I could tell you that he passed his face to me regardless, memetically— that my sister & I manifest a version of our father's face across 2 bodies, that we will never have our father's face, that a face is always the same & more than its materiality. I could say that this is what the passage of time means, just the apprehension of decay, mutual devourings: Void eat Solid/Solid eat Void. I could say that there is no big secret, just this roil:

I want to scramble my face for you (I want to break it open). (I want to reproduce inside my mouth the feeling. There's a language hole inside my mouth I shape with words [to touch the sensation in my mouth]. To make you feel them with my face. I'm looking for a way to break a set of words, to make— to have you feel my mouth— you feel the inside of my face.) I want to write a face.

( )

i begin again in fragments.  
i begin again myself. in  
the bathroom i feel myself  
wiping my asshole. i get  
intimate with myself  
again. i shave my face & it's  
a new face: -new nose.  
-new ears.  
-new mouth.

i have so many holes.

& every single one of my holes is always secreting something.

( )

Warwick Mules, in his take on the face, attempts to walk a line between Levinas's self-presence & Deleuze&Guattari's abstract machine of faciality that Mules characterizes as erring too much on the side of withdrawal (black holes/white walls & all that). Mules suggests that what we talk about when we talk about a face is not simply a presence of the self but the possibility of a relation to others & of becomings-other. The face, for Mules, does not simply subjectify & signify, but rather marks the withdrawal from our self-presence that allows relations to occur (for if we were "fully" present all the time, constantly asserting ourselves, where would be the possibility for change? For reception?):

... my sense of "I" depends on a self-relation that can only occur by you and me not seeing each other directly; by a mediation that always comes between us. But this "coming-between" does not block self-relation, rather it makes it possible by a withdrawal that makes the self-relation happen. Self-presence is possible but only by a mediation that withdraws in the act of making it possible. In terms of the face-to-face situation, this mediation is the face – that which, by its appearing as such, makes the "seeing" of face-to-face communication possible but is itself *unseeable* – invisible in the seeing itself. Furthermore, this invisibility of the face is not something that transcends the event of self-presence; it is not a "necessary condition" of the immediacy of face-to-face presence. Rather, the invisible face is an immanence

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1 Ernst Herbeck, *Everyone Has A Mouth*, trans. Gary Sullivan (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2012), 23.



( )

It's with this & my father in mind that I begin to think of the face as a "manifestation of ( )hole complex," "the possessed narrator of the void,"<sup>8</sup> "a new genre[:]" dynamic, unique to each encounter that produces it, new every time. The Face as a Becoming.

( )

This isn't an essay. This is a cabinet filled with drawers. Open one up & find my father peering at you through his DSLR. Open another & find my favorite thinkers arguing over what constitutes a face. Try to find the face(s) distributed throughout, already taking shape on/through the white walls & black holes everywhere. Pick up the machines that you find & start digging.

( )

Bataille has this one piece on deviations of nature that always gets me thinking about my dad. The gist of the piece seems to be that "freaks" & "monsters" are merely a matter of deviation to a particular degree while in essence they're really no different from the norm, seeing as how we all deviate from the would-be platonic ideal. He writes in it about "composite images... achieved through successive exposures of analogous but different faces, on the same piece of photographic film... From the faces of four hundred male American students, one obtains the typical face of the American [male] student."<sup>9</sup> He goes on to write that "each individual form escapes this common measure and is, to a certain degree, a monster."<sup>10</sup> So "freak" as we understand the term would just mean deviance to a particular degree, in a particular register, that resonates with some sort of a "profound seductiveness," a "malaise," according to Bataille.<sup>11</sup>

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In her book on the history of the de-centered subject Carolyn J. Dean writes that in the late nineteenth century it was believed the mark of a deviant could be found on the body. That the body bore the trace of its proclivities in an unmistakable way: "a physical mark that by its very presence testified to the perversity of the moral will and explained deviance simply by making it visible."<sup>12</sup> Degeneracy inscribed on the face.

( )

I've always had trouble explaining what makes any two faces recognizably different. There's a portrait in my apartment without a face of a man who would look just like me if I didn't have a face. One time, on acid, my hands— my face— pulled this crazy trick: I full-on picassoed. I scattered out and everything was offset like the tricks light plays underwater. My mouth, splayed; my face, gaping.

( )

I can't help but think of the oversight that Bataille seems to admit, though, giving into the seductive idea of "everyone a freak" without complicating it with an account of how "freaks"-as-such come to be designated. Without a complementary account, we move quickly into the Romantic territory of overlooking the very real violences of those categorizations that effectively demarcate the "freak" of the Freak Show from myself-as-freak, which I might derive from any number of my deviances in order to style myself accordingly (the framing that Bataille appears to open up). Essentially a demarcation between what we never asked for & what we aim to obtain on our own terms/for our own ends ("being opened by" vs. "being open to"?). Sure, there's a truth to the "freak"/"monster" nature of all deviances, but to use these commonly understood categories in order to explode & expose the tenuousness of those boundaries without critically examining the violence implicit in the freak-as-commonly-understood would

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8 Ibid.

9 Georges Bataille, "The Deviations of Nature," in *Visions of Excess Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. & trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 55.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Carolyn J. Dean, *The Self and Its Pleasures: Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 17.

seem to overwrite the trace of this line of thought while most likely also re-inscribing the violences of the original categories, now dressed up in a pseudo-elevation of the minor that makes it safely commodifiable/consumable.

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I suppose this may have something to do with why my father has always hated superheroes. Here were these cultural behemoths that were ostracized for being more-than, & so much of the drama was drawn from their tortured sense of being “other,” of being a “freak.” & there my dad was, visibly “deformed” but by random chance that had nothing to do with some terribly amazing & awesome powers/responsibilities.

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Sometimes I want to reach deep into the mouths of others to feel around for their language hole. But I already have a man’s face & this should be enough.

()

Too, Bataille writes crucially about the face in his essay “Mouth,” delineating ways in which it reveals our connection to the animal:

But man does not have a simple architecture like beasts, and it is not even possible to say where he begins... on important occasions human life is still bestially concentrated in the mouth: rage makes men grind their teeth, while terror and atrocious suffering turn the mouth into the organ of rending screams. On this subject it is easy to observe that the overwhelmed individual throws back his head while frenetically stretching his neck in such a way that the mouth becomes, as much as possible, an extension of the spinal column, *in other words, in the position it normally occupies in the constitution of animals...* the narrow constipation of a strictly human attitude, the magisterial look of the face with a *closed mouth*, as beautiful as a safe...<sup>13</sup>

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The speech therapists told my father to “speak like the people on broadcast news.”

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*To call a population barbarian is to measure their vocalization perceptually and sometimes quantitatively as noise; roar, shriek, howl, ululation, bark, yelp, wail: A lupus orchestra, a constant vociferation of language.*<sup>14</sup>

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Negarestani writes, more pointedly toward my subject, in Cyclonopedia about the:

Savage languages [that] transformed those serene facial traits belonging to the Greek face... shaping them, through vocalization, into insensate, heathen, bestial and inhuman faces, not merely facial expressions of a profound savagery...<sup>15</sup> [T] he Aramaic language, with its insidious sophistication both in writing and phonetic systems, can only render the face of a carcass (for the consonants which are fully vocalized internally without being concluded by the lips) or a face of thousands of spasms (for the articulation process which non-linearly twitches the whole face in different directions) during vocalization.<sup>16</sup>

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I’m reminded of a blogpost by Johannes Göransson in which he explores his thoughts on spasms in media/art (*The spastic movement is an uneconomical movement. Wasteful in the Bataille-ean sense*).<sup>17</sup> He draws lines between the convulsive body & the immigrant body/his

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13 Bataille, “Mouth,” 55.

14 Negarestani, 150.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 152.

17 Johannes Goransson, “Convulsionography,” *Exoskeleton* (blog), September 20, 2016, <http://exoskeleton-johannes.blogspot.com/2010/03/convulsionography.html>.

body, weaving together a series of examples from André Breton & Jean Genet to Lady Gaga & Marilyn Monroe. But I can't stop thinking of a face. The spastic ("savage"?) face. My father's face flayed open, more than once, trying to articulate. & straining (*the lips and eyes [as the addenda of articulation] [are] the pivots of expression...*).<sup>18</sup>

( )

There seems, for me, to be something about the face that's always in excess. The too-muchness of the face. We act as though it's natural to be able to handle looking into another's face, but perhaps this is an incredible act of will for a creature who (following Bataille) only recently came to have a face. Perhaps the moments when we can't bear the look of/to look at another, those breakdowns in the face & in being called to account, are revealing of our capacity for handling a face. We become overwhelmed with its vastness & depth. Too fearful of getting lost in the black hole of subjectivity, not a hole produced through excavation & absence but, like its namesake, a hole of too-much. Too much matter, too much Other, too much self, such that the self doubles in on itself, collapsing & drawing things towards it, threatening inescapability in the gravity of Subject.

( )

So then maybe this is what I mean when I think of my father's face. The self-awareness that his holiness imposed upon him as a particular angle of forced withdrawal beyond what might be considered "average" (beyond, at least, I suspect, what I've experienced). It took him out of his body & into his head. He became present to himself & distant from others because he couldn't not consider his face. A withdrawal that encouraged a seemingly paradoxical, bodily closeness that might be unfamiliar to others (he'll need to lean in close to read your name tag).

( )

i have an appetite.

& i want to open up a hole with my mouth.

i want to open up a face on your mouth— i

want to reproduce

inside my

mouth the feeling

in yr mouth. or

i want to give you my mouth.

( )

D&G, as we've seen, also write about black holes. Not just central to their theory of faciality, however, black holes crop up throughout their work, perforating every plateau. Of the Refrain provides another angle from which to see the black holes of the face: "Thus the black hole is a machine effect in assemblages and has a complex relation to other effects. It may be necessary for the release of innovative processes that they first fall into a catastrophic black hole[.]"<sup>19</sup> Black holes are dangerous, they warn, but sometimes they're essential for drawing a line of flight:

Sometimes chaos is an immense black hole in which one endeavors to fix a fragile point as a center. Sometimes one organizes around that point a calm and stable "pace" (rather than a form): the black hole has become a home. Sometimes on grafts onto that pace a breakaway from the black hole.<sup>20</sup>

( )

Mules writes about the face as the mark of "withdrawal from self-presence."<sup>21</sup> Yes. But maybe we need a more multiplicitous theory of the face. Yes, the mark of withdrawal from self-presence (*we are always on our way to withdrawal*), but also, perhaps, that which sucks us in. Both that which recedes & that which attracts us. The face not simply as the withdrawal from self-presence that makes relation possible, but that withdrawal understood simultaneously as the presence of The Outside, of others, & of the self. The Self-as-Outside/Other.

( )

18 Negarestani, 152.

19 Deleuze and Guattari, 334.

20 Ibid., 312.

21 Mules.

This isn't to say that a subject can be split from the faces they produce. Nor do I mean that a subject can't. I simply mean to say that this is a cabinet. (I want to write a face.) Both the imagining of a subject independent from & positioned with respect to faces as well as subject(s) & face(s) as inextricably caught up in one another provide new lenses through which we can broaden our understanding. I just want to provide a compilation of lenses.

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Negarestani, through his lost-archaeologist persona "Hamid Parsani," writes about our (in)ability to afford The Outside & the life it provides us. In the schema that Parsani outlines in *Cyclonpedia*, The Outside appears to be a constitutive entity of survival. The Outside is simultaneously more than we can ever afford to bear while also being that which constitutes our very existence (an existence defined by its resistance to & affordance of The Outside). It engenders survival in order that it may feed on survival or that which survives— the subjects of survival.<sup>22</sup> One can not open oneself to The Outside (Economical Openness), Parsani implores, it feeds on closure; the only way to invite it or to participate with it is not to open yourself to it or to try to "go there," but rather to invite it here, close yourself off to make of yourself A Good Meal (Radical Openness).<sup>23</sup>

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Counter Parsani, however, if survival itself is always intrinsically tied to The Outside, then our every action, or the mere fact of our continuation, is a participation of some sort with The Outside. Every cigarette smoked (an act of economic "openness" to The Outside) or course in hygiene (rituals of closure that invite being opened by The Outside)<sup>24</sup> is a sorcerous tactic of complicity, a portal in the here&now that allows for the proliferation of xeno-insiders through the undulating decay-processes that unground the tidy lines we draw between life&death, making of them a tellurian mess (Negarestani) or a deformation zone (McSweeney) in which lines are blurred & these categories are subjected to the spiraling vortex of decay. "No salvation"<sup>25</sup> or absolution. No termination or clean breaks. Just the furthering of mess. Messiness.

()

In the face of perforation, we tighten our borders. We try to reassert our sense of self, our boundaries. The body is one material delimitation of the self, but it isn't the only one. Theorists beyond my count have proposed variations on the theme that the world & all that we experience is, in a sense, part of our self. Is part & parcel with it. So perhaps, when we are forgetting ourself, we withdraw from our self as split from the world & move towards our self-as-world (self-as-other) in a process of becoming-world, or becoming-our-surroundings. Too, we may withdraw from the world (from ourself) toward our self, where we can see our borders more clearly (where I can see my face). We're almost always performing both operations simultaneously.

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Negarestani's concept of Hidden Writing might be a productive way of thinking through this relationship, a way to speculate about the effects of this ultimately messy engagement with our ability to afford the Outside &, subsequently, the relations that it engenders. Hidden Writing:

addresses perforations or anomalies in a text caused by the existence and activities of something other than the governing structure or the assumed base plot. What is usually identified as a plot hole is nothing but the concrete trajectory of such activities which, however communicative it is on the subsurface level, is inconsistent and symptomatic on the outer surface and superficial level.<sup>26</sup>

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This is how The Outside operates. My father's holiness as a perforation, not just an absence but the trace of The Outside, a self-fulfilling prophecy, even. To the extent that the world read him a freak, those holes mark the presence of that reading. Those absences as the breeding ground for further

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22 Negarestani, 215.

23 Ibid., 195.

24 Ibid., 200.

25 Ibid., 185.

26 Ibid., 60-61.

closure from the world. Because of this my father has had to develop other tactics for his being-in-the-world, lines of flight from the closure to the world on which The Outside would make a feast.

( )

This might be why my dad places himself behind a camera (he sometimes quips about the irony of being “the blind photographer”), not necessarily because of his eye for detail but because it’s a way of invisibilizing oneself while also being granted the social capital to do the close visual study that he needs just to come close to seeing like most everybody else. The camera as a technology for hastening another kind of withdrawal, the telescoping aperture a hole that we pass through in a particular type of becoming-other.

( )

(I deliberate on the relation  
between my skin  
-self & my  
thought-self— how I  
got my mouth, how  
I got this face.)

( )

Bishnupriya Ghosh understands the importance of apertures. In her work on global icons, she outlines a feedback loop for understanding icons that can, I think, be extended to signs more broadly (& faces, more specifically). Ghosh writes about the materiality of the icon while simultaneously situating it within a public sphere of cultural associations. The feedback loop that she outlines there opens up a reading of icons as apertures that have the power to grant us visions into other possible worlds (*icons are best understood as “technologies” that can, on occasion, open, aperture-like, into a social network yet to come.*)<sup>27</sup> It seems only appropriate, given Ghosh’s application of the term, to bring her understanding of apertures back to the site of its origin. “Generally, the ‘aperture’ is the opening in an optical system that determines how a bundle of rays might alight on the image plane.”<sup>28</sup> But what Ghosh does is to almost invert that formula when she moves to take corporeal presences (in her case, icons, but, for our purposes, faces [from hereon out, all her icons will become faces]) & figure them as openings (presence understood as absence or vice-versa).

( )

“But the [face] always opens to an elsewhere—to the chaos of vibrant matter.”<sup>29</sup>

( )

I’m reminded of the now-defunct-blog Montevidayo, Johannes Göransson again, this time quoting Steven Shaviro’s writing about Graham Harman’s thoughts on allure through excess:

What Harman calls allure is the way in which an object does not just display certain particular qualities to me, but also insinuates the presence of a hidden, deeper level of existence. The alluring object explicitly calls attention to the fact that it is something more than, and other than, the bundle of qualities that it presents to me. I experience allure whenever I am intimate with someone, or when I am obsessed with someone or something. But allure is not just my own projections. For any object that I encounter really is deeper than, and other than, what I am able to grasp of it. And the object becomes alluring, precisely to the extent that it forces me to acknowledge this hidden depth, instead of ignoring it.<sup>30</sup>

“Allure” as such is perhaps a bit too specific, but there’s something productive that I think we can steal here for an exploration of the face. It may not always be allure, exactly, but the face operates, I think, on a similar function of excess. At the same time that it is produced for the

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27 Ghosh, 6.

28 Ibid., 43.

29 Ibid., 9.

30 Johannes Goransson, “Accessibility vs Allure (Kalbach, Shaviro, Vanessa Place, James Pate),” *Montevidayo* (blog), September 14, 2016, <http://montevidayo.com/2013/06/accessibility-vs-allure-kalbach-shaviro-vanessa-place-james-pate/>.

owner of said face relationally on the basis of a withdrawal from self-presence (the face being the marker of that withdrawal [withdrawal, maybe, from what we can't face: from others, from the world, from the too much of morning, &c.]), the face is also produced for the onlooker through a surplus & vice versa.

( )

This might be a Frankensteinian reworking of their concepts but, on the subject of a productive surplus, I'm reminded of a passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*; not about faciality, but from their first plateau on the rhizome, specifically on some of the ways that different assemblages hook into one another (& is the face not an assemblage par excellence?):

... something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming... two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further. There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying.<sup>31</sup>

The exact opposite of their "face," or, rather, their abstract machine of faciality, so concerned with subjugation and signifiante: "Concrete faces cannot be assumed to come ready-made. They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality (visagéité)*, which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole."<sup>32</sup>

( )

The face as complicity with defacialization/survival (complicity with The Outside). When they speak of dismantling a face ("Dismantling the face is the same as breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity.")<sup>33</sup> they're not speaking of a literal scattering of the facial elements: eyes, nose, mouth, ears, &c. & they're not speaking in terms of resemblances either (*something else entirely is going on*). My face not simply resisting defacialization in an antagonistic relationship but, like Solid&Void, participating with it in a mutually constitutive relationship. Defacialization not just the threat of complete asignification but a necessary aspect of what it means to have a face, the potential for renewal through the workings of decay, the promise of something other, yet to come, through the absence of self that is simultaneously marked with the presence of The Other/The Outside.

( )

Parsani presents a deep & earnest desire for radical complicity with The Outside, but I'm more interested in developing the flipside of the object-oriented cryptoarchaeology that he exhumes—that his narrative would appear to denigrate for its failure to comprehend The Outside on its own terms— a speculative reading of the terms he delineates for our relationship to the ( )hole complex & The Outside. This is the space Negarestani opens up for me, no longer inviting The Outside actively inside to crack us open from within, but not wholly removed from it either, still allowing it to feed on our survival but in a space where we don't tighten our borders but become as loose with them as possible, find the lines of affinity with The Outside that allow us to remain stratified enough to maintain a flexible, dynamic engagement with the World. This is what my father has had to do.

( )

This is what I'm trying to say: the world didn't let my father forget about his ( )hole face. Talking different, looking different, being in & out of surgery all meant he couldn't not consider his own appearance. But on top of that, degenerative optic nerves mean fuzzy details on other people's faces (not to mention literally everything else). So there's this heightened, maybe even alienating, friction of being forced to think of how one is witnessed by others while simultaneously straining just to make out the important parts of other people's faces (details being totally out of the question). The processes of asignification are accelerated. The

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31 Deleuze and Guattari, 10.

32 Ibid., 168.

33 Ibid., 188.

circumstances of his birth laying the groundwork for more rigidly stratifying his subjectivity as one in retreat from the world.

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Again, Hidden Writing comes to mind:

... deflowering the face ('white wall/black hole' Deleuze and Guattari), marring and mangling it... by messing up the surfaces, scratching... skinning... eating... turning to dust... cutting into the core, with bare hands, daggers, crises, nails and enzymes... saliva and breath... shovel and plow.[sic]<sup>34</sup>

Defacialization occurs, but, for our purposes, not to the point of headlessness. Just enough to exhume & unground.

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It would take a lot of rearranging. My  
throat clogs. Entire  
layers of decay lay down on my skin.  
I stuff my mouth with dirt & whatever else  
I can get my hands on. I eat  
& eat & eat to show you how  
concerned I am with survival; I stuff  
my face with trash.

()

At any given time I am just an assemblage in the process of engaging with other assemblages. & in my moments of fullest engagement in these processes, at the height of experience & feeling, there is a sense in which I forget myself. We are already on our way towards a type of de-facialization. I forget myself because I move through myself; I move through my face, thereby engaging in a process of disassembling it.

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D&G write: "The face digs the black hole of subjectivity as consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye."<sup>35</sup> &, as we've observed, black holes are sometimes a necessary component, like slingshot maneuvers for leaving orbit, in drawing lines of flight from the stratifications that might otherwise crash down around us, assuring & assigning us a position or identity.

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Still, I remain a thing seen; my face, in a material sense, is never disbanded, but I am, for a moment, able to lose track of it in my bewilderment. At the same time, in losing myself I open myself to the world & the possibility of engaging with it such that, as I reterritorialize my self, I find myself again, the same but different. This is one way of understanding Mules' face.

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Maybe Mules can provide a way of understanding Negarestani's Outside with relation to faces. The withdrawal from self-presence as a self-perforation (self-preservation[?]). Making of oneself a hol(e)y structure in complicity with The Outside(/The Other). The Face as emblematic of a Becoming-Perforated. Perforation of the Self as Becoming-Other (openness, economical or otherwise) to The Other/The Outside.

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look, i'm just trying to open up  
my whitefield face (my  
mouth) to you  
to draw the contours  
from the holes of my face  
to the holes in your face.

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34 Negarestani, 51.

35 Deleuze and Guattari, 168.

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Another way of thinking about it: Here's what I've found productive in Mules: We're always on our way to withdrawal. Or, we're always already split from ourself. No matter the orientation, there's a distance there; we're both present to & absent from ourselves/others. We're never more or less a face, just differently a face. There's only this paradoxical presence/absence; faces hinge on that oscillation.

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Or, the face is the mark of witnessing ourself, witnessing ourself as something for others (even if that other is a totally impersonal force). We create a face when we understand ourselves as beheld, even if only in our mind's eye (*the camera, the third eye*). We are never totally facialized or de-facialized, only ever somewhere along a continuum between the two poles. But this is where staring into someone else's face gets interesting. Because we can experience, at turns, both the heights of experience that take us through ourselves into a place of self-forgetting, as well as the depths of self-consciousness as we see someone seeing us & vice-versa.

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“the [face]... relies on an epistemology of looks—that is, even as the [face] stimulates synaesthesia, ‘seeing’ remains the privileged sense perception in encountering [face] s...”<sup>36</sup>

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If, following Mules, there is an immanent mediation, an always-already-split nature to the act of seeing that allows us to frame a face-as-such, then the camera may become a technological manifestation of those seemingly abstract processes. We create a literal, technological mediation to seeing that allows for the mechanical reproduction of the product of our engagement with this technology for bearing witness. Or, to put it another way, it's socially acceptable to pay close attention with a camera where it might otherwise, due to the relative invisibility of the technology involved, appear out of place for one to scrutinize so closely with just one's face. In other words, the camera (*third eye*) is maybe a way for my father to comfortably have a face.

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Returning to Ghosh, the face, too, might be understood as opening before us as an aperture, granting visions of “the Self-as-Other” with The Other understood potentially as “a Self-to-Come,” or a “Becoming-Other” of the Self. To “hear” her tell it: “Whether the [face] is made in publicity or in the labor of personal adoration, it is a physically expressive sign, incorporating as its quality sensations circling between subject and object and calling forth a decorative eye.”<sup>37</sup>

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The black holes & white walls remain everywhere: The faces throughout the day that dig into us, eating away at/activating the role of Solid within us, making viable our relations as we, too, perpetrate the role of Outsider with respect to others, our faces digging holes in their Solid, making possible, maybe, the act of relating to another. (“Nothing in all of this resembles a face, yet throughout the system faces are distributed and faciality traits organized.”)<sup>38</sup>

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Heightened moments of experience/sensation (moments that trend towards selflessness [bewilderment]) are lines of flight from the ways in which we've concretized ourselves. But becomings always ossify, with or without our consent or knowledge. This is what a face does for us. The face, through this bi-vocal functionality of facialization/de-facialization, helps us to see & conceptualize stratifications that have occurred/are occurring. Or maybe they're one & the same, the witnessing & the concretizing. Another oscillation.

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36 Ghosh, 43.

37 Ibid.

38 Deleuze and Guattari, 169.

