

purely relative “nothing to see” that the male fetishist sees the woman’s sex only in terms of an absence, a “lack.” All men are fetishists to some degree, but few of them are full-blown clinical fetishists. Most men appreciate the existential fact of feminine sexuality as a fact, albeit one which is not to be grasped quite as simply as their own. The surrealists could not see what was “hidden in the forest” until they closed their eyes in order to imagine it; even then they could not be sure, for there are other forests to negotiate, not least amongst these the “forest of signs” which is the unconscious. Sooner or later, as in Newton’s image, we open our eyes, come back to a tangible reality: here, that of the woman’s body. That which is physical, that which reflects light—which has here left its trace on the photosensitive emulsion. But what the man behind the camera will never know is what her sexuality means to her, although a lifetime may be devoted to the enquiry. Perhaps this is the reason why, finally, Helmut Newton chooses to stage his perverse display under the gaze of his wife.

Bodies-Cities

Elizabeth Grosz

I Congruent Counterparts

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS I have been involved in research on the body as sociocultural artifact. I have been interested in challenging traditional notions of the body so that we can abandon the oppositions by which the body has usually been understood—mind and body, inside and outside, experience and social context, subject and object, self and other, and underlying these, the opposition between male and female. Thus “stripped,” corporeality in its sexual specificity may be seen as the material condition of subjectivity, that is, the body itself may be regarded as the locus and site of inscription for specific modes of subjectivity. In a “deconstructive turn,” the subordinated terms of these oppositions take their rightful place at the very heart of the dominant ones.

