

Routledge Studies in Popular Music

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Lady Gaga and Popular Music

Performing Gender, Fashion, and Culture

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and Melanie L. Marshall**

62. *Ibid.*, 200.
63. *Ibid.*, 190.
64. Perrino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 137.
65. Lady Gaga, interviewed by Larry King, *Larry King Live*, CNN, broadcast: 1 June 2010.
66. Butler, *Undoing Gender* 218.
67. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Brief Reflections on Popular Culture', in *ICA Documents 4*, ed. Lisa Appignanesi (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1986), 203.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Ben T. Singer, 'Towards a Transgender Sublime: The Politics of Excess in Trans-specific Cultural Production', in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 614.
70. *Ibid.*, 616.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Susan Stryker, 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage', in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 246.
73. Stryker, 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein', 234.
74. Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 159.
75. Lady Gaga, 'Gaga Memorandum #4.'

12 Consuming Gaga¹

Melanie L. Marshall

[Neil Strauss for *Rolling Stone*]: So, you're thinking, "I'm going to trick this idea down your throat"?

[Lady Gaga]: Or seduce people to be interested in something that is uncomfortable. Why are we still talking about "Don't ask, don't tell"?

It's like, what fucking year is it? It makes me crazy! And I have been for three years baking cakes—and now I'm going to bake a cake that has a bitter jelly.

[NS]: Elaborate on that metaphor a little.

[LG]: The message of the new music is now more bitter than it was before. Because the sweeter the cake, the more bitter the jelly can be. If I had come out as who I was, no one would be listening. Now people are listening. So I can be inspirational, and I'm in a different place in my life. I'm interested in different things. I've got fame now. So I don't want to write about it anymore.²

That's what everyone wants to know, right? "What's she gonna look like when she dies? What's she gonna look like when she's overdosed?" on whatever they think I'm overdosing on? Everybody wants to see the decay of the superstar.

Lady Gaga.³

Marian McAlpin, the protagonist of Margaret Atwood's first novel *The Edible Woman*, has a university degree, a job making market research questionnaires intelligible to the general public, and a boyfriend who fancies himself a bit of a catch. Following her engagement to Peter, Marian feels consumed by her fiancé and his magazine-perfect desires. She sympathizes with objects of consumption, and becomes unable to eat formerly living organisms, first cutting out meats, then vegetables, and eventually she begins to wonder what is ground up to become vitamin pills. She becomes unable to think of herself in the first person; she loses her sense of self, her 'I'. Even before Marian became anorexic, she often thought of herself in relation to food, particularly cake and ice cream. Marian considered herself and her women colleagues to be the 'gooey layer in the middle' of an ice-cream sandwich.⁴ The 'upper crust' is the executives and psychologists upstairs, all men, and the mimeo and IBM machines downstairs form the

bottom crust. It is only through baking (becoming a producer) that Marian regains her self and then her appetite for food. She bakes a light, white sponge cake, flavored with vanilla and lemon, arranges it into the shape of a woman, and decorates it with buttercream icing: a pink dress with floral pattern in silver balls, chocolate icing hair, and green eyes. Marian offers it to Peter as a substitute for her self, saying that he has been trying to destroy her, to assimilate her. In fact, Peter doesn't eat the cake at all. Marian eats some of it—"the cake, after all, was only a cake"—and her lover, Duncan, finishes it off, making for an uneasy ending. Through baking and eating the cake, Marian recovers her voice and re-enters consumer society.

Some have suggested the cake in Lady Gaga's 'Cake like Lady Gaga' refers to cocaine, or money, perhaps; it certainly indicates the general notion of excess outlined in the rest of the song.⁵ In the teaser video by Terry Richardson, Lady Gaga writhes around in cake and icing. Even prior to this song, people consumed Gaga in cake form. Cupcakes by 'EclSpatial', one with white icing molded into a bow, like Lady Gaga's white blond hair bows in 'Poker Face' and 'Eh, Eh (Nothing Else Can I Say)' (2009), the other, also with white icing, reminiscent of the shoulder decorations on the Haus of Gaga's Origami Dress that Lady Gaga first wore in 2008.⁶ Or a two-tier Lady Gaga cake by 'Charla Vail', with fondant Gagas, one in the white Origami Dress, one in Jeremy Scott's yellow jumpsuit and black Mickey Mouse sunglasses (Jeremy Scott X Linda Farrow) seen in 'Paparazzi', all on a predominately white background.⁷ Jay Murphy of KAK (Kick Ass Kakes) worked on a different scale altogether. He marked the entertainer's visit to Phoenix, Arizona with a larger-than-life Lady Gaga (5'9" and weighing rather more than the singer at 180 lbs) made from a wooden frame covered with vanilla cake, vanilla buttercream and fondant icing.⁸ Gaga has not only inspired cakes. Baby Gaga is the original name of a white, vanilla and lemon flavor artisan ice-cream, made in small quantities by The Icecreamists in London's Covent Garden from a top quality ingredient: human breast milk.⁹ Despite (or owing to?) the high price tag (almost £15 [US \$22] a scoop) and the unusual ingredients, the parlor allegedly sold out of Baby Gaga on the first day.

I am intrigued by these creations, the numerous Gaga cake images that can be found online, and what they may say about the relationship between celebrity, gender, fans and food. Ice cream and cake are calorie-laden, nutrient-light ways to consume Lady Gaga, to bring about the 'decay of the superstar'.¹⁰ To point out that ice cream and cake are usually empty calories is not to imply that Gaga is meaningless fluff. Popular culture does important cultural work, both reflecting and shaping thought on current issues intriguing society. Perhaps most commented on in Gaga's case is the dynamics of gender and sexuality; she arguably exhibits a new approach to gender politics that Jack Halberstam has termed 'gaga feminism'.¹¹ But that is not the only work that Gaga does or allows others to do. The ice cream and many of the cakes have something in common: color. Baby

Gaga ice cream is white, and most of the cakes I have seen online have a white icing background. Baker Jay Murphy pointed out that white works well in the chosen medium, yet I would suggest it indicates something of Gaga's cultural signifying too.¹² She's hardly a vanilla entertainer: she que(er)ies heteronormative white femininity, as many contributors to this volume have established, although this is not a consistent position. 'Born This Way' and Gaga's declaration of a body revolution may call for acceptance of physical difference but body is identity—a slight revision of biology is destiny—is not necessarily a progressive stance and it certainly lends itself to politically conservative arguments when it comes to gender and race, for example, since it prioritizes essentialism over cultural contingency and performativity.¹³ This conservatism, though, may be entirely appropriate since, contrary to its propaganda, the music industry rarely takes risks, and since all of this takes place in a late capitalist, neoliberal context. Gaga offers a model of decadent consumption, offset with charitable work and actions, and continuing re-invention of the self that sits well with the neoliberal notion that individuals are responsible for themselves alone, and are entrepreneurs of the self. She sells the idea of an autonomous, creative individual while simultaneously being contractually beholden to her record company.¹⁴ Stefani Germanotta is both a laborer in the music industry, and an entrepreneur selling products (Lady Gaga, records, lipstick, perfume, fashion).

Gaga has made being a misfit profitable. She appeals to an audience of young people who identify with her feelings of not fitting in.¹⁵ She has championed gay rights, discussed the prevention of bullying with one of US President Barack Obama's staffers, and set up a foundation to 'foster a more accepting society', which embraces differences and celebrates individuality.¹⁶ In a sense, being a misfit, never belonging to one place, may be part of early twenty-first century neoliberalism. An identity tied to a job or a profession, for example, is not available to all, given that employers in so many sectors value the flexibility offered them by temporary hires and short term contracts. Identity is increasingly bound up with consumption.

My basic contention is that the Gaga brand is a form of Žižek's 'capitalism with a human face', one that enables the late capitalist phenomenon of commodity activism and commodity feminism.¹⁷ By buying (into) Gaga, consumers can buy 'redemption from being only a consumerist' through identification with the social causes she champions and participation in her online community (littlemonsters.com) or other social networks (particularly Twitter).¹⁸ Moreover, Gaga encourages her Little Monsters to share their own creative works and build their own narratives as consumer-producers; they contribute unpaid immaterial labor to produce web content and help to define and shape the Gaga brand.¹⁹ Gaga is simultaneously a personal brand and a cultural product; although originally conceived by Germanotta, Lady Gaga is the product of a team

of strategic thinkers and creators who maximize profit through careful management of brand partnerships, synchronization deals, merchandizing, and development and exploitation of a consumer-producer base through social media.²⁰ While Little Monsters may contribute to the brand on the social network without seeking the permission of Gaga first, the Gaga team protects the brand from commercial exploitation by others, as The Icecreamists discovered.

EXPLOITING GAGA

The Icecreamists created Baby Gaga breast milk ice cream to attract attention for the opening of their new boutique parlor in Covent Garden. They worked closely with PR firm Taylor Herring Ltd from the start. In fact, the PR company came up with the idea of a breast milk ice cream—it was one of several they put to their client—and their management of the launch garnered them an Event Award 2011 for best PR Event/Stunt.²¹ After placing an advert on Mumsnet, The Icecreamists hired lactating mother and volunteer breastfeeding educator Victoria Hiley to supply breast milk. Despite the firm's description of Hiley as a donor, echoed in many of the news articles, she was compensated for her labor. The reported payment rate was £15 for 10 fluid ounces, which probably amounted to less than the minimum wage. (It takes some women 10–15 minutes to pump 1 oz.). Hiley's first batch of breast milk (30 fl oz) was mixed with cow milk cream and turned into a Madagascan vanilla and lemon zest ice cream. It was served in martini glasses by waitresses wearing costumes clearly reminiscent of Lady Gaga that were designed by a fashion student 'to keep overall costs to a minimum'.²² The ice cream reportedly sold out the first day.

Not everyone was enthusiastic: food critic Zoe Williams concluded, 'At first I liked it; then I didn't mind it; then I hated it; then I wanted to be sick.'²³ The Food Standards Agency, the Health Protection Agency and Westminster City Council expressed concerns about the ice cream's suitability for human consumption—something the PR company had anticipated and built into their strategy—and council officers took samples for safety testing.²⁴ And many people find the concept of breast milk ice cream repulsive. Victoria Hiley, who initially provided the milk, said the ice cream was 'burlesque: It's sexy and unsexy; beautiful and repellent.' Hiley stated that she was pronounced 'revolting,' was accused of spreading disease, 'scolded for not donating to a milk bank [...] and [was] told to keep [her] fluids' to herself.²⁵ Lady Gaga, or her lawyers, described it as 'deliberately provocative and, to many people, nausea inducing'.²⁶

Like Lady Gaga, the controversial raw ingredient can be read as subversive or conservative. Breast milk has a complex social, racial, and transnational history. It is arguably the principal source for women's cultural association with food and nurturing, since a normally lactating woman can

sustain her infant solely with breast milk for at least the first six months of the child's life. Human breast milk is often positioned as anti-capitalist or at least non-capitalist. It is something most women's (and some men's) bodies can make given certain hormones and physical stimulation; it is healthier than formula, and produced by women for their individual children rather than by vast food corporations for anonymous consumers.²⁷ Yet breastfeeding is considered and experienced by some in industrialized nations as tying a woman both to her child and to her home. Moreover, not all women are seen as producing equally healthy breast milk: in some states, women with addictions to legal substances and who are from underprivileged groups can be jailed for breastfeeding.²⁸ A state's emphasis on the importance of breastfeeding may potentially be a regressive step rather than a progressive step, unless it is accompanied by legal changes and social acceptance of breastfeeding in public and in the workplace.²⁹ In contemporary USA, the labor of breastfeeding has racial and socioeconomic dimensions: within every subgroup, non-Hispanic black women are less likely than non-Hispanic white women to continue breastfeeding, while Hispanic women (whether black or white) and Asian women have the highest breastfeeding rates overall.³⁰ The majority of nursing women who have paid work outside the home are in professional or flexible service occupations, in part because these are the women who can arrange their schedules to enable the continuation of breastfeeding, or whose employers offer time and privacy for nursing or pumping.³¹ And one of the ways a state may try to convince employers to support lactating workers is to argue that children fed breast milk are healthier than formula-fed babies, and therefore their parents take fewer days off to tend to sick kids. In other words, in a neoliberal economic climate, in order to justify giving lactating women who work outside the home the time and space to pump milk for their babies while at work, or to feed their babies directly, breastfeeding is given an economic value outside of the domestic sphere. This is not quite the same as creating a market for breast milk, although such a market does exist. Websites such as www.onlythebreast.com provide an unregulated space for women to sell breast milk to others for feeding infants, or even to supply the adult erotic lactation market (primarily men who like to drink human breast milk).

The ick factor of food for adults made with human breast milk is probably a combination of the potential for disease transmission and the taboo on consuming human bodily fluids—or perhaps it is more accurate to say anonymous consumption of human body fluids, since sexually active partners often share some bodily fluids—as well as the erotic connotations of breasts in Britain and the US, among other cultures, and the implied sexualized infantilization of the adult consumer.³² The Icecreamists boutique is aimed at adults. The interior is decorated 'like a sex shop from the 80s' and they developed a line of 'Vice Creams' (ice creams and alcohol).³³ The intro to The Icecreamists website (www.theicecreamists.com) employs a

by now standard image in eroticized marketing of ice cream: a woman's mouth open wide, licking ice cream from a spoon, in this case. (European adverts for Magnum ice cream employ similar images.) A subsequent image captioned 'sub zero medication' has a woman with her bust bursting out of a nurse costume feeding ice cream to an apparently naked and very happy young man. Hiley appreciated the burlesque concept behind the store, and apparently saw the breast milk ice cream and the resulting publicity as an opportunity to discuss breastfeeding more generally. Unfortunately for Hiley, lactation politics does not sell newspapers or ice cream; the 'tacky' quotes attributed to her in the official press release ('using my assets for a bit of extra cash?') were used in preference to her own words.³⁴

Although there is an attempt to cast the breast milk ice cream as sexy burlesque, comments from the company illustrate the conflicted sexual politics and stray in to misogyny. They describe the milk as organic and free range—terms that normally refer to farm animals—and Mart O'Connor, the owner, claims to be 'challenging the preconceptions we have about food, about farming. [...] About ice cream.'³⁵ In one interview, O'Connor stated 'it [the boutique] looked more like a milking parlour than an ice cream parlour'³⁶; in another, he asked '[w]ould you rather have a cheeky suckle of an attractive woman or a cheeky suckle of a cloven hoofed beast covered in dung?'³⁷ Indeed, The Icecreamists are not the first to draw a parallel between lactating women and cows: recently, PETA, an organization that is not known for its feminist politics, attempted to draw attention to the suffering of dairy cows by suggesting Ben & Jerry's should switch to human breast milk.³⁸ This is not anthropomorphizing cows but theriomorphizing women.

To associate this product with a woman celebrity, even one known for burlesque, for courting controversy through unusual uses of food stuffs, such as the meat dress, and, less charitably, for arguably playing along with the music industry's continued commodification of the female body, hardly seems to be intended as an honor.³⁹ It is not homage like Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia, and the 'nausea inducing' product reportedly earned them a cease and desist letter from Ate My Heart, Inc., Lady Gaga's publisher, on the grounds of trade mark infringement. The letter described the use of Gaga-themed costumes as 'clearly deliberate and intended to take advantage of her reputation and good will.'⁴⁰ O'Connor's response was to deny there was any reference to Lady Gaga, despite the similar name for the ice cream and the servers' costumes. He claimed the costumes were based on Jean-Paul Gaultier's cone bra designed for Madonna in 1990, and that Gaga did not have legitimate grounds for complaint since she also recycled pop culture.⁴¹ He described the episode as a 'storm in a D cup' and said Gaga had no sense of humor.⁴² While O'Connor took a dismissive tone in media interviews, in the end, he had to change the name of the ice cream: it is now called Baby Googoo.

BAKING GAGA

The Lady Gaga cakes I have found pictured on the Internet appear to be fan tributes that for the most part are hand made. In contrast, the majority of Beyoncé and Rihanna cakes were decorated with photographs printed with edible ink onto icing. This can be done via online mail order companies: the customer uploads a photo, the company prints it on to icing and posts it out for the customer to carefully transfer it to the cake. It appears that the DIY creativity of Little Monster culture extends from the costumes many fans make to wear to her live performances, and the poetry, photographs and artwork they share on littlemonsters.com, to the cakes they make or order. Even if some of these cakes are made by a professional baker, there seems to be a qualitative difference between printed images of a photograph and a molded fondant figurine in the implied personal touch. Cakes decorated by hand are still luxury items not because of the rarity and expense of the ingredients—sugar is now ubiquitous, especially in the form of corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup, and it is so cheap that it is used in many convenience foods, savory and sweet—but because of the time involved. A Lady Gaga made from fondant icing and details in food coloring does not only represent the time it took to make that specific Gaga, but also the time it took to develop the necessary skills. It is the result of productive labor: sugar work.

These cakes are a modern contribution to the history of food as art.⁴³ At least one was created by a professional. The life-size Gaga cake by Jay Murphy was multi purpose: a fan's commemoration of Gaga that extended and demonstrated his skill, attracted free publicity and therefore potentially brought in indirect business. It is thoroughly in keeping with a long tradition of sugar sculptures and with the history of theatrical window displays in confectioners' shops.

Murphy's Gaga is dressed in a white fondant frosting decorated with little silver sugar balls. The design is modeled on the white body suit by Somarra that Lady Gaga wore for Gagakoh, a collaboration with Terence Koh, hosted by MAC Viva Glam and KCD Worldwide at the Tabloid nightclub in Tokyo on 19 April 2010.⁴⁴ Gaga and Koh walked to the show in procession wearing white Shinto bridal headresses by Balmung. In many ways, Murphy's creation owes something to US wedding traditions, namely the nineteenth-century ornamental bride cake. This was commonly made from angel food cake and covered with a hard white icing. The cake symbolized the pure, virginal bride, and thus the wedding couple holding the knife and cutting into the cake was analogous to the breaking of the hymen and consummation of the marriage. Murphy's vanilla cake Gaga is not intended for consumption but for display, for visual consumption.⁴⁵ And, like the untouched wedding cake in Dickens's *Great Expectations*, it will eventually decay. Said Murphy, 'I hate to say I'll throw her away, but she'll break down one way or the other.'⁴⁶ The life-size Gaga cake is decorative

and transient, qualities that are, perhaps not coincidentally, attributed to many women pop stars whose work is presumed to be inconsequential and who are expected to have short careers.

CAKE LIKE LADY GAGA

To my knowledge, Lady Gaga has not baked a cake of herself, but she has used cake as a metaphor to discuss her work and herself. In an interview with Neil Strauss for *Rolling Stone*, for instance, she implied that initially she had to be 'sweet' to get attention (from the record company? from the public?) but that 'sweet' was not really her, or not completely her: 'I have been for three years baking cakes—and now I'm going to bake a cake that has a bitter jelly. [...] The message of the new music [presumably *Born This Way*] is now more bitter than it was before. Because the sweeter the cake, the more bitter the jelly can be. If I had come out as who I was, no one would be listening.'⁴⁷ Here, Gaga presents herself as an entrepreneur of the self who carefully disguised the less palatable aspects of her interiority in order to achieve success and the freedom to reveal her self, to come out as who she is. The idea that Lady Gaga had kept part of herself closed is not one that Gaga normally pushes in interviews; she frequently insists instead that there is no inner identity hiding inside Gaga.

A recent rap song, 'Cake Like Lady Gaga', also known as 'Cake' or 'Trap', uses cake as a metaphor for wealth, luxury and excess. The kind of consumption the song outlines is also an investment in image and it illustrates Gaga's success in her neoliberal entrepreneurship of her self:

Private plane like Lady Gaga
Sip champagne like Lady Gaga
Sold-out show like Lady Gaga
Big bank roll like Lady Gaga
Iced-out wrist, iced out chain
[...]
Diamond ring like Lady Gaga
[...]
Cake like Lady Gaga
Cake like Lady Gaga

Gaga used the song in her work for the Mugler Spring/Summer 2013 show at Paris Fashion Week. It first appeared as an official 'leak'.⁴⁸ The usual narrative is as follows: DJ White Shadow, the producer, uploaded an incomplete sound file to SoundCloud and, on Twitter, announced a competition to provide a vocal track. Some hours later, the experiment in crowd sourcing was apparently over. Tara Savelo, Lady Gaga's make-up artist, used her Twitter account to share a link to another track on DJ White Shadow's

SoundCloud with an apparently male voice rapping about Gaga and cake. An unnamed fan realized the voice had been manipulated, altered its pitch and discovered it was Lady Gaga.

Gaga certainly plays with notions of white femininity by releasing a track that, according to *Spin*, sounds like rapper and producer Tyler, the Creator; she gave a cross-gender, black voice performance.⁴⁹ While this challenges notions of white feminine vocal performance, it does so through a pastiche of black macho masculinity. The performance does not work to dismantle racial categories although it does highlight their existence. She then employed the song in a collaboration with a major fashion house, thus gaining further cultural capital. While on the one hand this challenges notions of white femininity—white women singers just do not do black male voices—it depends upon and reinforces white supremacy.⁵⁰ The main beneficiaries are institutions that regulate hegemonic whiteness.

Gaga has released two teasers of the video directed by Terry Richardson. A photo from the shoot released on Twitter depicts a brunette Gaga in her underwear and high heel shoes, covered in cake and frosting with the caption: 'The real CAKE isn't HAVING what you want, It's DOING what you want'.⁵¹ This undercuts the avarice voiced in the lyrics by emphasizing action over acquisition and fits with the mission of the *Born This Way* Foundation to 'celebrate individuality', 'encourage self-expression' and help young people to 'feel empowered'.⁵² Yet empowerment has become a fuzzy notion, perhaps best illustrated by an article in the satirical newspaper *The Onion*, 'Women Now Empowered By Everything A Woman Does', which emphasized the idea that while women previously felt empowered by 'advancing in a male-dominated work world', contemporary women can feel empowered through consumerism: Baner-Weiser's consumer feminism.⁵³ Paradoxically, Gaga foregrounds the kind of neoliberal subjectivities that obscure the fact that there are structural barriers to everyone being able to do what they want: the idea that all individuals have the freedom to do what they want presupposes a level playing field that does not exist and cannot exist under neoliberal capitalism.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Suzanne Gussick and Margaret McFadden for encouraging me to write about ice cream, and cake. I thank Jessica Allen for doing her job and directing me to resources, and, more personally, Catherine Watson Genna for her support.
2. Neil Strauss, 'The Broken Heart & Violent Fantasies of Lady Gaga', *Rolling Stone*, no. 1108/1109 (8–22 July 2010), 66–72, 74, 20.
3. 'Lady Gaga on "mastering the art of fame"', *60 Minutes* (online at: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18560_162-20066912.html?pagenum=2) <last updated: 5 June 2011> <accessed: 31 March 2013>.
4. Margaret Atwood, *The Edible Woman* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1998 [1969]), 13.

5. Rap Genius, 'Lady Gaga—Cake Like Lady Gaga Lyrics' (online at: <http://rapgenius.com/Lady-gaga-cake-like-lady-gaga-lyrics>) <accessed: 30 April 2013>. This includes the verse Lady Gaga added for the Mugler Spring/Summer 2013 show at Paris Fashion Week.
6. EclSpaiatl, 'Lady Gaga Cupcakes-muffins' (6 February 2010) (online at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/47259637@N07/4331876071/>) <accessed: 31 March 2013>. The Haus of Gaga Origami Dress is based on Thierry Mugler's Origami Dress (2008).
7. Charla Vail, 'Lady Gaga Cake' (5 February 2010) (online at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/charlavail/4336385478/>) <accessed: 31 March 2013>.
8. Stela Inger, 'Life-size Lady Gaga Cake a Labor of Love for Phoenix Chef', *azfamily.com* (23 January 2013; updated 24 January 2013) (online at: <http://www.azfamily.com/news/inger/Life-size-Lady-Gaga-cake-188070991.html>) <accessed: 31 March 2013>. See also 'The Making of a Life Size Lady Gaga Cake', *Yahoo! Shine* (online at: <http://shine.yahoo.com/photos/making-life-size-lady-gaga-slideshow/-photo-2573087-192900800.html>) <accessed: 28 April 2013>.
9. Amy Fallon, 'Human Milk Ice Cream Goes on Sale', *The Guardian* (25 February 2011) (online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2011/feb/25/human-milk-ice-cream-sale/>) <accessed: 23 March 2013>.
10. 'Lady Gaga on "mastering the art of fame".'
11. J. Jack Halberstam, *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender and the End of Normal* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2012).
12. See Burns and LaFrance, this volume.
13. Performativity, as I understand it, is one explanation of the cultural shaping of the person. My short version of Judith Butler's theory as laid out in *Gender Trouble* (2nd edition [London: Routledge, 1999]) and *Bodies that Matter* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993) is as follows: a person comes into being through an ongoing, dynamic and complex process of interaction between various cultural norms, and through their own repetitive actions that are unconscious and based on a culture's existing repertoire of gestures and possibilities. A person might find themselves falling into the constitutive outside that defines the boundary of 'normal', in which case they are not culturally intelligible and officialdom may make existence in their own terms impossible. This does not mean that one has limitless freedom to choose what to be—it is not a personal choice that one makes at an arbitrary age—since much of the shaping is done while one is still a child without a concept of selfhood, at the stage when neural pathways are being laid down (hence the significance of interpellation). It does leave open the prospect that the cultural script might gradually change, which is what I believe is happening as more states and countries legally recognize same sex relationships, and as disability rights activists articulate the violence of neurotypical and able-bodied privilege.
14. Matt Stahl, *Unfree Masters: Recording Artists and the Politics of Work* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013) investigates this paradox. Stahl sees Gaga's success as buying her greater autonomy than less successful recording artists.
15. Melissa A. Click, Hyunji Lee and Holly Willson Holladay's article, 'Making Monsters: Lady Gaga, Fan Identification, and Social Media' (*Popular Music and Society*, vol. 36, no. 3 (July 2013), 360–379) investigates Gaga fans who self-identify as Little Monsters and demonstrates her significance to them. The Little Monsters interviewed use Lady Gaga 'to reflect upon their own self-identities, to build self-confidence, and to embrace their differences from mainstream culture' (376); through their intense identification with Lady Gaga, they find the resilience they need to survive being bullied and discriminated against.
16. Born This Way Foundation, 'Our Mission' (online at: <http://bornthiswayfoundation.org/pages/our-mission/>) <accessed: 20 April 2013>.
17. Slavoj Žižek, 'First as Tragedy, Then as Farce', *RSA*, 24 November 2009. This talk is available in two separate videos: one 10' 57" version with an absorbing animation (4 August 2010, online at: <http://www.rsa.org/events/rsanimator/animation/ras-animator-first-as-tragedy-then-as-farce>) <accessed: 30 March 2013>, the other the full lecture (24 November 2009, online at: <http://www.rsa.org/events/video/archive/slavoj-zizek-first-as-tragedy-then-as-farce>) <accessed: 30 March 2013>. On the origin and development of commodity activism, see Sarah Baner-Weiser, *Authentic: Political Possibilities in a Brand Culture* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012).
18. Žižek, 'First as Tragedy, Then as Farce'.
19. Baner-Weiser, *Authentic*. On the immaterial labor that produces cultural content, see Maurizio Lazzarato, *Lavoro immateriale: Forme di vita e produzione di soggettività* (Verona: Ombre Corte, 1997). Baner-Weiser discusses unpaid immaterial labor performed by consumer-producers on a Dove advertising campaign website.
20. For the recording industry's summary of its role in investing in music, including the opportunities for brand partnerships and 'synch deals', see the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), 'Record labels invest US\$4.5 billion in new music', 12 November 2012 (online at: http://www.ifpi.org/content/section-news/investing_in_music.html) <accessed: 30 March 2013>. On the branding of women pop stars, including frequent discussion of Lady Gaga, see Kristen Lieb, *Gender, Branding, and the Modern Music Industry* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).
21. For Taylor Herring Ltd's account of the campaign, see Taylor Herring Ltd, 'The Icecreamists: Launching the World's First Breastmilk Icecream', [undated] (online at: <http://www.taylorherring.com/case-studies/breast-milk-ice-cream/>) <accessed: 30 March 2013>. For the award, see <http://www.eventmagazine.co.uk/news/1093686/Event-Awards-2011-winners-announced/>.
22. Taylor Herring Ltd, 'The Icecreamists'. The proportions of human milk to cow milk cream is mentioned in Zoe Williams, 'Breast Milk Ice-Cream: The Taste Test', *The Guardian*, 27 February 2011 (online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2011/feb/27/breast-milk-ice-cream-taste>) <accessed: 22 April 2013>.
23. Zoe Williams, 'Breast Milk Ice-Cream'.
24. 'Baby Gaga Breast Milk Ice Cream Seized for Safety Tests', *BBC News* (London edition), 1 March 2011 (online at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-12615353>) <accessed: 23 March 2013>.
25. Victoria Hiley, 'Lady Gaga and My Breast Milk Burlesque', *The Guardian*, 6 March 2011 (online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2011/mar/07/my-breast-milk-lady-gaga/>) <accessed: 23 March 2013>.
26. Jill Chappell, 'Breast Milk Ice Cream Back on Sale; Lady Gaga May Sue', *NPR*, 29 March 2011 (online at: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2011/03/09/134389930/breast-milk-ice-cream-back-on-sale-lady-gaga-may-sue>) <accessed: 23 March 2013>. The Icecreamists eventually changed the name of the ice cream to Baby Goo Goo.
27. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, and other bodies recommend infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their lives for reasons of nutrition and health. Many lactation activists (lactivists), anti-globalization protestors, and political entities proclaim the superiority of breast milk over formula on nutritional

- and health grounds. New York City's Department of Health, for example, recently ran a multilingual pro-breast-feeding poster campaign in subway trains and hospitals (New York City Press Office, 'New York City Health Department Launches "Larch On NYC" Initiative to Support Breastfeeding Mothers,' 9 May 2012 (online at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2012/pr013-12.shtml>) <accessed: 24 March 2013>). However, many claims about infant feeding are not based on medical evidence; this is a discourse regulating women's bodies: see Jules Law, 'The Politics of Breastfeeding: Assessing Risk, Dividing Labor,' *Signs*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Winter 2000), 407–450. Aref Abu-Rabia, 'Breastfeeding Practices among Pastoral Tribes in the Middle East: A Cross-Cultural Study,' *Anthropology of the Middle East*, vol. 2 no. 2 (2007), 38–54 has a brief discussion of historical and cross-cultural breastfeeding practices in Europe and the Middle East.
28. Kimberly Robertson places Native American breastfeeding in transnational contexts. Robertson points out that in the US, women with alcoholism who are breastfeeding their babies and are from underprivileged groups can find themselves jailed ('Globalization and the Politics of Native Breastfeeding,' *Off Our Backs*, vol. 36 no. 4 (2006), 61–64).
29. For a thorough discussion, see Linda M. Blum, 'Mothers, Babies, and Breastfeeding in Late Capitalist America: The Shifting Contexts of Feminist Theory,' *Feminist Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 1993), 291–311. Robertson's 'Globalization and the Politics of Native Breastfeeding' considers the effects of race and colonialism. Jacqueline H Wolf, 'Got Milk? Not In Public!', *International Breastfeeding Journal*, vol. 3, no. 11 (2008) (online at: <http://www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.com/content/3/1/11>) <accessed: 20 August 2013> discusses the public health consequences of the sexualization of breasts in the US. That article is part of a special collection edited by Miriam H. Labbok, Paige Hall Smith, and Emily C. Taylor, 'Breastfeeding and Feminism: Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice', *International Breastfeeding Journal*, vol. 3 (2008) (online at: <http://www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.com/series/1746-4358-Fem>) <accessed: 21 August 2013>. Wolf called for feminist support of breastfeeding in 'What Feminists Can Do for Breastfeeding and What Breastfeeding Can Do for Feminists,' *Signs*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2006), 397–24.
30. The most recent sociodemographic breakdown is of data from births in 2007 (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, 'Breastfeeding Among U.S. Children Born 2000–2010, CDC National Immunization Survey' (online at: http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/NIS_data/index.htm), <last reviewed: 31 July 2013>, <accessed: 16 August 2013>). For brief discussions, see Jessica A. Allen, Ruowei Li, Kelley S. Scanlon, Cria G. Perrine, Jian Chen, Erika Odum, and Carla Black, 'Progress in Increasing Breastfeeding and Reducing Racial/Ethnic Differences—United States, 2000–2008 Births,' *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 62, no. 5 (8 February 2013), 77–80, (online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6205a1.htm>), <accessed: 16 August 2013>; L. Gummer-Strawn, K. S. Scanlon, N. Darling, and E. J. Conrey, 'Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in Breastfeeding—United States, 2004,' *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. 12 (31 March 2006), 335–339 (online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5512a3.htm>), <accessed: 16 August 2013>.
31. Rachel Tolbert Kimbro, 'On-the-Job Moms: Work and Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration for a Sample of Low-Income Women,' *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1 (January 2006), 19–26.
32. Wolf, 'Got Milk? Not in Public?' briefly covers the cultural specificity of the idea that breasts are for sexual activity rather than for feeding a baby.
33. Williams, 'Breast Milk Ice Cream: The Taste Test.'
34. Jo, 'Baby Gaga Ice Cream: Victoria Hiley's Story,' *The Babi Pur Blog*, 6 March 2011 (online at: <http://www.ethicalshoppingforbabies.co.uk/2011/03/baby-gaga-icecream-victoria-hileys-story/>) <accessed: 25 April 2013>.
35. Williams, 'Breast Milk Ice Cream: The Taste Test.'
36. Glyn Davis, 'Innovative Retailers Part 3—Where Ice Cream Is Much More than Just Ice and Cream,' *Retail Insider*, 3 November 2011 (online at: <http://www.retailinsider.com/2011/11/innovative-retailers-part-3-where-ice-cream-is-much-more-than-just-ice-and-cream/>) <accessed: 25 April 2013>.
37. The Icecreamists, 'Devilishly Good: Covent Garden Journal Interview with Matt O'Connor,' 24 June 2011 (online at: <http://blog.theicecreamists.com/2011/06/devilishly-good-covent-garden-journal-interview-with-matt-oconnor/>) <accessed: 26 April 2013>.
38. The Associated Press, 'PETA Calls On Ice Cream Maker To Use Breast Milk,' *LA Times*, 26 September 2008 (online at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/sep/26/business/f-icecream26>) <accessed: 23 April 2013>; PETA, 'Breast Milk Headlines Explode After Ben & Jerry's Letter,' *The PETA Files*, 10 October 2008 (online at: <http://www.peta.org/b/thepetafiles/archive/2008/10/10/Breast-Milk-Headlines-Explode-After-Ben-Jerrys-Letter.aspx?PageIndex=3>) <accessed: 25 April 2013>.
39. On the meat dress, see Lucy O'Brien's contribution to this volume.
40. By the time Gaga's lawyers contacted The Icecreamist with a cease and desist letter, the ice cream had been taken off the shelves by officers of Westminster Council who were concerned about the health implications. Alleged extracts of the letter were made available on the web: Hollywood Life Staff [Leigh Blakley with reporting by Jessica Finn], 'Lady Gaga Goes Gaga Over Breast Milk Ice Cream: "Spoon-to-Spoon Combat! Exclusive!"' (online at: <http://hollywoodlife.com/2011/03/08/lady-gaga-breast-milk-ice-cream-interview-matt-oconnor/>) <accessed: 26 April 2013>.
41. Owen Bowcott, 'Lady Gaga Takes On Baby Gaga in Breast Milk Ice Cream Battle,' *The Guardian*, 4 March 2011 (online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2011/mar/04/lady-gaga-baby-ice-cream>) <accessed: 26 April 2013>.
42. This phrase appears in several reports, including Hollywood Life Staff, 'Lady Gaga Goes Gaga Over Breast Milk Ice Cream,' and in an interview with the Covent Garden Journal which was cross-posted to The Icecreamists' blog: 'Devilishly Good: Covent Garden Journal Interview with Matt O'Connor.'
43. For discussion focused on confectionary in the US, see Wendy A. Woolson, *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
44. The artists combined their names for the performance. Gagakoh is no doubt intended to be reminiscent of Gagaku. The proceeds of the Viva Glam cosmetics line are donated to the MAC AIDS Fund. This is in itself an example of 'capitalism with a human face.'
45. I borrow the idea of visual consumption from Woolson, *Refined Tastes*, 156.
46. Eatocracy Editors, 'Rah-rah oh yum yum: Fan Makes Life-Sized Lady Gaga Cake,' *Eatocracy*, 24 January 2013 (online at: <http://eatocracy.com/2013/01/24/life-sized-lady-gaga-cake/>) <accessed: 26 April 2013>.
47. Neil Strauss, 'The Broken Heart & Violent Fantasies of Lady Gaga.'
48. Chris Martins, 'Lady Gaga "Leak" Fools Fans: Hear Cake Like Lady Gaga,' *Spin*, 19 September 2012 (online at: <http://www.spin.com/articles/lady-gaga-rap-leak-fools-fans-cake-like-gaga/>) <accessed: 26 April 2013>.

49. On whiteness and femininity in US popular music history, see Laurie Stras, ed., *She's So Fine: Reflections on Whiteness, Femininity, Adolescence and Class in 1960s Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010); and Laurie Stras, 'White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters', *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1 (2007), 207–255.
50. The most significant text on the financial benefits of white privilege is George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, 2nd Edition (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006). On conceptions of whiteness and womanhood in the US, see Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
51. Lady Gaga (@ladygaga), 15 November 2012 at 3.11pm (online at: <https://twitter.com/ladygaga/status/269170781794213888>) <accessed: 28 April 2013> (capitalization and punctuation as in original).
52. Born This Way Foundation, 'Our Mission'.
53. See Banet-Weiser, *Authentic*, and 'Women Now Empowered By Everything A Woman Does', *The Onion*, 19 February 2003 (online at: <http://www.theonion.com/articles/women-now-empowered-by-everything-a-woman-does,1398/>) <accessed: 28 April 2013>.

Supplement

Poker-faced. Revealing Nothing

Martin Iddon

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Ecclesiastes 3:20

Elle, défunte nue en le miroir, encor
Que, dan l'oubli fermé par le cadre, se fixe
De scintillations sitôt le septuor.

'Ses purs ongles très haut . . .', Stéphane Mallarmé

This final chapter is intended, in a wholly Derridean sense, as a supplement, rather than a conclusion. It does not, in and of itself, present anything 'new' about Lady Gaga; indeed, the evidence it relies on in terms of Gaga herself is precisely that which the previous chapters have presented. The reader looking for further insight, then, into Gaga *qua* Gaga will find this chapter, appropriately enough, empty. It is, as Derrida suggests the quality of a supplement ought to be, unnecessary, excess to that which is truly essential. Yet I hope that the reader looking for ways in which to debate what precedes this final contribution in a wider frame will also find a particular way in which it reflects upon the previous chapters, bringing together at least one of the strands which runs through them. Its interest is, on the one hand, to reflect upon what the evidence of the volume might be capable of saying in broader terms but, in a way which is, I hope, coherent with this chapter's more general thrust, not likely to reveal anything further about Gaga 'herself'. By contrast, Gaga here functions much more as a focus to talk about what she might be capable of showing about how aesthetics (and in aesthetics) can be held to function in the contemporary world. Gaga is, the reader should be warned in advance, palpably absent from the text of this chapter for much of its duration. Indeed, the reader might (rightly) suspect that she is only one of a number of potential examples that could have been marshalled here. That the example could have been a different one does not, I trust, take away from the degree to which Gaga is ideally suited to the purposes of this chapter.

Those purposes are, then, twofold. First, I seek to suggest, following Badiou (and, in a sense, Hegel), that art is a site where metaphysical