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Jean Epstein	Magnification *and Other Writings on Film*
Peter Handke	*Blue Poem for B.*
Jean Ricardou	*The Population of Mirrors*
Rosalind Krauss	*Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America*
Annette Michelson	*Reading Eisenstein Reading* Capital
Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe and John Johnston	*Gravity's Rainbow and the Spiral Jetty* (conclusion)
Robert Pincus-Witten	*Naked Lunches*

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JEAN EPSTEIN, film-maker and theoretian, was born in Warsaw in 1897 and died in Paris in 1953. The selection from his theoretical writings published here is drawn from the period in which he was producing his major films: *Coeur fidèle* (1923), *La glace à trois faces* (1928) and *La chute de la maison Usher* (1929). His complete theoretical texts have recently been published by Editions Séghers, Paris.

PETER HANDKE is the leading playwright of his generation in the German language. Among the plays translated and published in English are: *Offending the Audience, Self Accusation, Kaspar, The Ride Across Lake Constance,* and *They Are Dying Out.* Permission to publish "Blue Poem for B," is granted by Urizen Press, New York.

ROBERT MORRIS, through his work as a sculptor, but also by means of a series of theoretical texts, has played a central role in defining the advanced art of the last twelve years.

ROBERT PINCUS-WITTEN, Professor of Art History at Queens College, was Senior Editor of *Artforum* from 1971-1974. He is currently an Associate Editor of *Arts Magazine.*

JEAN RICARDOU's *Problèmes du nouveau roman,* of 1967, established his reputation as a leading theoretician of contemporary fiction. His publications of the last decade include the novels *La prise de Constantinople* and *Les lieux-dits,* as well as other critical works.

Fragment from the Rodin Museum

ROBERT MORRIS

Gravel formal rectangles pathways yellowish brown like along Champs Elysées asked them to bring it over dead shrubs cut square around pool seventy-five feet long twenty-five feet wide water dead unfrozen winter water motionless concrete wall just above ground level foot wide pathway surrounding pool then dead hedge two feet high then expanse of yellowish brown pea gravel under feet air a whir a whirring sound from traffic one hundred yards away along parkway moving consistent 5pm blurs traversing distance beside pool sound of gravel below away sound of whir steady unchanging back of pool ground damp off gravel ground black dead unfrozen wet winter ground cold 5pm light fading back of pool first step sound of gravel stopped two sounds foot on granite block below drifting whir traffic parkway sitting above granite stairs (her) legs slightly apart eyes half closed legs and eyes slightly apart immobile watching pool below hearing foot immobile passing her above her top stair twelfth her thighs press seventh down seven yellowish gravel pool somewhere a word inscribed gravel word unreadable at distance whir and 5pm light directly in front green vertical expanse bronze in and out focus representations pushing falling stretched strained naked metal stops space stepped along gravel sound thighs against granite stops against second gated world of congealment.

(Cue: Oompah band keeps heavy time with each word)—Spirits, genii, angels, nymphs, satyrs, bacchantes, sirens, centaurs, dancers, bathers, Satan, Adam, Eve (before and after the Fall), Christ, St. John, Mary Magdelen, Bacchus, Psyche, Orpheus, Ariadne, Ugolino, Aphrodite, Apollo, Mercury, Perseus and Medusa, Pygmalion and Galatea, Paolo and Francesca, Romeo and Juliet, Ovid and Dante, sin, melancholy, sorrow, despair, desire, embraces, abductions, rapes, sleeps, fatigues, awakenings, reveries, meditations, self-sacrifices, muses, maternities, incests, perils, slitherings, pulsing, throbbing, sagging, tumescent, bulging, hacked, slicked, gouged, polished, ripped, probed, kneeded, torn (Cue: cut Oompah band) are not the first stirrings of an animated clay so much as a population melting down into . . .[1]

1. Dog shit was my first response and the whole thing went like this: ". . . not the first stirrings of an animated clay so much as a population melting down into dog shit. Maybe. Green dog shit. The impression given is of a state of affairs existing in the first moments after some basic molecular process

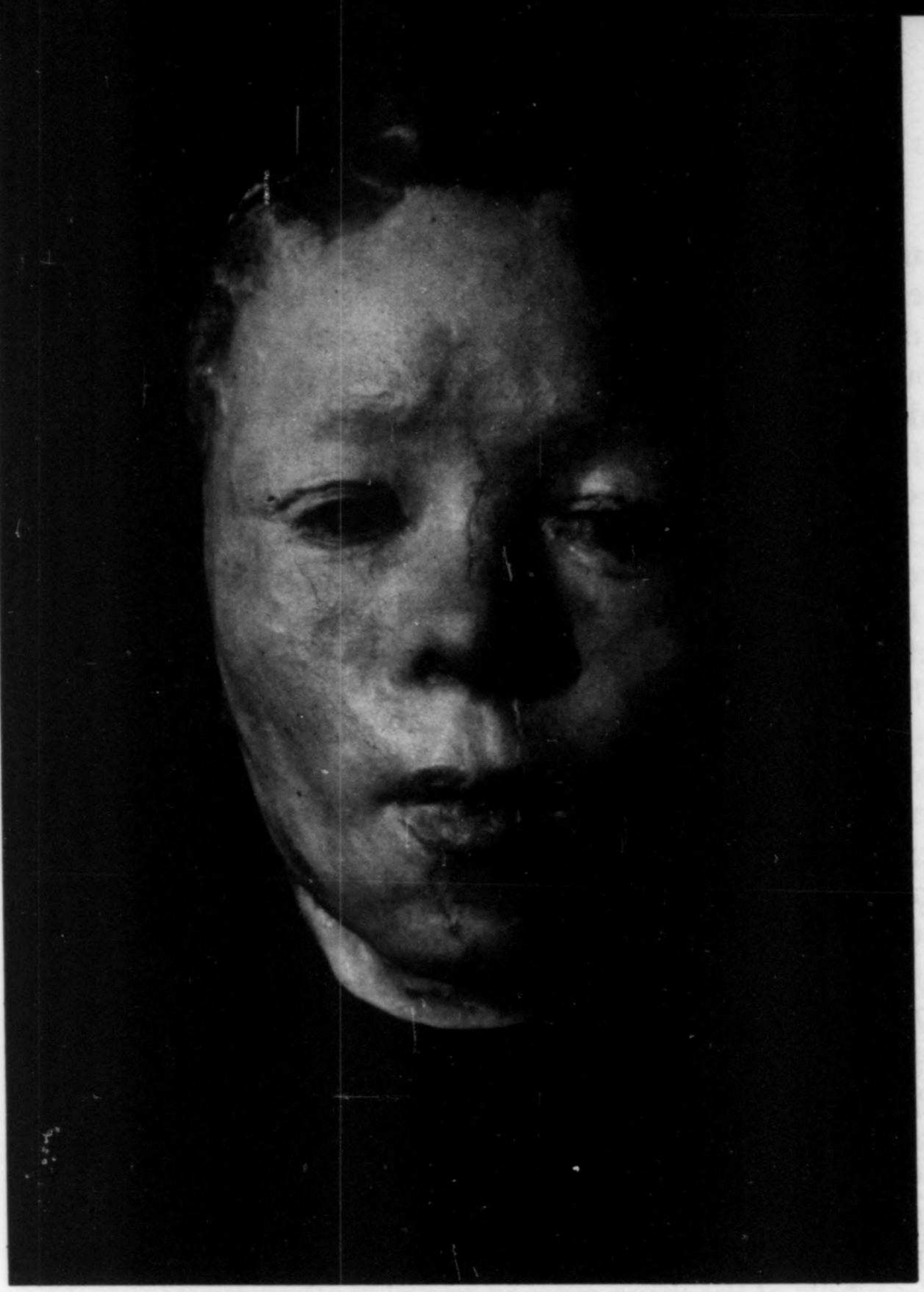
Within the triangular enclosure. Cold granite below. Taut line of insulating wool skirt above. Two curves (bulges) of flesh either side. A chamber in which temperature was equalizing itself. I entered the door on the left into a cramped vestibule. Opened the heavy bronze door and entered the dark hallway. Turned to the left, away from the green bronze meringue. Wanting to descend five stairs and place my hand on the cold granite. Shifted my weight to the left, walked the three steps to the bronze door which was deep brown. It was heavy but swung smoothly on its hinges. A step. A step up and I was before a small, high counter or desk where a crudely pencilled notation read, "Adults: $1.00." The door swung further open than I had expected. From the inertia of its weight. I had trouble keeping it from swinging into the wall. My torso twisted to the left, carried by the inertia of the door. It was a moment of struggle in which I turned to the left away from a brown counter to my right. Having decided to bother no further with the green upright bronze plaque, I turned sharply to the left and glanced over my shoulder at the leg projecting out over the seventh step as my right hand went out against the mullion of the heavy bronze door. My left hand pressed down with too much force on the handle whose brown patina had been worn to a brassy shine. The door began to swing inward and I began to pull back slightly, anticipating that its inertia would carry it into the wall with a force I had not at first suspected. The admission sign was taped with scotch tape to the brown wood. Rather it had been taped several times. Possibly whoever taped it had suspected the tape of poor adhesion and had taped and taped again. An aging female, slightly gray. Slightly transparent. Veiled with a patina of nothingness in my mind's recollection, stood behind the tongue and groove, brown painted kiosk. I suspected her as the taper. She and the tape, transparent but yellowish in my recollection. I turned on my right heel and entered the great hall. From below the sound of the foot against the terrazzo. Even with the eyes closed one would have sensed . . . what? Something about the change of pressure. More as though the air were old and heavy. Companion to the water outside. Heavy, unchanged, inside winter air. A sudden weariness behind the eyes. Want to roll up into head. Knees beginning to buckle as (Cue: low angle slow motion shot of moment of impact of large heavy object hitting highly polished stone floor) weight of fatigue pulls heavy slow. I waded into the great hall. That and the light. The light of skylights at 5pm winter. The light of a translucent skylight at that hour. Fatiguing as the air. Not bothering with the catalogue at the end of a gray transparent arm, I leaned my weight to the right. Three steps and I was into the thickening light of a great arched hall full of

has gone awry. An instant. Before we are all melted back into the earth as piles of green dog shit. No pain. Just a faint kind of buzzing sensation. And a powerful, confused sense of difference. "This my hand? What? Slightly green and . . . it smells. Good God, I'm turning into dog shit." Yet the tone of that was not right. Something scatological was wanted. But what? The sad truth is that the mind is faced with a poverty of terms when it turns to consider what might follow the phrase, "a population melting down into . . ." Cup grease? Karo syrup? The real problem is to be found in the preceding sentence. Specifically, the very phrase, "population melting down into" is the clinker. Why wouldn't "frozen into" do? Or even the clumsier, far weaker, "distorted into" is wide open for followers.

broad, plain mouldings and dados the color of dark bronze. The walls were white. A resistance to the eye. Something in my body turning slightly. Perhaps preparing for one of its seven year renewals. From below the sound of the foot on the stone. And at a distance. In the mind. It seemed high up. The sound of mumbled conversation. Or the muffled sound of pigeons under an eve. The triceps muscles of the right arm were contracted, thrusting the arm straight downward and slightly away from the body. The forearm was bulging with ligaments forcing the hand into a fist with the index finger pointing at the ground. Five steps and my eyes were at the level of his sex. The only relaxed muscle in his body. I imagined it otherwise. His right hand gripped (her) left calf at the point where the stocking ended. I moved toward the figure and the sound of steps on the flagstones from below. The neck was forced down and forward against the left shoulder. The torso pivoted slightly to the right so that the chest and arms were in one plane. The hips and legs in another. The body was tense and motionless. Stood rooted there. Allowing her to heave against. Skirt around waist. I waded through the heavy dense air not hearing the sound of the foot against the rough stone. Vision moving down its own tunnel. Fixed ahead on the bunched muscles of the bronze belly. Brown and polished like the water outside. Like the winter pool outside which had brown leaves at the bottom. But if drawn to it, also drawn past it. To the window beyond. Small paned and with bronze mullions running up and down. Past the bronze mid-section to the metal rectangle. Through its squareness the corrugation of granite stairs fanning out below. And there. At the seventh. The wool stocking caught on the polished rigid index finger. Behind me the great hall. Its stale air. Its broad and plain brown moldings following the curves of its white arched ceiling. I stood for some seconds before the window. Dead center. Five thin bronze mullions to the right, five to the left. From the corner of my right eye I sensed rather than saw a room. Or a hallway. Or an alcove. Or a darker space. I stretched my right arm down stiff. Against my body. I felt the triceps muscle at the back of the arm contract and press against the shirt. I twisted from the waist. The shoulders and the chest faced toward the room, the hips and legs addressed the glass for a moment before turning. The head dropped against the left shoulder resisting the turn momentarily as the vision caught on the leg projecting from the seventh step below. It was a hallway. Or an alcove. And a darker space. And a room. Beyond it, or through it, on the right stood a glass case edged in bronze. Unlit. Against the wall of the alcove stood a second massive case. The lower third was of bronze. The upper section was formed by four large panes of glass. Within was a model of the green bronze Gate which stood outside. A passageway connected the great hall, its light now like smoke, to the smaller room. A wall of granite. On the one side the green bronze Gate. The outside. On the other side a miniature of the same in red clay. The inside. The same fistless three atop the red. Even tinier figures writhing in the throws of death, orgasm, or ray-gun transformation into . . .

"And the light?" he inquired after so long a pause. "Dark," I said. Suddenly he looked weary, almost as though he withheld the expression of a secret pain gnawing at some part of his body. He held himself stiffly. Pivoted his upper body around to face me while his lower legs remained facing a different way. "The fists?" We both knew. "Fistless," I replied, feeling infected with his weariness. "Fistless, I could see that much even in the light,"[2] I continued. Somehow I wanted to convince him. I recall that he had no eyes. Only hollows of deep shadow. And projecting brows. The weight was thrown back. The belly vast and slung forward. A heavy robe covered the massive torso. The hands were beneath the robe. The left gripped the right wrist. The right fist appeared to hold the sex. The hands were not visible. The figure was raised up on a high pedestal. I waited for him to speak of another unseen fist. But he turned, sunk back into himself. Or leaned his weight back and merely peered down at me. Squat and massive. Thick with flesh. Heavy with muscle in the process of losing its tone. An abandoned body. Gross and full. The bulk was leaning back. The weight was back on the heels. The right fist pulled the flesh forward against the lean. Away. Somewhere. The aforementioned sound. Pigeons. And below. As I circled the bulk. The sound of one foot sliding across the stone. Then the other coming to rest beside it. Sideways locomotion. The robe thick as felt. The robe draped over squat flesh. The robe bulging over the right fist. The heavy plaster robe was covered with a fine patina of dust and, in places, dirt. The plaster figure covered with dust. The light suited it. It suited the light. The dust. Where the air had sagged and died. The plaster was hard and angular. Nearly planar in places. To the left a small, narrow, single paned window framed in bronze, gave out onto the wet earth and a corner of the stair. The way the flesh of fat people can look. The way the expanse of flesh and

2. Had the fist been nearby it would have had the status of a 'fragment'. Had the body been armless and had the arms been nearby, they too would have been addressed as fragments of the body. Or, had the body not been nearby, we would simply have 'arm fragments'. Does a once-whole figure when equally divided, as though by sword from crown to crotch, yield two fragments? More than likely two halves have been produced. At what point in a progressive removal of parts do we encounter the threshold, the dividing line, beyond which we no longer have a figure and its fragment(s)? Somewhere less than half, no doubt. Yet a bust is not a fragment so much as a part. Fragment, of course, is a kind of part. But a bust is not that kind of part. The fragment kind. A nose, an ear, a finger, a cock, a foot, a slice of back (how fitting 'slice' is to fragment; they were made for each other) are fragment type parts. But assume the fist had been nearby, having fallen from the figure. Assume further that in striking the ground (nothing to do with anger, but pulled down by the heavy hand of gravity, so to speak) the knuckle of the second finger had broken off. Do we now posses a 'part' of a fragment? Had the fist broken neatly into two parts weighing equal amounts, in spite of a certain asymmetry, would we then have two halves of a fragment? Or do we begin over? Taking one half of the fist at a time, we are back to dealing with 'fragments' of the figure pure and simple. But here Rilke chides that "the feeling of incompleteness does not rise from the aspect of a thing, but from the assumption of a narrow-minded pedantry, which says that arms are a necessary part of the body . . ." Nothing here of fists falling off like roof tiles. On the contrary, Rilke saw in the drawers at Meudon: "Hands that rise, irritated and in wrath; hands whose five bristling fingers seem to bark like the five jaws of a dog of Hell. Hands that walk, sleeping hands, and hands that are awakening; criminal hands, tainted with some hereditary disease; and hands that are tired and will do no more, and have lain down in some corner like sick animals that know no one can help them . . ." Perhaps what that missing fist was hiding in its clutch was reason enough for its removal.



Auguste Rodin. Mask of Hanako, The Japanese Actress. *1911. Pâte de verre. (The Rodin Museum, Philadelphia.)*

hair of fat men can take on the appearance of powerful animals. Elephants and rhinoceros or hippos. Beneath the expanse of encasing hide and hair and fat one senses the powerful muscles. Without his robe he had that look. Legs spread. Rather legs astride. Astride of what I could not say. But his heavy thighs were astride a shape. A shape started beside his ankles and thrust upward in a tapering, pyramidal form coming to rest between his legs. Spearing his groin. A large prop. An aid which both held him up and . . . I had again felt the fatigue. As though I had been knocked down from above. The feeling behind the knees. The eyes wanting to roll back. The desire to give in (Cue: color shot, medium closeup, 23 frames only, of the heavy sword beheading in one stroke a black bull in the Malaysian New Year festival) and sink down onto the granite in a deep sleep. Well, I was not blessed with a prop like his. Blessed? Perhaps it was not a prop but

rather a sort of geometric hernia which sagged out of him. To the very earth. And which his long robe sometimes covered. Perhaps. I had lost all interest in him. I shifted my weight, the left foot coming to rest beside the right. Nothing between the legs. Nothing but dead air. It hung there. In the space. Palpable. A slightly dirty light filtering down from the arches of the great hall. It deposited, particle by particle, a patina of fine dust and, in places, built up to a layer of dirt over the bronze flesh. Figures. Lurching. Leaning. Straining. Rotating. Six. Seven. More? Pressing. Milling. Confined. Space too small. Pressing. Six. Seven. More. Twelve legs. Fourteen? More? Confined. Circling. Circling her? Milling. Pressing. Wool. Thighs. Enclosing. Pushing. Damp. Bronze. Mumbling. Wet. Pressed. Pressed in. Pushed and flattened. The face was grotesque. Not a full face. More like a mask. Several. Several of the same face. Three of the same face. There behind the high glass of the case. Sitting well back in the bronze case, overly large for what it displayed, were three rough masks or modeled faces in pinkish terra cotta. These were placed on a rumpled, pinkish, faded velvet whose wrinkles led one to suspect an attempt by a curator long since gone to give a careless but suave style to the swirl and folds of the cloth. Perhaps further handiwork of the transparent taper . . . Dead cloth. As dead appearing as the objects within, the air without, and, one could not help but assume, the air within. The edges of the glass plates met in bronze corner mullions. Undoubtedly it was airtight. One suspected that the entire contents would collapse into dust particles should the case be opened. The faces. Both hacked and modeled. Smoothed in places, gouged in others. As though made in the spirit of a sketch. Or a study. Or a studied sketch. As though trying for those contours, those planes, those eccentricities of shape and line, which in themselves tread dangerously near the lump, but taken all together (and how else can a face be taken?) catch the look of the subject. Oriental. The eyes without the upper folds. And flattened out. The whole of the thing more in one plane than most faces. The bridge of the nose quite low. The mouth slightly parted. Those touches of roughness, those small gouges, pits, scratches, hacks and lumps gave to the face not only its verisimilitude but its expression of terror. It had witnessed the flesh melting, the skin peeling, the fire spreading, the bodies bloating, the blood clotting. My face was pressed against the glass. I felt the bridge of my nose flatten as I stared into the other faces. At my left, around the bronze corner and pressing against the glass perpendicular to my glass, a flattened face was reflected, the bridge of her nose nearly in a plane with the cheek bones. Lips parted and wet against the glass. The dark, like dust, settling on her back. Hands against the pilaster. Skirt pulled up. The curve of her hip visibly pressing against the dark bronze. Hands forcing the arch in her back. Still as statues. Partly hidden by the darkness settling in the niche. High up. In the recesses. Where the 5pm winter light died in the motionless air. Where the dead air hung. Where the sound of a foot on stone drifted upward to be met by the sound of mumbled conversations. Or pigeons. Drifting down. Where midway in the numbed space the sounds met. Interpenetrated. Blended into an irregular sighing sound . . .

Magnification and other Writings

JEAN EPSTEIN

TRANSLATED BY STUART LIEBMAN*

I will never find the way to say how I love American close-ups. Point blank. A head suddenly appears on screen and drama, now face to face, seems to address me personally and swells with an extraordinary intensity. I am hypnotized. Now the tragedy is anatomical. The decor of the fifth act is this corner of a cheek torn by a smile. Waiting for the moment when 1,000 meters of intrigue converge in a muscular *dénoument* satisfies me more than the rest of the film. Muscular preambles ripple beneath the skin. Shadows shift, tremble, hesitate. Something is being decided. A breeze of emotion underlines the mouth with clouds. The orography of the face vacillates. Seismic shocks begin. Capillary wrinkles try to split the fault. A wave carries them away. Crescendo. A muscle bridles. The lip is laced with tics like a theater curtain. Everything is movement, imbalance, crisis. Crack. The mouth gives way, like a ripe fruit splitting open. As if slit by a scalpel, a keyboard-like smile cuts laterally into the corner of the lips.

The close-up is the soul of the cinema. It can be brief because the value of the photogenic is measured in seconds. If it is too long, I don't find continuous pleasure in it. Intermittent paroxysms affect me the way needles do. Until now, I have never seen an entire minute of pure photogeny. Therefore, one must admit that the photogenic is like a spark that appears in fits and starts. It imposes a *découpage* a thousand times more detailed than that of most films, even American ones. Mincemeat. Even more beautiful than a laugh is the face preparing for it. I must interrupt. I love the mouth which is about to speak and holds back, the gesture which hesitates between right and left, the recoil before the leap, and the moment before landing, the becoming, the hesitation, the taut spring, the prelude, and even more than all these, the piano being tuned before the overture. The photogenic is conjugated in the future and in the imperative. It does not allow for stasis.

I have never understood motionless close-ups. They sacrifice their essence, which is movement. Like the hands of a watch, one of which is on the hour and

* The translator would like to acknowledge the many helpful corrections and suggestions made by Camille Hercot and Annette Michelson.

the other on the half hour, the legs of St. John the Baptist create a temporal dissonance. Rodin or someone else explained it: in order to create the impression of movement. A divine illusion? No, the gimmick for a toy presented at the "*concours Lépine*,"[1] and patented so that it can't be used to make lead soldiers. It seemed to Rodin that Watteau's *Cythera* could be animated by the movement of the eye from left to right over it. The motor-bikes posters race uphill by means of symbols: hatching, hyphens, blank spaces. Right or wrong, they thereby endeavor to conceal their ankylosis. The painter and the sculptor maul life, but this bitch has beautiful, real legs and escapes from under the nose of the artist crippled by intertia. Sculpture and painting, paralyzed in marble or tied to canvas, are reduces to pretence in order to capture movement, the indispensable. The ruses of reading. You must not maintain that art is created out of obstacles and limits. You, who are lame, have made a cult of your crutch. The cinema demonstrates your error. Cinema is all movement without any need for stability or equilibrium. Of all the sensory logarithms of reality, the photogenic is based on movement. An exhibition of inventions held annually in Paris. Derived from time, it is acceleration. It opposes the event to stasis, relationship to dimension. Gearing up and gearing down. This new beauty is as sinuous as the curve of the stock market index. It is no longer the function of a variable but a variable itself.

The close-up, the keystone of the cinema, is the maximum expression of this photogeny of movement. When static, it verges on contradiction. The face alone doesn't unravel its expressions but the head and lens moving together or apart, to the left and right of each other. Sharp focus is avoided.

The landscape may represent a state of mind. It is above all a state. A state of rest. Even in those landscapes most often shown in documentaries of picturesque Brittany or of a trip to Japan are in serious error. But 'the landscape's dance' is photogenic. Through the window of a train or a ship's porthole, the world acquires a new, specifically cinematic vivacity. A road is a road but the ground which flees under the four beating hearts of an automobile's belly transports me. The Oberland and Semmering tunnels swallow me up, and my head, bursting through the roof, hits against their vaults. Seasickness is decidedly pleasant. I'm on board the falling airplane. My knees bend. This area remains to be exploited. I yearn for a drama aboard a merry-go round, or more modern still, in airplanes. The fair below and its surroundings would be progressively confounded. Centrifuged in this way, and adding vertigo and rotation to it, the tragedy would increase its photogenic quality ten-fold. I would like to see a dance shot successively from the four cardinal directions. Then, with strokes of a pan shot or of a turning foot, the room as it is seen by the dancing couple. An intelligent *découpage* will reconstitute the double life of the dance by linking together the viewpoints of the spectator and the dancer, objective and subjective, if I may say so. When a character is going to meet another, I want to go along with him not

1. The "*concours Lépine*": an exhibition fair for inventors held in Paris.

behind or in front of him or by his side, but in him. I would like to look through his eyes and see his hand reach out from under me as if it were my own; interruptions of opaque film would imitate the blinking of our eyelids.

One need not exclude the landscape but adapt it. Such is the case with a film I've seen, *Souvenir d'été à Stockholm.* Stockholm didn't appear at all. Rather, male and female swimmers who had doubtlessly not even been asked for their permission to be filmed. People diving. There were kids and old people, men and women. No one gave a damn about the camera and had a great time. And so did I! A boat loaded with strollers and animation. Elsewhere people fished. A crowd watched. I don't remember what show the crowd was waiting for; it was difficult to move through these groups. There were Café terraces. Swings. Races on the grass and through the reeds. Everywhere, men, life, swarms, truth.

That's what must replace the Pathécolor newsreel where I always search for the words "Bonnie Fête" written in golden letters at the corner of the screen.[2]

But the closeup must be introduced, or else one deliberately handicaps the style. Just as a stroller leans down to get a better look at a plant, an insect, or a pebble, the lens must include in a sequence describing a field, close-ups of a flower, a fruit, or an animal: living nature. I never travel as solemnly as these cameramen. I look, I sniff at things, I touch. Close-up, close-up, close-up. Not the recommended points of view, the horizons of the Touring Club, but natural, indigenous, and photogenic details. Shop windows, cafés, quite wretched urchins, a cashier, ordinary gestures made with their full capacity for realization, a fair, the dust of automobiles, an atmosphere.

The landscape film is, for the moment, a big zero. People look for the picturesque in them. The picturesque in cinema is zero, nothing, negation. About the same as speaking of colors to a blind man. The film is susceptible only to photogeny. Picturesque and photogenic coincide only by chance. All the worthless films shot near the Promenade des Anglais proceed from this confusion; and their sunsets are further proof of this.

Possibilities are already appearing for the drama of the microscope, a hystophysiology of the passions, a classification of the amorous sentiments into those which do and those which do not need Gram's solution.[3] Young girls will consult them instead of the fortune teller. While we are waiting, we have an initial sketch in the close-up. It is nearly overlooked, not because it errs, but because it presents a ready-made style, a minute dramaturgy, flayed and vulnerable. The amplifying close-up demands underplaying. It's opposed to the theater where everything is loudly declaimed. A hurricane of murmurs. An interior conviction lifts the mask. It's not about interpreting a role; what's important is the actor's

2. Epstein is evidently referring to the practice of early film companies who inscribed their trademarks emblem on the theatrical sets or inserted placards bearing such emblems into shots taken outdoors to prevent pirating of their prints. Epstein rejected such a declaration of artificiality as inappropriate for film.
3. "Gram's solution": a solution used in the differential staining of bacteria.



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Sessue Haya
1915

belief in his character, right up to the point where a character's absent-mindedness becomes that of the actor himself. The director suggests, then persuades, then hypnotizes. The film is nothing but a relay between this source of nervous energy and the auditorium which breathes its radiance. That is why the gestures which work best on screen are nervous gestures.

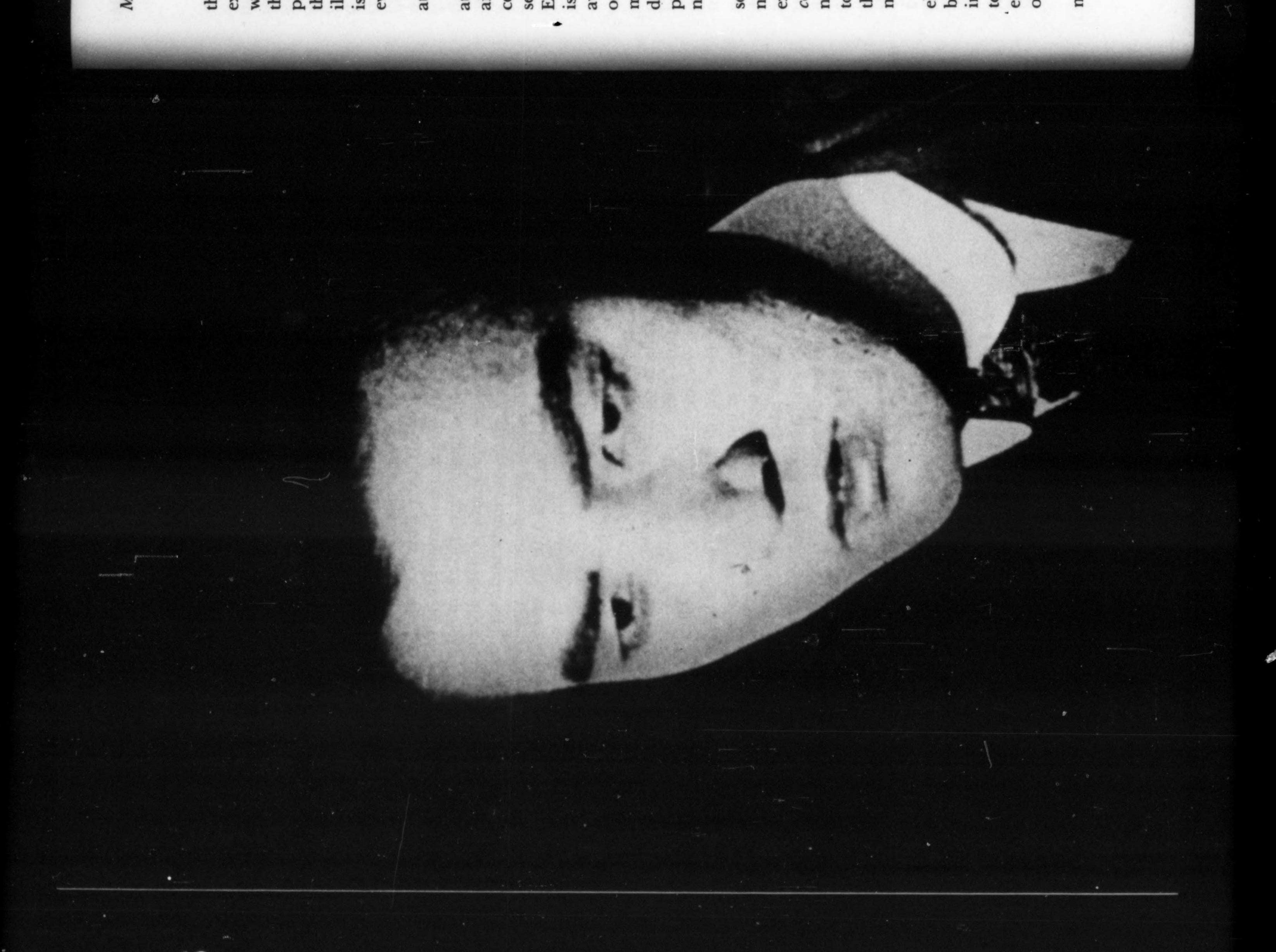
It is paradoxical, or rather extraordinary, that the nervousness which often exaggerates reactions should be photogenic when the screen deals mercilessly with the least forced gestures. Chaplin has created the overwrought hero. His entire performance consists of reflexes of a nervous, tired person. A bell or an automobile horn makes him jump, forces him to stand anxiously, his hand on his chest, because of the nervous palpitations of his heart. This isn't so much an example, but rather a synopsis of his photogenic neurasthenia. The first time that I saw Nazimova agitated and exothermic, living through an intense childhood, I guessed that she was Russian, that she came from one of the most nervous peoples on earth. And the little, short, rapid, spare, one might say involuntary, gestures of Lillian Gish who runs like the hand of a chronometer! The hands of Louise Glaum unceasingly drum a tune of anxiety. Mae Murray, Buster Keaton. *Etc.*

The close-up is drama in high gear. A man says, "I love the far-away princess." Here the verbal gearing down is suppressed. I can see love. It half lowers its eyelids, raises the arc of the eyebrows laterally, inscribes itself on the taut forehead, swells the massiters, hardens the tuft of the chin, flickers on the mouth and at the edge of the nostrils. Good lighting; how distant the far-away princess is. We're not so delicate that we must be presented with the sacrifice of Iphigenia recounted in alexandrins. We are different. We have replaced the fan by the ventilator and everything else accordingly. We demand to see because of our experimental mentality, because of our desire for a more exact poetry, because of our analytic propensity, because we need to make new mistakes.

The close-up is an intensifying agent because of its size alone. If the tenderness expressed by a face ten times as large is doubtlessly not ten times more moving, it is because in this case, ten, a thousand, or a hundred thousand would-erroneously-have a similar meaning. Merely being able to establish twice as much emotion would still have enormous consequences. But whatever its numerical value, this magnification acts on one's feelings more to transform than to confirm them, and personally, it makes me uneasy. Increasing or decreasing successions of events in the right proportions would obtain effects of an exceptional and fortunate elegance. The close-up modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to taste the tears. Never before has a face turned to mine in that way. Ever closer it presses against me, and I follow it face to face. It's not even true that there is air between us; I consume it. It is in me like a sacrament. Maximum visual acuity.

The close-up limits and directs the attention. As an emotional indicator, it overwhelms me. I have neither the right nor the ability to be distracted. It speaks

Sessue Hayakawa in Cecil B. deMille's The Cheat
1915



the present imperative of the verb to understand. Just as petroleum potentially exists in the landscape that the engineer gropingly probes, the photogenic and a whole new rhetoric are similarly concealed in the close-up. I haven't the right to think of anything but this telephone. It is a monster, a tower and a character. The power and scope of its whispering. Destinies wheel about, enter, and leave from this pylon as if from an acoustical pigeon house. Through this nexus flows the illusion of my will, a laugh that I like or a number, an expectation or a silence. It is a sensory limit, a solid nucleus, a relay, a mysterious transformer from which everything good or bad may issue. It looks like an idea.

One can't evade an iris. Round about, blackness; nothing to attract one's attention.

This is a cyclopean art, a unisensual art, an iconoscopic retina. All life and attention are in the eye. The eye sees nothing but a face like a great sun. Hayakawa aims his incandescent mask like a revolver. Wrapped in darkness, ranged in the cell-like seats, directed toward the source of emotion by their softer side, the sensibilities of the entire auditorium converge, as if in a funnel, toward the film. Everything else is barred, excluded, no longer valid. Even the music to which one is accustomed is nothing but additional anesthesia for what is not visual. It takes away our ears the way a Valda lozenge takes away our sense of taste. A cinema orchestra need not simulate sound effects. Let it supply a rhythm, preferably a monotonous one. One cannot listen and look at the same time. If there is a dispute, sight, as the most developed, the most specialized, and the most generally popular sense, always wins. Music which attracts attention or the imitation of noises is simply disturbing.

Although sight is already recognized by everyone as the most developed sense, and even though the viewpoint of our intellect and our mores are visual, nevertheless, there has never been an emotive process so homogeneously, so exclusively optical as the cinema. Truly, the cinema creates *a particular system of consciousness limited to a single sense.* And after one has grown used to using this new and extremely pleasant intellectual state, it becomes a sort of need, like tobacco or coffee. I have my dose or I don't. Hunger for a hypnosis far more violent than reading offers because reading modifies the functioning of the nervous system much less.

The cinematic feeling is therefore particularly intense. More than anything else, the close-up releases it. Although not dandies, all of us are or are becoming blasé. Art takes to the warpath. To attract customers, the circus showman must improve his acts and speed up his carousel from fair to fair. Being an artist means to astonish and excite. The habit of strong sensations which the cinema is essentially capable of producing, blunts theatrical sensations which are, moreover, of a lesser order. Theater, watch out!

If the cinema magnifies feeling, it magnifies it in every way. Pleasure in it is more pleasurable, but its defects are more defective.

Timeless Time

Learning perspective

Every spectacle which is the imitation of a series of events creates, by the very fact of the succession contained within it, a time which is its own, a distortion of historical time. In primitive theatrical manifestations, this illusory time dared depart only a very little from the time in which the described action actually occurred. Similarly, the first designers and painters explored the illusion of relief timidly, hardly knowing how to represent the illusion of spatial depth; they remained attached to the reality of the flat surface on which they worked. Only gradually did man, developing as the imitative animal *par excellence*, become accustomed to providing himself with fictive spaces and times which, proceeding from imitations of nature to secondary and tertiary versions of these first imitations, progressively distanced themselves from their original models.

Thus, the length of mystery plays performed in the Middle Ages reflects the difficulty which minds of this epoch still experience in shifting temporal perspective. At that time, a drama which did not last almost as long on stage as the actual unfolding of the events would not have seemed believable and sustained the illusion. And the rule of the three unities which established 24 hours as the maximum of solar time which it was permitted to compress into three or four hours or performance time marks another stage of the advance toward the comprehension of chronological abridgement, that is, of temporal relativity. Today, this reduction of duration by one eighth which classical tragedy offered at best seems a very small endeavor compared to the compressions of 1/50,000 which the cinema achieves, though not without inducing slight dizziness.

The machine which thinks temporally

Another astonishing quality of the cinematograph is its ability to multiply and make immensely more supple the play of temporal perspective, to train the intellect in an exercise which is always difficult: to move from established absolutes to unstable conditionals. Here again, this machine which extends or condenses duration, which demonstrates the variable nature of time, which preaches the relativity of all standards, seems endowed with a kind of psyche. Without it we would not see and therefore would understand nothing at all of a time which may physically be 50,000 times more rapid or four times slower than the one in which we live. It is a physical implement, certainly, whose functioning, however, provides an illusion so fully elaborated and ready for the mind's use that it can be considered as already half-thought, conceived according to the rules of an analysis and synthesis which man, without the cinematic instrument, had been unable to use.

Dimensions of space

The respect with which the precious standard measures of irradiated platinum are conserved in armored and padlocked tabernacles at constant temperatures recalls the worship accorded to miraculous objects, materializations of revealed truths descended from the absolute in the heavens onto this world of errors. No one, however, considers the meter—a one ten-millionth part of a quarter of the terrestrial meridian line—as a sacred and essential truth. Many countries still use other measuring units. We have seen four millimeters become three and a half centimeters under a magnifying glass long ago. Travellers know that each kilometer has a different meaning depending upon whether it is traversed on foot, on horseback, on a bicycle, in a car, in a train or in a plane, according to the terrain, the climate and the season. Like the lunar, Martian and Venusian meters—one ten-millionth part of a quarter of the meridian lines of this satellite and these planets—the terrestrial meter possesses only a relative significance. And if these celestial bodies, as is believed, gradually contract into themselves, we must ask ourselves where our true meter can be found—whether in the less variable standards of the Bureau of Longitudes or in the subdivision of a meridian line in perpetual regression?

Dimensions of time

More mysteriously, the truth-value of the hour has proved less subject to caution. The hour is not merely the secret product of standard clocks that are also buried in deep crypts and venerated as religious objects. It is nothing but the result of a simple measurement of the globe's surface; it originates on sundials from the trace inscribed by the incomprehensible, divine movement which animates the whole celestial mechanism. While the meridian line can for better or worse be divided by the decimal system, the orbit's elliptical shape refuses to submit to the arbitrariness of this human convention; it imposes its own number of days and nights so tyrannically that even if the total were unsatisfactory, nothing could be done to change it and calendars would have to be readjusted constantly. Occasionally, no doubt, a boring hour seems to pass more slowly than a pleasant one, but these impressions, always confused and often inconsistent, are not sufficient to shake the faith in the inalterable stability of a universal rhythm. A belief also confirmed by the irreversibility of duration, invariably positive, an image of the constancy of astronomical movements, since in its length, breadth and depth, space may be crossed and measured in one way one time and in an opposite way at another. Thus, until the invention of accelerated and slow cinematic motion, it seemed impossible to see—and it was not even dreamed of—a year in the life of a plant condensed in ten minutes, or thirty seconds of an athlete's activity inflated and extended to ten minutes.

Time is a relation in space

Thus, an hour and the time it defines, produced and regulated by cosmic dynamism, appears to be of a very different reality than that of the meter and space: more mysterious and more exalted, intangible and immutable. But the cinematograph, by "laminating" time to demonstrate its extreme malleability, has caused it to fall from these heights and reduced it to a dimension analogous to those of space.

The fourth dimension has been discussed for a long time, misconstrued, all the while, as to its nature, its existence even subject to doubt. For certain mathematicians, it was an essentially geometric dimension similar to the three others, a fiction or reality of calculation, yet practically ungraspable because our senses provide us with no data about it. For numerous scholars and novelists, philosophers and poets, it was ether or the means to go to the stars, the habitat of pure spirits or the way to the square the circle. . . . Nevertheless, just as all things which preoccupy man sooner or later come true, the fourth dimension—like the unicorn that will eventually be captured in Nepal—appeared, endowed with probability in the relativists' space-time.

Time, understood as a scale of variables, as the fourth of a system of coordinates in which our representation of the universe is inscribed, would have merely remained for a long time to come a construct of the mind, satisfying only a restricted audience of scholars, if the cinematograph had not visualized and reinforced this concept by experimentally producing very ample variations, hitherto unknown, in temporal perspective. That our time is the frame of a variable dimension, just as our space is the locus of three kinds of relative distances, can now be understood by everyone because all can see the extension or abridgement of time on screen just as they see the elongation or shortening of a distance through one end or another of a pair of binoculars. If today, every modestly cultivated man can represent the universe as a four dimensional continuum in which all material accidents are situated by the interplay of four spatio-temporal variables; if this richer, more variable, perhaps truer figure is gradually supplanting the three dimensional image of the world just as it had substituted itself for primitive flat schematizations of the earth and heavens; if the indivisible unity of the four factors of space-time is slowly acquiring evidence which modifies the inseparability of the three dimensions of pure space, the cinema is responsible for the wide fame and popularity of the theory with which Einstein and Minkowski have principally associated their names.

Fourth or first dimension?

Nevertheless, while the three spatial dimensions merely offer by no means essential differences of position among themselves, the temporal dimension retains a particular character which is at first attributed to the irreversibility of the march of time. Movements within any spatial dimension are supposed, on the contrary, to be capable of being effected in a positive direction sometimes, in a

negative direction at others. But since the four dimensions form inseparable co-variants, it seems strange that one of them can be irreversible without requiring the three others to also become so. In fact, nothing that moves, whether living or inanimate, can ever erase the route it has travelled. The kilometer traversed while returning does not annul the kilometer traversed while going, but is added to it because it is a new kilometer, different from the first. The evening's route, even if it doesn't differ a millimeter, is always another route than that of the morning, bathed in another light, in another atmosphere, traversed in another frame of mind and with different feelings. The irrevocable march of time effectively imposes a unique, irrecuperable and indestructible, perpetually positive meaning on all the movements of the universe. The *sui-generis* quality of the temporal dimension has a power to orient geometric space in such a way that the successions in it can only be produced according to the direction of this polarization. It is only through the polarized movement which it brings to images that the cinema—when given stereoscopic capacities—will be able to create the perfect illusion of a four dimensional continuum, an alternative reality.

In order to take into consideration the chronological order in which man familiarizes himself with the measures of length, surface and duration, wouldn't it be better to call time the first and not the fourth dimension in recognition of the general orienting function that it exerts over space?

Local and incommensurable times

Not only does the cinematograph show that time is a controlled dimension correlated with those of space, but that furthermore, all the valuations of this dimension merely have a local value. It is conceded that the astronomical conditions in which the earth is situated impose an aspect and a division of time very different from what they must be in the Andromeda nebula whose heaven and movements are not the same; for those who have never seen cinematic fast or slow motion, however, it is difficult to imagine, viewing from outside, the appearance that a temporality other than ours could have. That is why a short documentary film which describes in a few minutes twelve months in the life of a plant from its germination through its maturity and withering to the formation of the seed of a new generation (in a few minutes) suffices to make the most extraordinary voyage, the most difficult flight that man has yet attempted, come true for us.

This film seems to free us from terrestrial—that is, solar—time, from whose rhythm, it seemed, nothing would ever dislodge us. We feel introduced to a new universe, to another continuum in which change in time occurs fifty thousand times more rapidly. In this little domain, a special time reigns, a local time which constitutes an enclave within earth time, which is itself merely a local time, though extending over a vaster zone, in its turn enclosed within other times, or juxtaposed and mingled with them. The temporality of the whole of our universe itself is but a specific time, valid for this aggregate but neither beyond it nor in all its interior sections.

By analogy, innumerable ultra-specific temporalities, organizers of atomic ultra-microcosms, are foreseen as probably incommensurable in terms of wave or quantum mechanics, guesses are they share no common measure with solar time.

Time is not made of time

Sustained by the senses, the intellect separates itself with difficulty from its primary conception of a sensory continuum. Just as it had filled space with ether, it had endowed time with a sort of extremely thin consistency corresponding to the uncertain fluidity of ordinary perceptions of duration offered by synesthesia. This exquisite weft, this fine thread of fate, this veil of sorrow, this indefinite substance subtler than ether which even refused to accept the precision of a proper name nevertheless remained a physical reality.

The cinematograph destroyed this illusion; it demonstrates that time is only a perspective generated by the succession of phenomena just as space is only a perspective on the coexistence of objects. Time contains nothing that can be called time-in-itself any more than space is comprised of space-in-itself. They are only composed, one as much as the other, of relationships, variable in their essence, between appearances which are produced successively or simultaneously. That is why there can be thirty-six different times and twenty kinds of space just as there can be innumerable specific perspectives depending upon the infinitely diverse positions of objects and their observer.

Thus, the cinema, having shown the unreality of continuity and discontinuity alike, confronts us rather brutally with the unreality of space-time.

The Universe Head Over Heels

Experience since time immemorial has created the dogma of life's irreversibility. The course of evolution in both the atom and the galaxy, in inorganic matter as in both animal and human forms, derives its irrevocably unique meaning from the loss of energy. The constant increase in entropy is the catch which stops the gears of the terrestrial and celestial machine from ever moving in reverse. Time cannot return to its origin; no effect can precede its cause. And a world which would claim to break with or modify this vectorial order seems both physically impossible and logically unimaginable.

Focus attention, however, on a scene in an old avant garde film or a slapstick comedy that has been filmed in reverse motion. Suddenly, with an undeniable precision, the cinema describes a world which moves from its end to its beginning, an anti-universe which until now man had hardly managed to picture for himself. Dead leaves take off from the ground to hang once again upon tree branches; rain drops spurt upwards from the earth to the clouds; a locomotive swallows its smoke and cinders, inhales its own steam; a machine uses the cold to produce heat and work. Bursting from a husk, a flower withers into a bud which retreats into the stem. As the stem ages, it withdraws into a seed. Life appears only through resurrection, crossing old age's decrepitude into the bloom of maturity, rolling through the course of youth, then of infancy, and finally dissolving in a prenatal limbo. Universal repulsion, the energy loss of entropy, the continual increase of energy constitute truth values contrary to Newton's law and the principles of Carnot and Calusius. Effect has become cause; cause, effect.

Could the structure of the universe be ambivalent? Might it permit both forward and backward movements? Does it admit of a double logic, two determinisms, two antithetical ends?

The cinema as the instrument of a philosophy as well as of an art

For several hundred years, the microscope and the telescope have helped to intensify the acuteness of our dominant sense: vision, and reflection on the world's new aspect thereby obtained has prodigiously transformed and developed every philosophical and scientific system. In turn, the cinematograph, although hardly fifty years old, has to its credit some admittedly important revelations, notably in the analysis of movement. But for the general public, the machine which generated the "seventh art" chiefly represents a way of reviving and popularizing the theater, a machine for the fabrication of a type of spectacle accessible to the minds and purses of the largest possible international common denominator. A beneficent and prestigious function, certainly, whose only drawback lies in the stifling effect of its popularity upon those other possibilities of the same instrument which then pass almost unnoticed.

Thus, little or no attention has been paid until now to the many unique qualities film can give to the representation of things. Hardly anyone has realized that the cinematic image carries a warning of something monstrous, that it bears a subtle venom which could corrupt the entire rational order so painstakingly imagined in the destiny of the universe.

Discovery always means learning that objects are not as we had believed them to be; to know more, one must first abandon the most evident certainties of established knowledge. Although not certain, it is not inconceivable that what appears to us as a strange perversity, a surprising nonconformity, as a transgression and a defect of the screen's animated images might serve to advance another step into that "terrible underside of things" which terrified even Pasteur's pragmatism.

The interchangeability of the continuous and the discontinuous: A kind of miracle

We know that a film is composed of a large number of images, discrete and slightly dissimilar according to the more or less modified position of the filmed subject, juxtaposed on the film strip. The projection at a certain speed of this series of figures, separated by short intervals of space and time, produces the appearance of uninterrupted movement. And this is the most striking and prodigious quality of the Lumière brothers' machine; it transforms discontinuity into continuity; it permits the synthesis of discontinuous and static elements into a continuous, mobile whole; it effects the transition between the two primordial aspects of nature which have always, ever since the constitution of a metaphysics of science, been opposed as mutually exclusive.

First manifestation: the perceptible continuum

At the level where it is directly or indirectly perceived by the senses, the world at first appears as a rigorously coherent assemblage of material parts between which the existence of a cavity of nothingness, a veritable discontinuity seems so impossible that whenever one is not sure what is there, a substance, baptised ether, has been imagined to fill it up. Indeed, Pascal showed that nature's supposed abhorrence of the void was purely imaginary, but he did not efface that abhorrence of the human intellect for a void inaccessible to sensory experience is available.

Second manifestation: the discontinuity of the physical sciences

Since Democritus, the atomic theory which takes matter to be constituted of corpuscles, indivisible and separated from each other, has emerged as the victor over the primitive conception of a universal continuum. Despite its supposed indivisibility, the atom has had to be subdivided into several kinds of electrons. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of a gaping, discontinuous—one might say gaseous—material structure of both the infinitely small and the infinitely large, in which solid elements occupy a very small volume in comparison to the immense voids through which they circulate, is still generally accepted today. Thus, a galaxy can be compared to a starry mist just as the atom recalls a miniature solar system.

Beneath the consistent world of our practical experience hide the surprises of a reality that is very diffuse, in which the proportion of what is to what is anything but definite, can be rendered by the image of a fly in flight in a space of some eight cubic kilometers cubed.

Third manifestation: the mathematical continuity

If material corpuscles can be conceived as separate, they cannot be thought to be independent of each other for they exert reciprocal influences upon each other which account for their behavior. The network of these innumerable interactions or force fields represents a mysterious weft which entirely fills the realtivists' space-

time. In this new four-dimensional continuity, the latent energy dispersed throughout condenses here and there in granules endowed with mass which are the constituents of matter.

Beneath the material discontinuity—molecular, atomic, intra-atomic—one can therefore imagine a deeper and even more hidden continuity which should be called pre-material because it facilitates and directs the measurable and probabilistic positions of mass, light and electricity.

The transmutation of the discontinuous into the continuous, negated by Zeno, but accomplished by the cinematograph

The most obscure moments of this poetry occur during the transitions between or the superimpositions of superficial continuity over the intermediary discontinuous level, and of this intermediary level over the pre-material continuity whose existence is only mathematical. The fact that reality can encompass continuity and discontinuity, that an unbroken order can be a sum of interruptions, that the addition of static phases produces movement, has amazed the rational mind ever since the Eleatics.

Now, the cinematograph seems to be a mysterious mechanism intended to assess the false accuracy of Zeno's famous argument about the arrow, intended for the analysis of the subtle metamorphosis of stasis into mobility, of emptiness into solid, of continuous into discontinuous, a transformation as stupefying as the generation of life from inanimate elements.

Continuity, pretense of discontinuity

Is it the recording apparatus or the projector which creates this marvel? In fact, every part of each film image, successively projected on the screen, remains as perfectly still and separate as it had been since its appearance at the sensory level. The unity and animation of these forms are effected neither on the film strip, nor by the lens, but in man himself. The discontinuity becomes continuity only after it has made its way in the spectator. It is a purely internal phenomenon. Outside the spectator, there is no movement, no flux, no life in the mosaics of light and shadow which the screen always presents as fixed. Within, there is an impression which, like all other sensory data, is an interpretation of the object, that is, an illusion, a phantom.

Bad eyesight, the source of the metaphysics of the continuous

The spectre of a non-existent continuity is known to be caused by a defect of sight. The eye's power to distinguish space and time is strictly limited. An alignment of points very close to each other is perceived as a line; it sustains the appearance of spatial continuity. And a sufficiently rapid succession of separate images, each slightly different, creates, due to the slowness and persistence of retinal sensations, another more complex spatio-temporal continuity which is also imaginary.

Every film thus provides us with a clear example of a mobile continuum formed by what might be called its somewhat deeper reality of discontinuous static elements. Zeno was therefore right to maintain that the analysis of movement yielded a collection of stops; his only error lay in denying the possibility of the irrational, absurd synthesis achieved by the cinema thanks to that weakness of our vision which effectively recomposes movement through the progressive addition of static moments. Faraday once observed that "The irrational is not impossible." The natural sequence of phenomena is not necessarily logical, as one also discovers, when light added to light produces darkness within the gaps between.

The discontinuous, reality of an unreal continuity?

The perceptual continuum whose existence outside ourselves is confirmed by daily experience, but denied in its reality by scientific research, is only a trap which has its source, like the misleading continuity of film, in the inadequate discrimination of our sight, as of all our senses. Thus, the charm of music, the perfectly smooth flux of harmony which we enjoy when hearing a symphony comes from the ear's inability to situate each vibration of each flow of sonic waves distinctly in space and time. Similarly, the relative crudeness of the multiple sensations to which we give the name of "touch" does not enable us to experience the extreme division nor the extraordinary agitation of the miniscule components of the objects we handle. From these perceptual deficiencies derive all the false notions of a matter without void, of a compact world, a solid universe.

The visible, palpable, audible, breathable continuum in every domain is only a very superficial semblance which is undoubtedly useful, that is to say, empirically true; it conceals, however, a basically discontinuous organization, the knowledge of which has proven to be still more useful and whose reality, therefore, can and should also be considered deeper.

Discontinuity, the pretense of a continuum

What is the source of this discontinuity considered more real? Where and how in the cinematic process, for example, are the discontinuous images with which the spectator forms the film's subjective continuity obtained? These images are taken from the perpetually moving spectacle of the world: a spectacle which is fragmented, cut into brief slices by a shutter which during each rotation uncovers the lens for a mere third or fourth of the necessary time. This fraction is brief enough so that the snapshots obtained can be as sharp as photographs of static subjects. Considered in themselves, the discontinuity and immobility of cinematic images are therefore created by the recording camera. They provide a very imprecise interpretation of that continuous and mobile aspect of nature which assumes the role of a fundamental reality.

If a man is organized through his senses to perceive
the discontinuous as a continuum, the machine 'imagines'
the continuous as discontinuous more easily

A mechanism proves, as it happens, to be endowed with its own subjectivity since it represents things not as they are perceived by human eyes but only according to the way it sees them itself, according to that particular structure which constitutes its personality. And the discontinuity of static images, (static at least for the time of their projection, in the intervals of their jerking passage through the projector) a discontinuity which functions as a material foundation for the continuity which man is capable of imagining in the projected film, turns out to be in turn a mere phantom, conceived, thought by a machine.

The cinematograph has first shown us a subjective transfiguration of a truer discontinuity within the continuous; this same cinematograph then shows us an arbitrary interpretation of a primordial continuity within the discontinuous. We realize then that cinematic continuity and discontinuity actually are equally non-existent, or, what is essentially the same thing: the continuous and the discontinuous act alternatively as object and as concept, their reality being only a function in which one can be substituted for the other.

Blue Poem for B.

PETER HANDKE

TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL ROLOFF

Deep at night
it became bright again
Crushed from the outside
I began to curdle
in full consciousness
Unfeeling my cock twitched
larger
from breath to breath
"Don't wake up now!" I thought
and held my breath
But it was too late
Nonsense had struck again

Never before had I felt so
in the minority
Outside the window
nothing but omnipotence
At first a few birds sang
then so many
the singing
became a racket
the air an echo chamber
without pause or end
Such a down
suddenly no memory
no thought of the future.
I lay stretched out long in my fear
did not dare

open my eyes
relived the winter night
when I did not turn once
from one side
to the other
gnarled by the cold then
now stretched out
illiterate from the horror outside me—
The air
how high it shrilled!
And then
all at once
quite near the window
a low whistling in the bird racket
a juke box tune
"A human being!" I thought
spelling out each letter from deathly fear
and withered
without moving
"The one who has been murdered
  by the disembodied monster
in the unpeopled predawn light
Fear billowed up from the cellar stairs
and the COMMON-SENSE PERSON inside me
listened:
the tune was repeated
was repeated—
"No bird whistles that monotonously
the phantom wants to ridicule me
its grinning
with pitchblack lips

"I" thought
The light
when I squinted
had the color from the time
when I still believed in hell
and the whistling monster by the window
soundlessly rattled its wrists
as if it now meant business

"Didn't Freddy Quinn sing that back then?"
I thought
"But which bird?" the common-sense person
Then child woke up in the next room
and shouted
that she couldn't sleep
"Finally," I said
went to her
and calmed her down
full of egotism
A garage door slammed
the first early riser had to go to work
The evening of the next day I left

The unleveled rolling plazas
in the large graceful city
this repetition of the open country
with its horizons of hills
amid the houses
the land
prolonged into the city
onto these plazas
where you were overwhelmed as nowhere else
by horizon-longing
When I climbed out of the subway
even the dog shitting on the sidewalk
struck me as magicked
I shuddered with disbelief
suddenly I was THE OBJECTIVELY LIVING THING
My cock lay strangely forgotten
between my legs
Joy rose
from the deepest depth
and replaced me
"I can be happy!" I thought
"Why don't you envy me!"

For days I was beside myself
and yet as
I wanted to be.

I ate little
talked just to myself—
needless so happy
unapproachable so full of curiosity
selfless
and self-confident
in one
the self-confidence
as the INMOST
of the self-lessness
I as inspired machine
Everything happened by chance.
that a bus stopped
and that I got on
that I rode my ticket's worth
that I walked through streets
until the neighborhood changed
that I walked on in the new neighborhood.
I lived
as it came
no longer HESITATED
reacted IMMEDIATELY
experienced nothing SPECIAL
—no "Once I saw"—
merely experienced
The cats sniffed around in the mausoleums
of the large cemeteries
Very small couples sat in the cafes
and ate Salade Niçoise together . . .
I was in my element
clucking

But in my dreams
I hadn't yet lost all interest
Straggling slime track
of the snail person.
I was not ashamed
was only angry.
I made myself wishless
by drinking too much

The twitching eyelids became irksome
The passersby were walk-ons
who behaved like stars
"Levi's-Jeans-people!" I thought
"Ad-space bodies!"
—"Which says everything about you"
I thought
without the earlier sympathy.
I became superficial with crossness
Whatever I saw
I also felt I touched
it seemed
so bristly
and perverse
Once when I was paying
the bill crinkled
at the salesman's breath
like a caterpillar
on a hotplate.
I did not feel well
in my skin
everything itched.
I no longer sweated as nonchalantly
The features
in the wrong places . . .
And the boulevards
doodled with dogshit . . .
"What impudence
of you fellows imported from Africa
to sweep the gutter before me
with such animally absent eyes!"
I gave up
and left for another city
where I had friends

Unfeeling transport object
within means of transportation
Self-forgotten
but for my hand's susceptibility to smell
of the butter

and of the coldcuts
lying there like that forever
under the plastic cover
and of the towellettes!
Cared for
yes
as someone who pays
Lodged
yes a part of a unit
In any case:
a DIFFERENT nonsense
without deathly fear
My heart throbbed for no one
and the city was foreign to me again
from all its familiar landmarks
The housedoors were locked as of eight PM
and I telephoned
to get in
in a friend's dark apartment
I sat absentmindedly
my ears buzzing
and heard my soulless own voice
Being happy all I could remember
was happiness
being unhappy merely unhappiness
Indifferently I recounted
how okay everything had been with me

Then we talked about fucking
The sexual expressions
provided us with the unabashedness
for everything else
Anyone joining us we greeted
with obscenities
and let loose
they lost their strangeness
Even while entering
the suburban wine cellars
we prolonged our fantasies there
where we had dropped them

looking for a parking place
Everything without horniness
In the upper deck of the bus
the total strangers grinned
when they listened to us
and felt at home with us

What exhibitionism
as soon as one of us
suddenly mentioned something!
But there was always someone
who found the hint of sex
in the allegedly other . . .
Yet no one talked about himself
we only fantasized
never the embarrassment of true stories
How the surrounding flourished then
and the pleasure in nothing but the present:
the heartiness of the sour wine in the
cylindrical glasses
Don't stop
please don't stop!
The indescribable particulars
of the grim new age
found the order of their lost connection
in the dirty stories
Hello
meaning is back!
Not to have to see my worried face
at midnight any more
Even left alone
I sat well guarded
in my afterthoughts
Calmly I watched the outstretched heel
twitching from my heart beat.
I felt well
by feeling nothing of myself
"My prick" I said
impersonally

Then it got serious
and the seriousness hit so quickly
that it didn't want to be me
who was meant
Then I became curious
then ruthless
I would take a woman to the next best toilet
No more flirting
no more obscenities
no more touches
instead of "fucking" I now said
"sleep with you"
—if I said anything at all.
I pared my fingernails
so as not to hurt you too much
In my horniness
I could suddenly call nothing
by its name
Before I had found a metaphor for sex
in the most unsuspecting things
now
during the experience
we experienced the sexual acts
as metaphors for something else
The movements reminded me
of what?
The noises were the noises from the world of things
it smelled of . . .
I didn't even have to close my eyes
to experience completely different events
than those before me
and to describe the "real" pictures
the "facts"
was optional
for
only the "other" pictures
into which the "real" ones
rocked me more and more
were for real

and the "other" pictures
were not allegories
but moments
from the past
set free by the good feeling
—as I remember just now
a hedgehog in the grass
with an apple
impaled on its quills
Dragging signs
with your breath
out of the depth of your consciousness
Thus I could be tender
without loving
and the skin at the heels
the pale navel
and the blissful smile
were no contradiction
and each thing by itself
intertwined with the other:
the leaves by the window
the child singing himself awake
a framework house at dawn
the light blue on the wayside shrine
from the time when you still believed in eternity
"Yes, swallow that!"
"Beauty is a kind of information" I thought
warm from you
and from the recollection
"You force me
to be
as I want to be" I thought
To exist
began
to mean something to me—
Don't stop!
I faltered just now
when I noticed
how suddenly the poem ended

The Population of Mirrors: Problems of Similarity Based on a Text by Alain Robbe-Grillet

JEAN RICARDOU

TRANSLATED BY PHOEBE COHEN

> Due to the perfect similarity of their gestures, together with a great resemblance in appearance, the two brothers, one of whom was left-handed, gave the illusion of a single subject reflected by a mirror.
>
> Roussel

> Unity cut in two, that is assuredly a strange fact. . . . The spirit of the 16th century was preoccupied by mirrors.
>
> Hugo

Every similarity tends to produce double effects: duplication if it affects separate entities; division if it concerns a single entity.

I. REDUPLICATION

Let us assume a fictional text. Its external relationships can be divided into two areas: as a text it can be compared to other texts; as fiction it can be contrasted with 'life itself'.

A. Aspects of the Dominant Ideology

We know that these relationships are subject to intense ideological domination. It becomes apparent when we realize the extent to which we commonly conceive of them according to an insistent value system rather than a technical schema (system, mechanism). Let the relationship of similarity that the text can have with an external point of comparison be termed (+), and the relationship of dissimilarity be termed (−). Immediately (Fig. 1) values appear and can be assigned. As can be seen, the "that depends" dear to Marx is once again mandatory. The value of a relationship in no way derives in and from itself, but from its function in the system. There is a *good* resemblance, that between the text and 'life'; it goes by the name of authenticity, with its inverse artificiality. There is a *bad* resemblance, between the text and other texts; it goes by the name of banality, with its opposite, originality. A hierarchy of texts can thus be established on the basis of inter-textual relationship and relationship to life: the best (−,+)

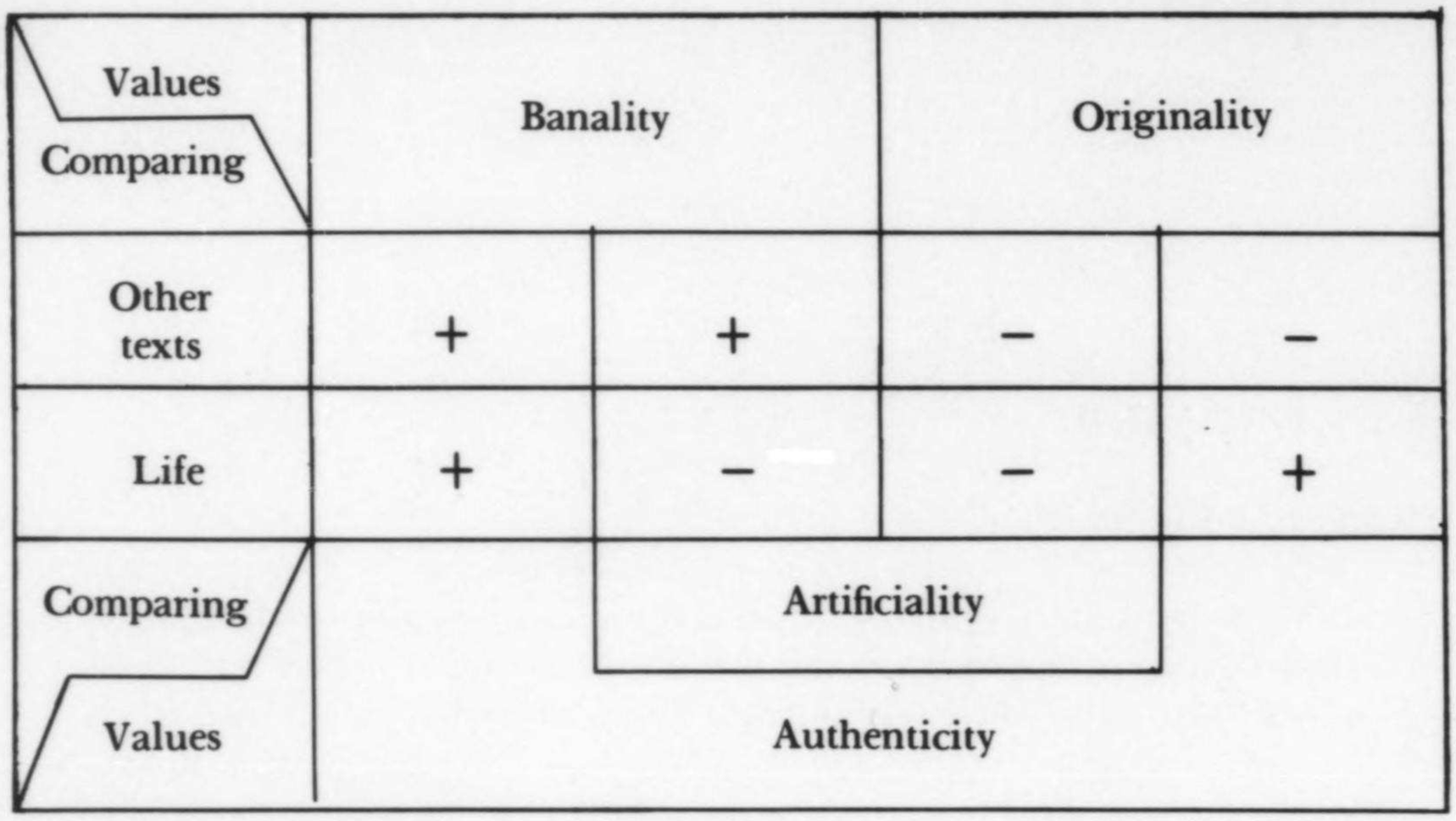


Figure 1

original and authentic; the debatable, either (+,+) banal but authentic, or (−,−) original but artificial; the worst (+,−), banal and artificial.

The objective of this system is clear: to conceal the text. On a first level, every duplication sets up an assimilation procedure; the agent of duplication tends to be identified with the object of duplication. The good resemblance, constraining the text to imitate life, identifies it with life, so that its specificity as text is lost; the bad resemblance is that which, including the text to duplicate a text, identifies it with a text, thereby stressing its specificity as a text.

The system continues to dominate, generally unquestioned. We know it well; it is the ideology of expression (if by 'life' we understand the self) or that of representation (if by 'life' we understand the world). Present-day thinking in this area is channelled in a direction which culminated in two celebrated schools of the 19th century: romanticism and realism.

B. Ideological Confrontation

We must remember that domination, for an ideology, means the accomplishment of a totalizing ideal: the invasion of an entire field so that it is concealed and becomes an absolute, pure and simple *common sense*. Naming or pinpointing an ideology already raises an initial question; confronting it with another accomplishes a second.

This confrontation, as one can predict, will be even sharper if produced at a point situated at the extreme limit of either of the two value systems. As we have seen, the romantic/realistic ideology disqualifies that which is banal as a text and

artificial as fiction. Now, isn't that in a certain way just what classical ideology largely advocated? Of course it also resorted to a valorizing vocabulary. The resemblance of texts is imitation (of the Ancients), the dissimilarity with life is propriety of distance (in time or space).

However, to imitate is not to repeat imitation, although producing an assimilation effect does, in a second phase, cause an effect of differentiation. In their imitation of Aesop, the texts of La Fontaine are, for example, fully classifiable as Fables; once this assimilation on the level of genre occurs, an opposing tendency allows differences of execution to be all the more clearly stressed. Both classical ideology and romantic ideology take equal account of the dissimilarity of texts. Only their manners are diametrically opposed.

Classical ideology sees the dissimilarity as intertextuality, something of a comparative nature: intra-canonical difference. The texts are distinguished from each other within the framework of certain models (genres, forms). Romantic ideology sees dissimilarity as something of an absolute, originality. Difference is not presented as comparison. It is hypostasized into an intrinsic quality originating in a unique source, the author.

C. Ideological Subversion

In their opposition, these two systems therefore deny each other a monopoly of common sense. However, there subsists a double inequality which forms a trap. On the one hand, the second system profits from the first since it was established on the basis of its excesses in criticism. On the other hand, as they are diametrically opposed, any attack on the second can induce a return to the first. This would, in fact, maintain the same ideological structure. Neo-classicism is the infantile disease which threatens all anti-romantic or anti-realist activity. Even Valéry, as we know, was not always innocent of this reactionary deviation, which can be traced in many others as well, from Gide to Cocteau.[1]

At every level, therefore, effective questioning of the second system also assumes a questioning of the first. On the textual level it will reject both the banality of imitation and the uniqueness of originality. It will oppose any acceptance of canons and their secondary distinctions; it also rejects the denial of canons because of supposed relentless pressure. It will lead to transformation of the canons: new forms, new genres. And, for example, a New Novel.

On the fictional level it will oppose both the pressure of raw experience and its related opposite, the filtering effect of propriety. Avoiding approved behavior if necessary, it will structure its stories so as to prevent confusion, in the last analysis, with life itself.

1. In reference to this, see my "The Impossible M. Texte," in *For a Theory of a New Novel*, Paris, Seuil, 1971.

D. A Permissible Textual Duplication

The dominant ideology, always quick to castigate similarity between texts, makes one very curious exception. Duplication between a text and its title is far from prohibited; duplication is, in fact, strongly recommended. The title actually enjoys special status. It is not another text, even if it derives from one. As such it enjoys no autonomy. The title is not the text itself, even if taken from it. As such it is distinct from the text. It thus escapes from two severely controlled areas. The first is intertextuality, which must be governed by diversity, as we have seen; similarity disturbs inter-textuality with its unacceptable assimilations. The second is intra-textuality, which must be governed by unity, as we shall see below; similarity disturbs intra-textuality with its unlawful divisions.

The title is neither another text nor the same text, but an 'onoma-text'; it forms the name of the text. We can make a distinction between two types of names: one offered by the language and one proposed by any given user. Insofar as the text is a new object, no term in the language would seem to suit it; the title is a kind of neologism. As we know, the neological process is subject to strict constraints. One can, of course, resort to convention, choosing or inventing a given term as one wishes and giving it the definition one proposes to recognize. But this procedure has its defects; for immediate comprehension every reader must know the basis of the code. Otherwise he will have to deal with an opaque neologism which only becomes comprehensible in context. To avoid such inconvenience one can construct a term so that its definition is clearly stated. Thus the intelligent neologism is one which is immediately intelligible rather than one produced by a specialist.

If the title presents a neologism, it will only fully become the name of the text *after* the text is read, when the pact linking the term to its definition is entirely concluded. For the title to offer the name of the text from the outset, it must become an intelligent neologism, incorporating its definition within itself. However, since the title uses an appreciably smaller number of words than the text, this incorporation will be a reduction; what the title displays as the name of a text is a résumé of its definition.

Title, résumé, and definition can all be included in the group which escapes the rules of both inter-text and intra-text. Like the title, the résumé and the definition enjoy no autonomy and can be differentiated. They belong to a category which must be named the epi-text; the text on the text. The meta-text is written on the text for operational, analytic goals; the epi-text is written on the text for representative, synthetic goals. The epi-text therefore belongs to a larger class, the synonymic, in which established thought allows the only lawful substitutions. As we know, the synonymic permits a basic operation, translation. This can be subdivided, according to the case. If it is inter-linguistic—from one's own language into another or vice-versa—translation assumes that the essential semantic traits of a text can be transposed into another language without basic

alteration. If it is intra-linguistic—a résumé or paraphrase—it assumes that the essential semantic traits of a text can either be summarized or expanded without damage. If it is pseudo-linguistic—expression or representation—translation assumes that supposed semantic traits relating to given aspects of the self or the world can be expressed by language without basic alteration; to translate feelings, to translate a landscape. As we know, this system is supported by a hypothesis still largely unexpressed: the relationship which associates the arrangement of the signifiers and the correspondent emergence of the signifieds can be safely dissolved. In short, it cannot conceive of an effective semantics specific to the literal arrangement of the text.

According to the case, the tactics can be inverted, depending on the given situation. Sometimes (I, ABC) intertextual similarity is rejected, sometimes (I,D) it is frantically pursued. But the strategy is actually the same: to obscure the text. Insofar as the title allows synonymic substitution for a text with complex literal arrangements, it is subject to Mallarmé's accusation: it speaks too loudly, it completely obliterates the text.

E. Subversion of the Title

To illuminate the text is therefore to subvert the title. But as we know, dissimulation is always a double operation: on the one hand, dissimulation; on the other, dissimulation of this dissimulation. I hide a given object, but I also hide the gesture of hiding it. In the same way, the title hides the text by a reduction concealing that which is not summarized. But it hides this discord and concealment by the conspicuous accord of synonymic convention. For the text to subvert the title, the text must bring to light the hidden conflict which victimizes it. It must also establish a counterattack in this conflict. In short, the text must revolt against its title.

But how can the text turn against its title? We can give some indication from another area. We have assumed that literal arrangement can produce major semantic effects. These are of two kinds: some reinforce the direct statement; others differentiate themselves from it, and even oppose it. We can predict that the dominant ideology always favors the first kind. It is the insipid domain of the expressive, to which so many basically mediocre academic stylistic studies are dedicated. The second kind belongs to the domain that would formerly be called the ironic. For example, we are aware of the heavy-handed academic insistence on expressive alliteration where the literal arrangement intensifies the sound evoked by the statement itself, such as "*pour qui Sont Ces Serpents qui Sifflent Sur vos Têtes*" and "*et fait Râler d'hoRReuR les agRes effaRés*"; but we are also aware of the persistent attention accorded to a perfect ironic disjunction such as "*Un jour, sur ses longs pieds, allait, je ne sais ou, le héron au long bec emmanché d'un long cou.*" In this phrase, one of the most remarkable series of short terms offered by French literature is assembled in connection with a statement repeating the idea of

length several times. It is true that, out of respect for a supposed 'spirit of the text', some readers do not hesitate to mask the nature of the works by clumsily prolonging some of the syllables. If established thought emphasizes these two textual phenomena so unequally it is because, at least on this first level, they involve opposing functions. Expressive literality reinforces the semantic unity of the text; ironic literality intensifies its diversity.

Insofar as the title is a monoid, synonymic convention requires, if not simple monosemic unity, at least the complex unity of a hierarchized semantic system. In short, synonymic agreement between the text and the title can be read in two ways. From the text to the title, the text is considered to be reducible, it can be summarized. From the title to the text, the title is considered to be extensible; it can be paraphrased. We can thus see more clearly the effect that the text can have on the title. If the title tends to unify the text, the text tends to diversify the title, to 'explode' it by subjecting it to a multiplicity of definitions.

F. Subversion Procedures

The text can achieve this multiplication of the title by playing on similarity (+) or its opposite (−). (Fig. 2) Since the most convenient way to abolish the text is to insist on its referential dimension, oriented to 'life itself' we can predict that this dimension must be adequately designated by the tyrannical title. (a) In most

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Similitude</th><th colspan="2">Dimensions</th></tr>
<tr><th>Literal</th><th>Referential</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">+</td><td rowspan="3">b</td><td>a</td></tr>
<tr><td>c</td></tr>
<tr><td>dd</td></tr>
<tr><td>e</td><td>e</td></tr>
<tr><td>−</td><td>g</td><td>f</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 2

cases this happens; any example would be superfluous here. Conversely, if the title enhances the text by stressing aspects of the literal dimension, it is to its own detriment. (b) Let a poet title a book simply poems, poetry, book of verse, and the conditioned reader feels an incontestable devitalization of the title, immediately and curiously attributed by a common ideological diversionary tactic to a certain modesty of the author.

In other cases (c) the title seems to designate a given major aspect of the referential dimension of the text. But the text insidiously and ingeniously casts doubt on the fundamental character of this aspect. Such tension between title and text occurs, for example, with situations which can be called the title as hyperbole and the title as litotes. With the hyperbolic title, the book promises more about a given subject than it contains. *Salammbô* certainly concerns Salammbô, for example, but the daughter of Hamilcar is less clearly the principal protagonist than the title would seem to indicate. The entire book, on the contrary, tends to diminish her importance relative to the whole, so that, in Flaubert's phrase, "the pedestal is too big for the statue." In *Madame Bovary*, Madame Bovary is obviously going to be the principal character. But in the delightful beginning of the novel, using a kind of narrative anacoluthon, Flaubert first takes pleasure in creating doubts in the reader's mind. A childhood is narrated at first, but it is not Emma's, it is Charbovari's. And this conspicuous narrator, who is given the authority of a thundering opening "we," is not Emma either. We have just undertaken to practice what we preach; despite the promise of the subtitle of this study, we have not yet dealt with any work by Robbe-Grillet in the numerous pages of this text so far. With the title as *litotes*, the book contains more than it promises. Erasers are undoubtedly involved in *The Erasers*, but in fact, as we know, Robbe-Grillet constructs a completely different story.

As we have seen, the text can also produce diversity in the title by offering several possible definitions for it (dd), in short, by branding it as polysemic. If the title is a machine for effacing its text, the text is in return a machine for reading its title. In *Jealousy*, we find the emotion of jealousy, if only in the paradoxical guise of an intensity which is always implicit. We also find, at an important location, that louvred blind called a jalousie. Furthermore the other side of the title can designate an aspect of the literal dimension of the text. (e) *The Erasers* thus also calls attention to the general plan of the book by which twenty-four hours are 'erased' through the partially textual repetition of the prologue in the epilogue. In Claude Simon's *Battle of Pharsalia*, an obvious anagram makes it easy to recognize an aspect of the text's function: the battle of the phrase. The designation of the literal dimension does not have to take second place to the designation of the referential dimension: *Les chants de maldoror, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, Manuscript Found at Saragossa.*

With *Jealousy* and *The Battle of Pharsalia*, the phenomenon is clear. The title is implicitly divided: blind passion and window blind, Pharsale and phrasing. With the *litotes* of *Erasers*, the tacit side of the title could take the form of a

subtitle: attempt to compose an ironic story based on *Oedipus Rex*. With Simon's *La route des Flandres*, we know that a subtitle was nearly written: fragmentary description of a disaster. With *The Wind*, by the same author, the split had already become explicit: attempt to reconstruct (restore) a baroque retable.

The subtitle therefore willingly plays a contradictory role; it emphasizes the aspect of the text that has eluded the title (e/e). If the subtitle reinforces the referential dimension (erasers, road, wind), the subtitle (implicit, unpublished or explicit) stresses a literal aspect (composition, description, reconstruction). We should therefore not be surprised to find a title which accentuates its opposition to itself by presenting a double chiasmus: my own *Les lieux-dits*, (on the one hand, referential dimension, on the other, topos-logos connection), *Little Guide to a Trip* (logos-topos connection) *in the book* (literal dimension). The subtitle, therefore, splits the unity of the title. This unity is protected, however, by the hierarchy which maintains one under the other, in a subordinate role. Balancing two antagonistic titles seems to have been the objective of a book with two different titles, such as my *La prise/prose de Constantinople*. The title on the front cover, *La prise de Constantinople*, indicates the referential dimension, which is itself subdivided by the text into multiple implicit occurrences: the taking of the constellation, the awakening of consciousness, the taking of the cunt. This title is balanced against a metagrammatical title on the back cover indicating the literal dimension: *La prose de Constantinople*, Byzantine text.

These procedures aim to shatter the title; in fact, they barely succeed in creating decisive fragmentation. In the first series, the diversification elicited by the text leads to the construction of the title's semantic field, occasionally enlarged to the point of unseemly punning. Diversity is still subsumed by unity. Finally, this kind of title maintains an even more successful agreement with the text: the title becomes the ultra-name of the text. In the second series the multiplication of the title is real. However, as we have noted, it tends to be reduced by hierarchization: in the case of subtitles, one of the titles remains subordinate to the other, while in the more difficult case of paired titles, one of the titles imposes itself upon the other. As the writer of the *Prose of Constantinople* speaking of his own work, I can say that I've not usually been very careful about employing the two titles alternately.

This suspicious use of excess is not the only way to subvert the title. Absence is another easily conceived method. Subversion by excess is essentially based on traditional metaphor; it weaves a multiple relationship of similarity between text and title. Subversion by absence, on the other hand, is based on the surrealist metaphor and it establishes a relationship of difference between the title and the text. This relationship can involve the referential dimension. For example, Boris Vian's *Autumn in Peking* takes place neither in autumn nor in Peking. The literal dimension may also be affected. *Les poésies* of Isidore Ducasse hardly correspond to what is commonly called poetry. The title becomes the anti-name of the text.

Of course, this metaphorical alternative is not the only one. To avoid it, a

part of the text can be used as the title, for example. But whether a central, initial (*incipit*) or terminal (*excipit*) quotation is chosen, this solution recalls one of the cases already considered: euphemism, not through a *litotes*, but by a synedoche. If we purely and simply want to abolish the title, a replacement formula would soon be presented, most often the incipit itself, leading back again to the preceding events.

Emptying the space of the title means offering up that space for the prompt return of a title in full. A final temptation is then strong: to permit this space to be occupied in some way by a void, that of a pure numerical order. One, or two, or three, or four would thus be used from one work to another, one per book. But passing from the full unity designated by name to the empty unity designated by number, one escapes Charybdis and falls into Scylla. As we have seen, the fullness of unity can undergo a certain elaboration: difficult fragmentary creation of equivocal multivalence. But the void of unity is out of reach. It would therefore appear for the moment as if immense ideological forces were opposed to the break between the text and its name. The work of diversification can only be spread clandestinely: under the mask, the assurance, the impression of unity.

II. DUPLICATIONS

The first title of *Snapshots* aggressively assumes this unifying role.* "Three Reflected Visions" does not subsume the diversity of only one underlying text, but unifies three separate texts under that title: "The Dressmaker's Dummy," "The Replacement," and "The Wrong Direction."

A. Paradoxical Duplication

But actually it does too much. If this title excessively obeys the directives of dominant ideology, it does so, paradoxically, the better to violate them. We must remember that from this point of view there are two duplications: the desirable one which associates text and title, and the detestable one which joins text to another text. In this case, the overall title groups three permissible duplications: those linking the title to each of the three texts. It thereby assimilates the three texts, producing three illegitimate duplications: those which join the three different texts two by two. Once again, but in another way, it is the function of a procedure in a particular text rather than the procedure itself, which can be judged ideologically. The better the orthodox similarity between the main title and the three texts is assured, the more the heretical similarity of the three texts among each other will be strengthened.

Moreover, this function itself can only be judged in relation to others which

* In all the passages that follow, the page references are to: Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Snapshots*, tr. Bruce Morrissette, New York, Grove Press, 1968.

can interject it into an opposite system. We thus find the word 'vision' in the main title. We have shown elsewhere that description tends to produce an effect that can be called infinite parenthetical division.[2] This results in a written explosion of the object, which can be made perceptible through a generally concealed paradox: the more the object is described, the less visible it is made. To realize this, we only have to turn to the immense versified descriptions of Roussel.[3] Here the use of the idea of vision is a basic obscuring process. The perceived object—which is unitary—is highly favored by the referential so as to conceal more effectively the written object, which is 'exploded'. Roussel does this for the inattentive reader, by titling his descriptions *La vue*; Robbe-Grillet does this for the very attentive reader, by titling his descriptions *Visions*. But the obscurantist role of vision relative to description is well integrated into the subversive process discussed above. Since the dissimulation occurs equally in each text—each one is a description, each one is called vision—assembling the three ideological concealments participates in assimilating the three texts. This assimilation is opposed to other rules of the same ideology.

B. Referential Duplications

Nevertheless, since reflected visions are involved, the ideological conformity of the three texts to the main title leads in fact to a double counter-ideological action. On the one hand, as Roussel would say, it composes a single subject out of related elements. As we have seen, it tends to that which should remain separate, by stressing the duplication of the three different texts. On the other hand, as Hugo would say, it cuts unity in two. As we shall see, it tends to separate that which should remain unified by producing division in each text.

There are two ways of breaking the internal unity of the text. One operates by diversification; its agent is difference, its effect is disjunction. But if this internal diversity remains contained by the unity of the text, as happens, it continues to be reducible. It is at the mercy of an obscurantist counter-attack which makes the text as a whole appear to duplicate the diverse abundance of 'life itself'. The other way uses division: its agent is similarity, its effect is subdivision. Since it remains contained by the unity of the text, this internal split is irreducible. It escapes from all obscurantist counter-attacks, because the unrealistic excess of accumulated resemblances prevents the text from passing for a duplication of 'life itself'.

We believe that in the 'visions', reflection (calculation) multiplies many types of reflections (duplications, divisions) which can call unity into question by the constant action of new splits. A rapid reading is promising and disappointing in this connection. It is promising because the first text contains mirrors, and the third a reflecting pool:

2. *The New Novel*, Paris, Seuil, 1973.
3. "Roussellian Activity," in *For a Theory of a New Novel.*

> Behind the table the space above the mantel holds a large rectangular mirror in which may be seen half of the window (the right half) and, on the left (that is, on the right side of the window), the reflection of the wardrobe with its mirror front. (p. 4)

> The hatching of the sun's rays over the surface of the mirror cuts through the picture with brighter lines, equally spaced and perpendicular to the reflected tree trunks; (p. 14)

It is disappointing because the second contains no reflective surface. On further reflection it is clear that the promise is disturbing and the disappointment reassuring. Actually, the mirrors are too highly polished to be honest. They easily increase the possibilities of similarity, but at a high price: by justifying them from the point of view of 'real life', which has so much difficulty accounting for the multiplicity of resemblance. With optical mirrors, the prohibited similarity—which splits the unity of the text—tends to be taken over by the permissible similarity—which tends to make the text duplicate the unity of life itself. Far from being a disappointment then, the lack of a mirror in the second text is the promise of less dangerously conspicuous divisions, which might have been overlooked. However, the absence of a mirror could have functioned equally as indicator in any one of the three texts. We must therefore understand why this task has fallen to the second text.

But first, limiting ourselves for the moment to the first and third texts, we find many similarities. To begin with, the title of the first is sufficiently explicit. "The Dressmaker's Dummy" is a substitute image of the body. The work thus offers images in the second degree: the reflection (in the mirror) of a reflection (the dummy); or again, the reflection (in shadow on the coffee-pot) of a reflection (the dummy). There are also images in the third degree: the reflection (in the mirror) of the reflection (in the wardrobe mirror) of a reflection (the dummy).

> In the spherical surface of the coffeepot is a shiny, distorted reflection of the window, a sort of four-sided figure whose sides form the arcs of a circle. The line of the wooden uprights between the two window sections widens abruptly at the bottom into a vague spot. This is, no doubt, the shadow of the dressmaker's dummy. (p. 5)

> In the mirror above the mantel may be seen two other dressmaker's dummies: one in front of the first window section, the narrowest, at the far left, and the other in front of the third section (the one farthest to the right. (p. 4)

Moreover, the source of the reflections, "the mirrored wardrobe had been placed in its position to help with the fittings" (p. 5), which are operations producing approximate images of clothes to come, themselves images of the body.

Or again, the squares of the waxy oilcloth on the round table reflect the brilliant sphere of the coffeepot on the ceramic square:

> It is a four-legged round table, covered with a waxy oilcloth patterned in red and gray squares . . . In the center, a square ceramic tile serves as a protective base; its design is entirely hidden, or at least made unrecognizable, by the coffeepot placed upon it . . . It consists of a sphere . . . very light, smooth brown, and shiny. (p. 3)

Along the same lines, dead leaves at the bottom of the pond echo leaves which have disappeared from the top of the trees, as shown by their curious junction with the reflection of the branches in the water:

> Within a hand's grasp, close to the south edge of the pond, the reflected branches join with old, submerged leaves, reddish but still whole . . . (p. 14)

Nevertheless, there are fewer clandestine reflections in the referential dimension within this third text than in the first. This too deserves explanation.

C. Literal Duplications through Similarity

The reflection in these two texts thus extends far beyond simple optical conditions. Now we must watch closely. This excess is no chance event. It forms the fourth stage in a process of creating resemblances which tends to become systematic. First phase: similarity in the main title, marked by the phrase "reflected visions." Second phase: similarity between the main title and the texts. Third phase: these two similarities give rise to similarities in the two works through optical reflections. Fourth phase: from optical similarities we pass, by similarity, to subtle similarity. From which a fifth phase results: similarity of the subtitles to the texts. And a sixth: similarity of the main title to the subtitles.

As we can see, this process, with its duplications and divisions, is confined to a single sphere, the referential dimension of the work. But its systematic character impels us to scrutinize the literal dimension. As well, we must ask whether there is a relationship of similarity between the literal and referential dimensions which produces literal reflections.

Literal reflections can be produced in two ways: either by similarity or by position. Obviously, the two effects are additive. So much so that, between the minimum and the maximum, different instances obey the formula $M = S + P/2$, which can be represented by means of an elementary diagram:

Literal similarity has an immense number of spheres. It can involve the numerical; in this instance, a quantitative correspondence connects the main title with the three texts it subsumes. The three words which form the main title are arranged in a calculated syllabic order: *Trois* (one) *visions* (two) *réfléchies* (three).

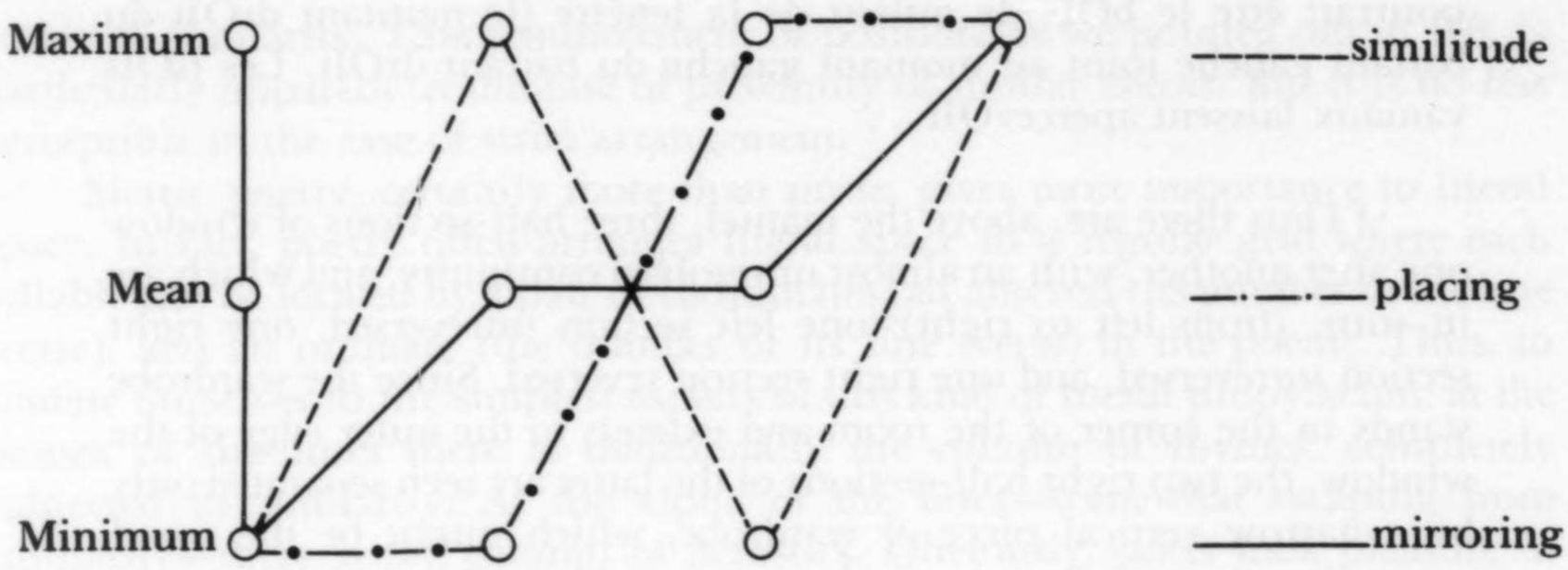


Figure 3

Of course the extension of the system demands that this literal reduplication be accompanied by literal duplications. Several literal similarities can be found in the body of the texts, often reinforced by the proximity of their positions. In paragraph four of "The Dressmaker's Dummy," on the pretext of supplementary details, there is an exact and apparently redundant repetition of the vocabulary used in the preceeding lines:

> The coffeepot is on the table. It is a four-legged round table, covered with a waxy oilcloth . . . In the center, a square ceramic tile serves as a protective base; its design is entirely hidden, or at least made unrecognizable by the coffeepot placed upon it . . . There is nothing on the table except the waxy tablecloth, the ceramic base, and the coffeepot. (p. 3)

Or again, in paragraph seven, we find the hilarious profusion of the same terms, without the slightest attempt at synonymy. Moreover, on the word-by-word level, the phenomenon is reinforced by a syllabic similarity: *miroir* (mirror), *aperçoit* (perceives), *voit* (sees), *fois* (time), *endroit* (place).

This eruption of sound may perhaps be considered both arbitrary and fortuitous. We must therefore notice that the syllable OI is common to two major aspects of the functioning of the whole (the *trOIs* of the triade; the *mirOIr* of the reflection). It also undeniably bursts forth in the following paragraph:

> Il y a ainsi au-dessus de la cheminée trOIs mOItiés de fenêtre qui se succèdent presque sans solution de continuité, et qui sont respectivement (de gauche à drOIte): une mOItié gauche à l'endrOIt, une mOItié drOIte à l'endrOIt. Comme l'armOIre est juste dans l'angle de la pièce et s'avance jusqu'au bord de la fenêtre, les deux mOItiés de celle-ci se trouvent seulement séparées par un étrOIt montant d'armOIre qui

pourrait être le bOIs de milieu de la fenêtre (le montant drOIt du battant gauche joint au montant gauche du battant drOIt. Les trOIs vantaux laissent apercevOIr. . .

> [Thus there are, above the mantel, three half-sections of window one after another, with an almost unresolved continuity, and which are in turn, (from left to right): one left section unreversed, one right section unreversed, and one right section reversed. Since the wardrobe stands in the corner of the room and extends to the outer edge of the window, the two right half-sections of the latter are seen separated only by a narrow vertical piece of wardrobe, which might be the wood separating the two French window section (the right upright edge of the left side joined to the left edge of the right side). The three window sections . . . give a view. . . .] (p. 4)

As we noted in IIB, the referential similarity in "The Wrong Direction" is relatively unobtrusive. This is equally the case at the literal level. Once again, the absence of any quest for synonymy produces the insistent repetition of certain terms. But they are scattered and less aggressive. However, we must stress the active presence of a vocabulary utilizing the same OI:

> Le sol est nOIr . . . les troncs hauts et drOIts . . . par endrOIts . . . d'étrOItes bandes lumineuses . . . dans l'eau nOIre . . . tout le mirOIr . . . comme vOIlée par l'éclairage . . . sur la drOIte . . . il dOIt faire un pas . . . il aperçOIt alors . . . les arbres qu'il a devant sOI . . . ou bien s'aperçOIt-il . . . à travers bOIs . . . les fûts drOIts et lisses . . . l'image tronçonnée des colonnes, inverse et nOIre.
>
> [The earth is black . . . the trunks high and straight . . . in this part . . . narrow luminous bands . . . in the black water . . . the surface of the mirror . . . as if . . . veiled by intense lighting . . . on the right . . . he has to step . . . he then perceives . . . the tree directly in front of him . . . or does he, only now, observe . . . through the woods . . . the straight, smooth tree trunks . . . the sectioned reflections of the columns, upside down and black . . .]

D. Literal Duplications by Adjustment of Positions

The above-mentioned formula which makes reflection an equal function of similarity and position is acceptable only in theory. In practice, the effectiveness of position is less clear. This is because, insofar as it accentuates the materiality of the text, literal space is obliterated by dominant ideology—producing undeniable blindness in the reader. Literal position is primarily viewed as contributing to the

action of similarity. This reinforcement of position, as we pointed out in IIB, is particularly apparent in the case of proximity of similar events. But it is no less perceptible in the case of strict arrangement.

Metric poetry, certainly more than prose, gives most importance to literal space. In fact, poetry often arranges literal space in a regular grid where each syllable can be located by a pair of coordinates: an abscissa (its number in the line (verse), and an ordinate (the number of its line (verse) in the poem). Thus, to confine ourselves to the simplest aspects of this kind of literal propylaeum, at the omega of the lines there is traditionally the column of rhymes; completely subjected to similarity. At the alpha of the lines—somewhat escaping from similarity—there is the column of acrostics. Obviously, poets took pleasure in innumerable refinements. For example, Baudelaire makes the beginning of *Harmonie du soir* correspond to the end by term-for-term similarities placed exactly in syllables three and four of the first and last lines. Rimbaud likewise makes the beginning and end of *Le dormeur du val* correspond by a chiasma placed in the third and fourth syllables of the first and last lines. (Fig. 4)

Verse \ Syllables	3/4	3/4
First	Voici VENIR les temps	C'est un TROU DE verdure
Last	Ton souVENIR en moi	Il a DEUX TROUS rouges

Figure 4

These elementary observations of literal topology can be explained in two ways. First of all, the arrangement of the Baudelarian pantoum, this final "*souvenir*" incarnating the preceding waltz of dispersed elements, is the installation of the schema obtained by the phonetico-semantic analysis of the word "*souvenir*": that which comes under. According to the theory of literary creation outlined elsewhere,[4] we would say that "*souvenir*" is a generator-organizer of the text. We may note in passing that the same system is seen in the other poem: the arrangement of the Rimbaud sonnet, this final death following so much presumed life, lays out the schema obtained from the phonetic-semantic analysis of the word "*dor-meur*"—he who sleeps, he who is dead. From the crossed correspondence *trou de/deux trous*, we understand why the young soldier has "*deux troux rouges au cote droit*," and not one, or three, or five, or six or seven, or eight, nine or ten, *etc.* as the meter would allow.

If the capacities of this ordered literal space are specific to a certain form of

4. See, for example "The Battle of the Phrase," in *For a Theory of a New Novel*," and "Birth of a Fiction," in *The New Novel: Yesterday, Today* 10/18, Vol. 2.

poetry, writing in general has several other characteristics. It is rare that prose flows in an unceasing stream. Most often it is divided into fragments, separated either by varied punctuation (groups of words, clauses of sentences, sentences) or by different intervals (paragraphing, chapters, sections, the whole of the text). The simplest spatial relationships in this fragmented domain obviously involve the extreme ends. The *incipit* and *excipit* of each fragment, the totality of *incipits*, the totality of *excipits*, *etc.* can thus be associated.

Among many other works instructive in different ways in this connection are, as we know, *Finnegans Wake* and *Remembrance of Things Past. La prose de Constantinople* and *The Battle of Pharsalia* are more recent examples. A reading of "The Dressmaker's Dummy" from the same perspective is fruitful. The text opens with the words "the coffeepot" and ends with the words "the coffeepot."

> The coffeepot is on the table . . . But for the moment it cannot be made out because of the coffeepot.

Through the symmetrical positioning of a similarity obtained by the ordinal inversion of two identical words, maximum literal reflection is thus created over the entire surface of the text. Moreover, going from the over-all picture to details, we notice a similar phenomenon in the first two paragraphs, in a combined play of means and extremes which corresponds in some way to enclosed rhymes (abba). One of the first words of the first paragraph returns as one of the last words of the second; one of the last words of the first paragraph is one of the first words of the second:

> The *coffeepot* is on the *table*. It is a four-legged round *table*, covered with a waxy oilcloth . . . or at least made unrecognizable, by the *coffeepot* placed upon it. (p. 3)

Certain readers, their scepticism sustained by dominant ideology, might ask for a profusion of examples at this point. We will offer two more, since they concern another type of unity. We have noted that fragments of the text can be sentences (separated by periods) or clauses of sentences (separated by semicolons). One sentence in the third paragraph, showing an elaborate play of similarity and symmetry, offers a statement worthy of Lichtenberg. Again, one of the first words of the first clause becomes one of the last words of the second clause, and one of the last words of the first clause becomes one of the first of the second:

> The *handle* has, perhaps, the shape of an ear, or rather of the outer fold of an *ear*; but it would be a misshapen *ear*, too circular and lacking a lobe, which would thus resemble a "pitcher *handle*." (p. 3)

In the sixth paragraph, the *excipit* of the first sentence is repeated by the *incipit* of the next one in reverse order following the order of the text, but in direct order on the basis of symmetry.

> Behind the table, the space above the mantel holds a large rectangular mirror in which may be seen . . . the reflection of the *mirrored wardrobe*. In the *wardrobe mirror* the window may again be seen . . .

The first two paragraphs and the sentences of the third and sixth on the one hand, are linked by a similarity with the text in its entirety, on the other hand. Or, to put it another way, the former reflects the latter on a smaller scale in what we can, at least provisionally call a literal instance of 'infinite visual regress'.

We can predict that in *The Wrong Direction* we can find phenomena of the same order, but less elaborate and more diffuse. Both the beginning and the end of the text thus contain the same idea of water with something missing: "*Les eaux . . . sans profondeur,*" of the beginning corresponding to "*les eaux . . . sans rides*" of the end.

> The rain*water* has accumulated in the hollow of a shallow (*sans profondeur*) depression, forming a wide pond . . . Opposite, the straight, smooth tree trunks are still reflected in the unwrinkled (*sans rides*) *water*, perpendicular to the rays of the sunset. Deep in the shadowed zones shine the sectioned reflections of the columns, upside down and black, washed miraculously clean.

In the same way, the beginning and end of the first paragraph contain similarities that are less obtrusive. The sky, by which it ends, can already be clandestinely read in the "rainwater" by which it begins.

> The rain*water* has accumulated . . . the bare branches stand out sharply against the *sky*.

E. The Cross of Auto-Representation

Since similarity leads to impressions of representation, two kinds are possible. With reduplication, the text tends to represent something else besides itself. With duplication, the text tends towards auto-representation. Insofar as fiction has both a literal and referential dimension, there are four principal types of auto-representation. If L and L1, and R and R1 respectively correspond to two passages considered both on the literal and referential level, we can easily design a figure which we shall call the cross of auto-representation. (Fig. 5)

With vertical, descending auto-representation, certain aspects of the literal dimension of the work are modeled on certain characteristics of the referential

dimension; the writing is subordinate to the story. It is the area of the expressive. We presented examples of this in IE with expressive alliteration. Seen from this point of view, in the beginning of *The Heron,* La Fontaine clearly thwarts this internal representation by countering it with a systematic opposite rather than by ignoring it through random disorder. The ironic effect is in this case more exactly the outcome of expressive anti-auto-representation.

With vertical, ascending auto-representation, certain aspects of the referential dimension are modeled on certain characteristics of the literal dimension; the story is subordinate to the writing. This category is in the area of the 'productive'. We have noted elsewhere how the referential dimension of Rimbaud's poem conformed to an aspect of the literal dimension of the title.[5]

With horizontal, referential auto-representation, certain aspects of the referential dimension of the work serve as a model for a more or less important part of the rest; the story imitates the story. This is another region of the 'productive'. In IIB we pointed out many examples of literal duplications; elsewhere we studied certain problems of the referential 'infinite regress'.[6]

With horizontal, literal auto-representation, certain aspects of the literal dimension of the work serve as a model for a more or less important part of the rest: writing imitates writing. This also belongs to the 'productive'. Several instances of literal duplications were indicated in IIC. We have considered the problem on the syntactic and lexical level elsewhere.[7]

The question of orientation remains. Distinguishing between literal and referential auto-representation is no problem since they involve different spheres. But distinguishing between ascending and descending auto-representation sometimes poses thorny problems insofar as they involve the same sphere. The criterion for separation is clear: the represented aspect controls the other. For example, the shower of Rs in *Les pauvres gens* and the repetition of S in *Andromaque* suddenly appear as a result of closely ordered referential sequences. These are cases of expressive alliteration. But let us imagine strictly ordered literal sequences presenting successively, one by one, in alphabetical order for example, groups of R, S, T, U, *etc.* The referential sequence where rolls of thunder, serpents hissing, drums thundering, demiurges roaring, succeed each other is obviously arranged in terms of the literal dimension. This would be an instance of productive alliterations. Or again, in *Le dormeur du val, dormeur* is not used because of the referential sequence of slumber transformed into death, but rather the reverse.

Orientation can be debatable, however, even indeterminable. In IIB,C, we

5. In *Problems of the New Novel* (particularly pp. 12–15, 54–55, 68, 82, 140, 150, 157, 190, 201–207), and *For a Theory of a New Novel* (particularly pp. 37, 56–58, 67, 102–109, 155–156, 158, 228). Among recent useful publications is "*Étymologie et Éthymologia*," by Pierre Guiraud in *Poétique*, no. 11.

6. "Story within a Story," in *Problems of the New Novel*; and "The Regressive Tale (*Le Récit abyme*)," in *The New Novel.*

7. Syntactical domain: "The Derived Enigma," in *For a Theory of a New Novel*; lexical domain: "The Battle of the Phrase," in the same book and "Elements of a Theory of Generators," in the collective work *Art and Science: On Creativity*, UGE 10/18, 1972.

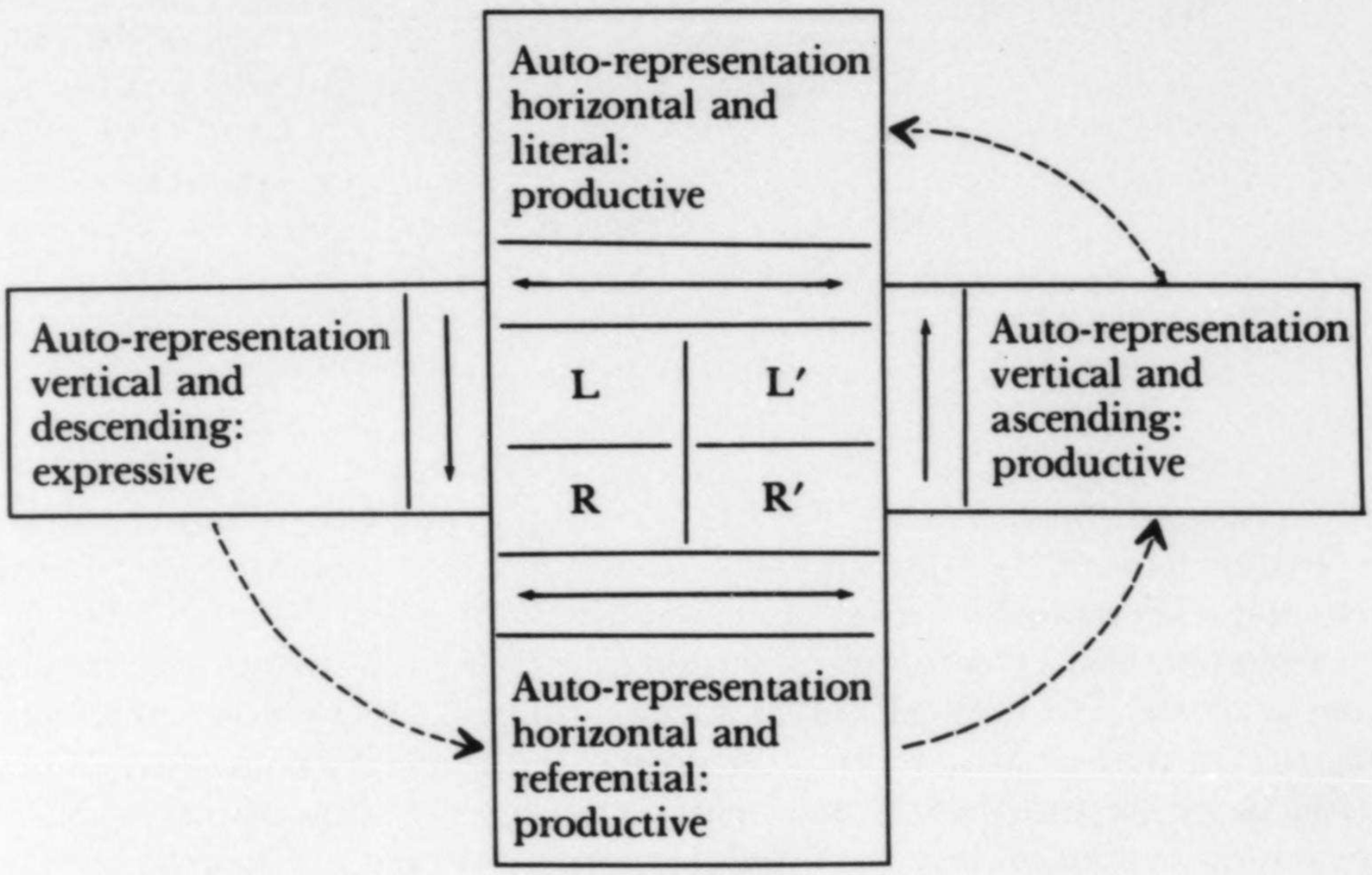


Figure 5

pointed out referential and literal similarity in "The Dressmaker's Dummy" and "The Wrong Direction." The result was similarity between the two dimensions. Which one, then represents the other? Nothing in the texts themselves gives evidence of one dominant orientation; the principle of similarity seems to be equally divided between both of the works' dimensions. The choice of one orientation rather than another will therefore be strictly ideological. Those who think in terms of expression will emphasize the impact of the referential dimension, while those who think in terms of production will stress that of the literal dimension. The situation is in fact more serious. The auto-representative orientation can be unbalanced by two mechanisms; one is conditioned reading, the other, the rhetoric of the *exposé*. We have presented this problem in a traditional manner—first the referential dimension (IIB), then, on that basis going on to the literal dimension (IIC). Because of this mode of presentation we fallaciously reinforced the impact of the first to the detriment of the second. There is no neutral study of the text. We choose to begin with one aspect. Supported by this supposedly solid base, the rest will be understood as the set of secondary refinements of an easily excessive subtlety—unless preparation is made for a change of view.

The question of displacement remains. For reasons of simplicity we have presented only horizontal and vertical auto-representations. But we must also take into account certain displaced relationships which induce oblique auto-representations. (Fig. 6) Without bothering with minor details, we will point out

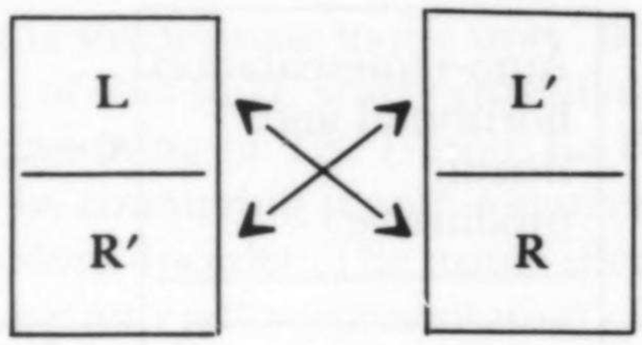


Figure 6

the four instances: anticipatory (R1–L1) or retrospective (R–L) oblique expressive auto-representations and anticipatory (L–R) and retrospective ('–R') oblique productive auto-representations.

We must also consider the question of ideological reaction to the auto-representations. The vertical and horizontal spheres are basically different in nature. The vertical area is inter-dimensional; the unity of the text, though heterogeneous, is disturbed by the internal cleavage of the two dimensions. The vertical duplications of the text should therefore more precisely be called internal reduplications. The horizontal domain is intra-dimensional; the unity of the text, at every level, remains homogeneous. The horizontal duplications are therefore, in fact, partial duplications.

Contrary to what might perhaps be expected, ideological reaction to auto-representations does not conform to this important sub-category. The most favored will obviously be those in which the referential dimension dominates, the least acceptable will be those in which the literal dimension dominates. Expressive auto-representation is admired most, then the descending order of appreciation follows the trajectory of the dotted arrows in Figure 5, where, as we see, the two preceding spheres are in alternation. The dominant ideology favors a triple reduplication. The text must reduplicate the world; the referential dimension is to the literal dimension as the world is to the text and therefore, finally, the literal dimension must reduplicate the referential dimension. Because of this central proportion, the term expressive is sometimes used to indicate correspondence between what is to be said and the text which says it, and sometimes between what is said and the manner of saying it. We are stagnating in the realm of right-thinking.

Being intra-dimensional, horizontal, referential auto-representation does not call this relationship into question. Its effect is to dispute the similarity between the referential dimension of the work and the referent. Causing an inopportune multiplication of excessive similarities within the referential dimension, it breaks down its possible similarity with the referent accordingly. For a certain realist way of thinking, we are verging on the improbable.

Being inter-dimensional, vertical, productive auto-representation inverts the common sense of the expressive. But, as we have just pointed out, the dominant

ideology uses the system of the three reduplications: two duplications of two terms which are respectively reduplicated by the establishment of a proportion relating the four terms. Caught in this system, the dominant ideology cannot deal with a referential dimension modeled on the literal dimension without being structurally impelled to believe that the world is being modeled on the text. The result is its obscure, tenacious resistance. To a certain kind of realistic way of thinking, we are verging on the impossible. But there is one obvious exception: the mystical solution. The three duplications are inverted by those religions which, in different terms conceive of the world as the effect of a certain power of language ("in the beginning was the word," "all is written"), only invert the three duplications. With realism of expression and representation, the literal dimension must be modeled on the world. With the mystique of creation, the world is modeled on the text, as the referential dimension is modeled on the literal dimension. In the first case the functioning of the text is deduced from a certain relationship between the world and the text. In the second, the relationship between the text and the world is deduced from a certain functioning of the text. In short, a fantasy which confers value upon the writer, who analogically postulates divine creation on the basis of certain capacities of his own work. This is a fantasy which is, by its very success, effaced as such. But the valorization is maintained, or rather returns, by inversion of the basic metaphor; like the divinity, the writer is the Creator of the world. The repetition of the world—as demanded by the doctrine of expression/representation—and the invention of the world—as claimed by the doctrine of creation—are based on the same fundamental proportion. They are two related inversions of the same ideology, the dominant ideology, which avoids consideration of the way in which the world can be transformed by the work of the text.

Although intra-dimensional, horizontal, literal auto-representation paradoxically calls the relationship between the two dimensions into question. Nothing in fact can affect the literal dimension without reflecting back in one way or another on the fictional structure, and in the end affecting its referential dimensions. By multiplying the similarities between different aspects of the literal dimension, horizontal, literal auto-representation establishes incontrovertible connections between fictional elements which could not have such connections on the referential level. To a certain realistic way of thinking, we are verging on the inconceivable.

III. THE SYSTEM

As we have shown, "The Dressmaker's Dummy" and "The Wrong Direction" each contain literal and referential similarities which divide them. Therefore these two texts are placed, with respect to each other, in a relationship of similarity which is conducive to mutual reduplication.

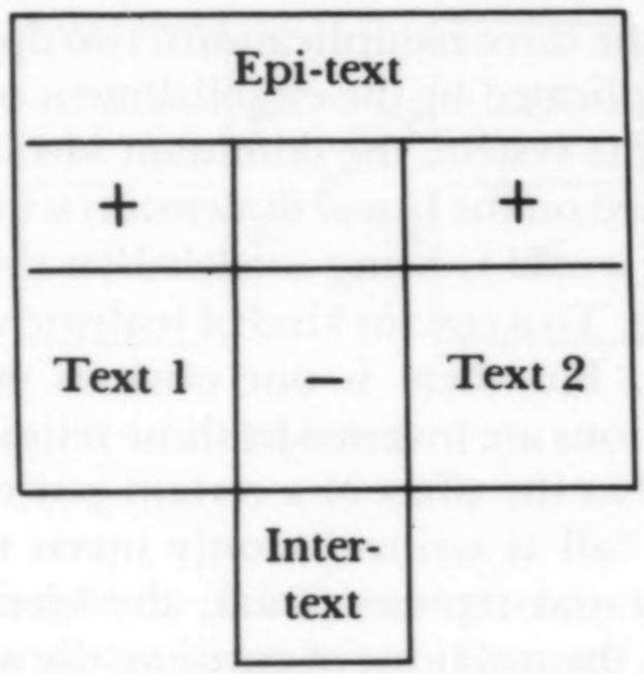


Figure 7

A. Internal Reduplication

The stratification of ideologically contradictory phenomena outlined above (IIA) can thus be confirmed and must now be spelled out. When an overall title is used to subsume the diversity of a collection of separate texts, a contradictory arrangement is of necessity established. Its simplest form is easy to draw. (Fig. 7) On the one hand, there must, under penalty of unlawful reduplication, be a relationship of difference (−) between one text and another. On the other hand, there must, under penalty of unauthorized disagreement, be a relationship of similarity (+) between each text and the overall title.

A system is thus installed which could be called a 'system of disobedient zeal'. This kind of amicable disagreement can take two forms: complete differentiation or generalized assimilation. In the first case, conventional intertextual differentiation is carried to its maximum, to the obvious detriment of the agreement between the texts and the epi-text: the three boxes of the figure are marked by the sign (−). In the second case, the conventional agreement between the texts and the epi-text is carried to the extreme, to the obvious detriment of intertextual differentiation: the three boxes of the figure are marked by the sign (+).

It is clear that this last procedure is at work in our text. The two texts tend to resemble each other. There is an abstract resemblance between them since a second degree is involved: a similarity by similarity, or more exactly, a reduplication of duplications. To strengthen this hypothesis, we must also find concrete similarities of the first degree. There is ample evidence of such similarities, both on the level of descriptive aspects and in the general configuration of the 'narrative' (Fig. 8).

We may note in this connection that "The Dressmaker's Dummy" deals with an 'empty' condition of being lost, unrelated to any directly designated protagonist. This leads to an intensive development of deceptive space, in its referential dimension (a double reflection) as well as in its literal dimension (a concerted

Levels \ Texts	The Dressmaker's Dummy	The Wrong Direction
Descriptive	"Round table" "cylindrical filter" "brown earthenware" "leafless trees" "the rest is (. . .) shiny" "oilcloth patterned in squares" Transparency of the windowpane	"Circular . . . bond" "perfect cylinders" "brownish color" "bare branches" "shine as if varnished" "a checkered appearance" Transparency of the pond
Diegetic	Being lost in a labyrinth Reassuring exit from the labyrinth	Being lost in a labyrinth Reassuring exit from the labyrinth

Figure 8

repetition of sounds and terms). As in *Jealousy*, there is also an 'empty' exit, signaled by indicators, which in this case are comforting:

> The room is quite bright, since the window is unusually wide, even though it only has two sections. A good smell of hot coffee rises from the pot on the table. The dressmaker's dummy is no longer in its accustomed spot: it is normally placed in the corner by the window, opposite the mirrored wardrobe. The wardrobe has been placed in its position to help with the fittings. The design on the ceramic tile base is the picture of an owl, with two large, somewhat frightening eyes. But for the moment, it cannot be made out because of the coffeepot. (p. 5)

In "The Wrong Direction" the condition of being lost is filled. A character arrives at the edge of the shimmering water and stops. This results in a lesser development of a fallacious spatiality, both in its referential dimension (a single reflection) and in its literal dimension (less stress on the same sounds and terms). Likewise there is a 'full' exit, which results in a direct narration of the departure in a neutral tone, free of all emotional indicators:

> This was, then, the end of his walk. Or does he, only now, observe that he has gone in the wrong direction? After a few hesitant glances around, he turns back to the east through the woods, again walking silently, following the path that he had taken to reach this spot. (p. 15)

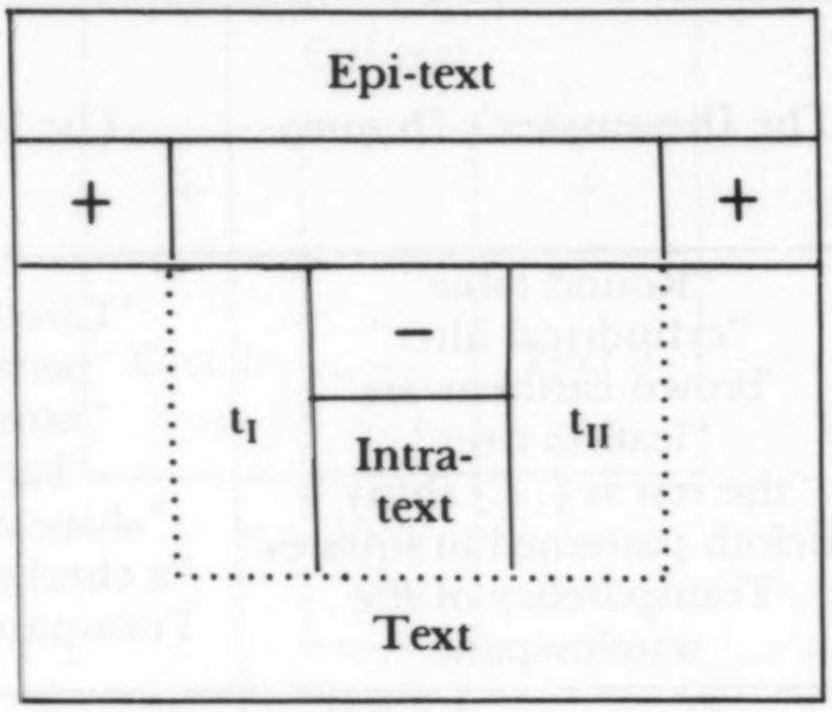


Figure 9

The reduplication of each other by the first and last texts is thus amply confirmed. We should, however, note that, due to a paradox which is generated by the system's structure, the reduplication is internal. It is reduplication since it concerns two separate texts. It is internal since these texts belong to a totality postulated by the general epi-text: the main title.

If the paradox erupts with the collective title, it is relatively contained with the individual title. The problem can in fact be drawn another way. (Fig. 9) It is clear that two sequences (t1 and t2) can maintain relationships of difference with each other, while the text which contains them can be easily subsumed in its entirety by the epi-text—assuming the text and the epi-text maintain a relationship of similarity. As we know, this kind of text conforms to the dominant ideology, since it avoids unacceptable duplication and carries out recommended reduplication. To confine ourselves to the referential dimension, we can predict which arrangements can contest this functioning. (Fig. 10)

In the first instance (10–a), there is multiplication of those sequences having similarity to each other in conformance with the directives supplied by the epi-text to the text as a whole. In a sense, *The Observatory at Cannes* only presents an

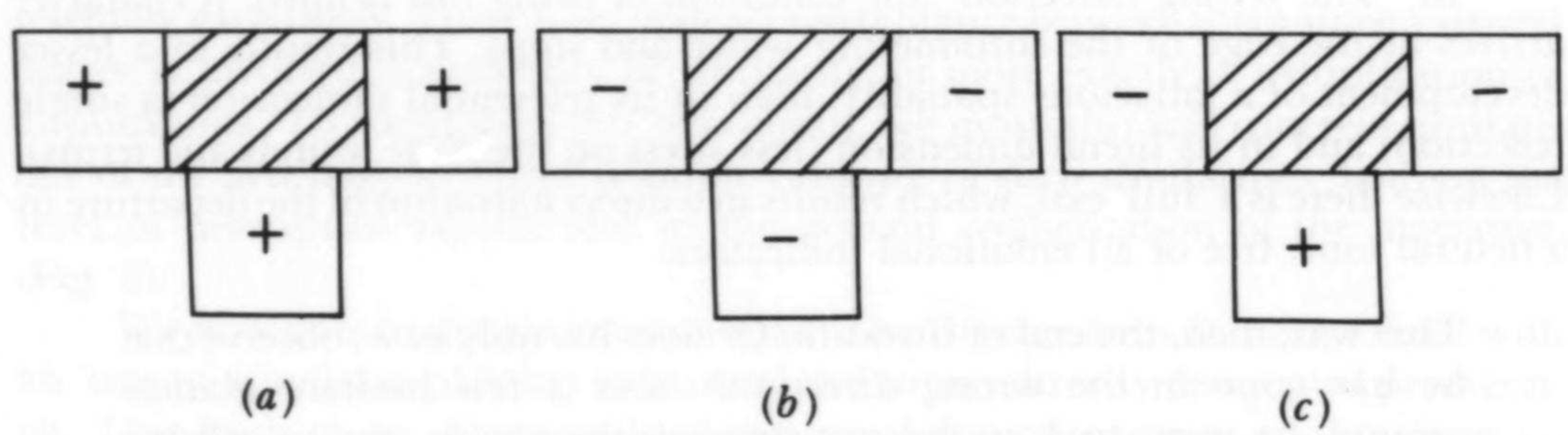


Figure 10

incessant series of varied undressings (women or panoramas). Diversity is reassembled into the unity of the constantly repeated strip-tease, but this unity, as has been noted, immediately divides into reciprocal reflections. *Jealousy* proceeds in this way, but somewhat differently, reflecting a feeling (present and empty) by a utensil (present and full). We have, in short, the sphere mentioned above (IF and Fig. 2, dd).

In the second instance (10–b) there is multiplication of sequences differing from each other within a totality which does not itself conform to the directives offered by the epi-text. This is the case (IF and Fig. 2, f) in Boris Vian's *Autumn in Peking*.

In the last and most daring instance (10–c), there is multiplication of sequences similar to each other, but in which similarity does not conform to the directives supplied by the epi-text to the text as a whole. This would have been the case had we entitled the text of our *The Observatory at Cannes: The Mist of the Thames*.

B. The Structural Mirror

Until now we have considered only the first and last texts, because we first had to lay down the characteristics which could make the function of the central text intelligible. This may now be stated as follows: "The Replacement" plays the role of a structural mirror of the whole. For this to be the case, the text must occupy the symmetrical center of the whole—as indeed it does. The first and last texts must also be reflected in it. A demonstration of the way in which this occurs will be proposed below. Finally, for those who might continue to have doubts, we must add an additional proof.

The referential dimension presents many duplications through similarity. We have seen that "The Replacement" does not use optical reflections, but rather multiplies elaborate similarities. Four such groups can be distinguished: characters, objects, actions, situations. Among the double (or multiple) characters we must first indicate the title character, the replacement. This substitute, like the dummy, is in some way the image of the teacher he replaces. Moreover, he is a teaching assistant (*répétiteur*). The student also forms an image of the teacher in time, and the pupils, in the same way, offer a multiple image of the student. In its way, the white paper puppet represents each one of the characters joined together, and the text being read deals with two brothers. Among the double (or multiple) objects, we must note several plurals which duplicate the similar or the same:

> The same voice . . . that gave each word equal emphasis . . . The other pupils . . . returned to their books . . . The faces remained dutifully leaning over the desks . . . But the bottom panes were of frosted glass . . . on the window panes.

However, it is the area of double actions which is marked by the most obsessive insistence. The actions can in effect be duplicated in time, by repetition:

> After several fruitless efforts . . . he returned to the foot of the tree, where he took up the same position . . . The boy had again paused in his reading . . . the boy began again with the same studious voice . . . The schoolboy peered again at the leaves on the low branches. "As previously stated, *comma*, the two brothers. . ." Searching out (*il retrouva*) the passage in his own book, he read . . . "Start at: 'As previously stated, the two brothers . . .'" . . . The boy resumed the sentence: [this sentence not translated in Morrisette] "As previously stated the two brothers . . ." "Yes, *sir*," the teacher (*le répétiteur*) corrected him "Yes, sir," the boy repeated . . . The boy looked . . . again at the wall . . . The *répétiteur* nodded slightly a couple of times. "Now you will summarize (*résumer*) for us the whole of the reading passage" . . . Despite frequent stops and starts . . . The schoolboy had returned . . . He again stood motionless . . . "We will take up the reading again at the top of the page: 'But Philippe and his followers . . .'" . . . One by one, the faces in the classroom looked up (p. 12) . . . Soon all eyes were again fixed on the white paper cutout of a man.

But the actions can also be duplicated in space, by the multiplication of the collective:

> Most of the pupils were looking up . . . The faces were all lowered silently . . . The other pupils, already raising their eyes . . . immediately returned to their books . . . the two brothers slid down. "For the benefit of your friends who may not have understood" . . . The pupils had all raised their heads and were silently staring . . . The whole class, as one, leaned over the desks . . . But Philippe and his followers were not of this opinion . . . If the majority of the Diet . . . were to renounce in this manner . . . The pupils looked at the teacher, then at the windows . . . Soon all eyes were again fixed on the white paper cutout of a man.

Finally, several double situations are indicated in "The Replacement" by a strategy of ubiquity: the alibi. The alibi aims to give the impression that someone is in one place when in fact he is in another. It tries to make a simple image of oneself pass for oneself—as with the two brothers in the story of the conspiracy of Philippe of Coburg. They are really in the city, "Only they wanted to go elsewhere and make people think they were still there." We have the pupils who pretend to pay attention to the text, but observe the white paper puppet on the wall. We also have the teacher who feigns concentration on the text, but watches the maneuvers of the student.

The literal dimension contains duplications through similarity as well. They are produced by both the repetition of different words and the recurrence of certain sounds. Several words are stressed by the absence of any attempt to use synonyms for them. Throughout the text, for example, the student is always called the student and the *répétiteur* is called the *répétiteur*. We again find the active presence of the OI sound, especially in the first half of the text, with the successive instances of: *fois, droite, fois, croire, voix, soirée, courtoisie, pouvoir, pouvoir, droite, croie, croire, croire, noire, fois, rasseoir, surcroît, voix.*

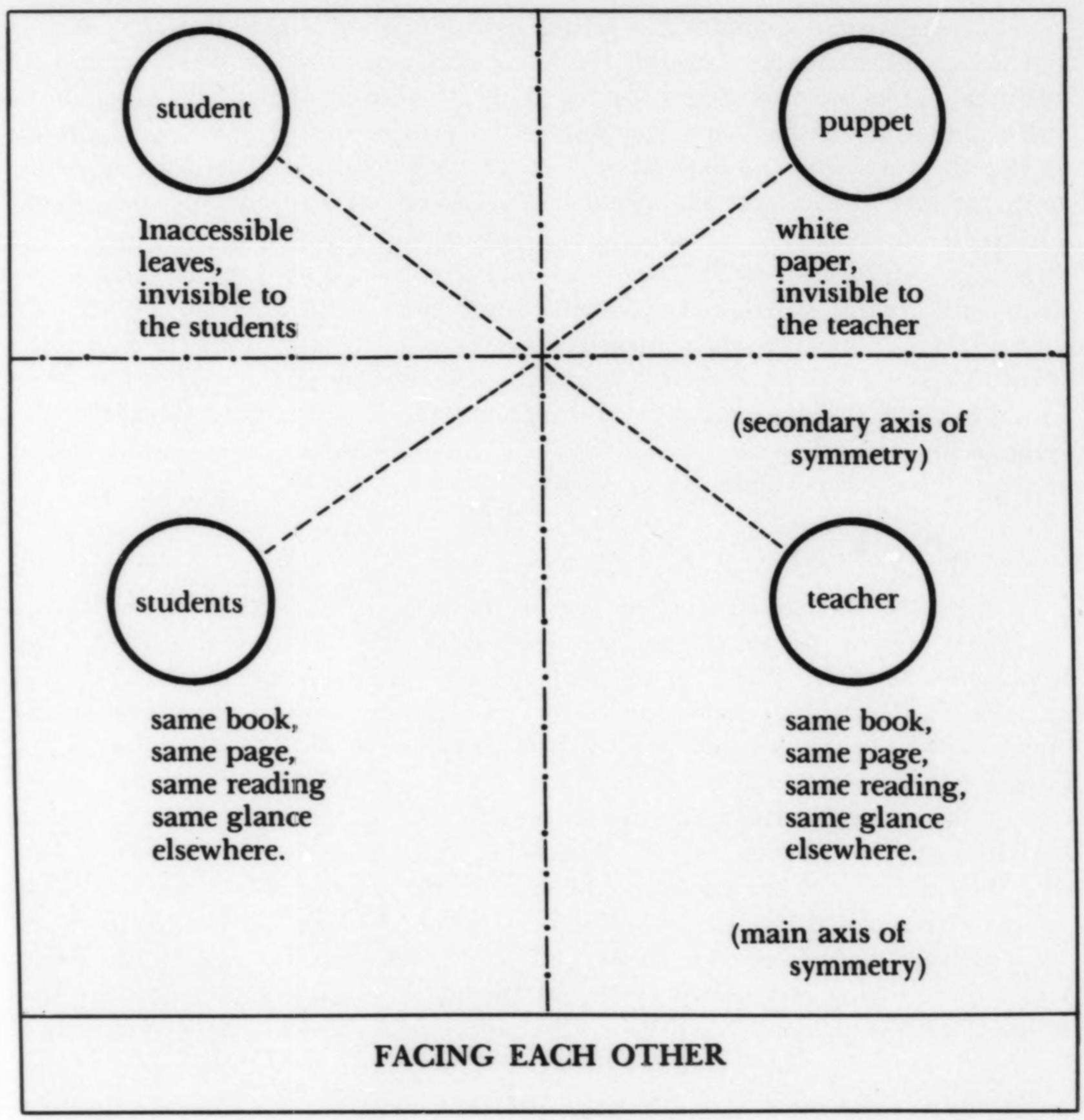


Figure 11

However, at this level, the search for duplications caused by position leads to disappointment. In contrast to the first and last texts, as we have seen (IIB), "The Replacement" does not contain any optical mirrors. In the same way, in contrast to the other texts, it seems that no discernable similarity links its *incipit* and *excipit*. Its first words are "The schoolboy stepped slightly backwards" and the last "Soon all eyes were again fixed on the white paper cutout of a man." But in fact this is due to a defect in reading, caused by failure to recognize the arrangement of the referential dimension of this text on the basis of an exact duplication by position.

Teachers and students are actually caught in a symmetrical face-to-face position which associates similar elements. Both are seated at desks, in front of identical books open to the same page. They are reading the same passage in the same distracted manner, and they raise their eyes identically to observe similar sights: the student at the foot of the tree, the white paper puppet. Linked in the same manner to the same symmetrical system, this student and this puppet are placed in symmetry. As a result, several similarities between them appear. The student stands on tiptoes, the puppet is hung up on the wall; both are only visible diagonally; one tries to touch a virgin (untouched) leaf, the other is made of a virgin leaf (white paper). The entire space is therefore divided along the fold of the vertical axis by a reflection without a mirror. Contrary to the suggestion of an initial reading, then, the *inicpit* and *excipit* of "The Replacement" symmetrically arrange similar and symmetrical elements in the referential dimension: the initial student, the terminal white paper puppet.

C. Chiasmic Compensation

For those who may remain in doubt that the central text plays the role of a structural mirror, we must, as has been said, offer additional proof. "The Replacement" is the mirror in the totality of the system because it lacks optical mirrors itself. All disequilibrium in this totality tends to be restrained by the operation of a universal law, crossed compensation or double inversion, of the form a/B = A/b.

This process is easily discerned in the first and last texts. In "The Dressmaker's Dummy," we saw an 'empty' phenomenon: the absence of a character to go with the condition of being lost in a labyrinth which finally offers a way out. This relative deficiency is compensated for on the literal plane by the profusion of alarming and disturbing repetitions, and on the referential plane, by the abundance of reassuring indications at the end. We saw the same phenomenon in "The Wrong Direction" but in its fullness: a visible person lost in a labyrinth which finally offers a way out. This strong presence is restrained, on the referential plane, by the emotional neutrality of the scene and, on the literal plane, by the less active use of division.

The relative paucity of duplications in the third text can be explained, as we

implied, by the term-for-term relationship of the main title to the three texts. As we noted, the main title contains three works arranged syllabically. The first text, which corresponds to three, and the second, which corresponds to visions, receive the compensation of a profusion of doubles. The third, which corresponds to the idea of the double itself—reflected—is obviously somewhat deprived in this respect.

In the same way, the first and last texts, which do not play the role of structural mirror to the whole, each contain the most convincing reflecting surface: an optical mirror. In contrast the central text, which does play the role of structural mirror, is obviously lacking this. As we have seen, it must be content with a space arranged to mirror without mirrors. This is a typical, although subtle, case of vertical productive auto-representation. The referential dimension of the text, intended for inscription on the system's axis of symmetry has been worked out to offer a reverse representation of this role: a reflection without mirrors. The inverse holds true for the first and last texts. But in fact these three ironic auto-representations participate in a general system of compensation which repeats each inversion in a broader symmetry.

As we can predict, the textual system multiplies these arrangements, undeniably conjoined, by the joint action of the literal and referential dimensions. Without venturing an exhaustive analysis, we can nevertheless point out three very distinct examples. (Fig. 11) At the beginning of the central text there is a stress on silence. "The schoolboy had again paused in his reading . . . After a silence . . . The monotonous voice stopped abruptly, in the middle of the sentence," *etc.* The final text also contains an allusion to silence: "He turns back to the east through the woods, again (walking) silently." Conversely, towards the end of the central text there is an allusion to the ear: "But Philippe and his followers were not of this opinion (*ne l'entendaient pas de cette oreille*)," while in the initial text we find the famous ear in the form of a "pitcher handle."

1	2		3
ear	silence	ear	silent
inside	outside	inside	outside
no character	student	puppet	character

Figure 12

In the same way, at the beginning of the central text, the action takes place outside (the student at the foot of the tree), while in the initial text the action takes place inside (the fitting room). And conversely, at the end of the central text the action takes place inside (the puppet on the wall), while in the final text the action takes place outside (the pond in the forest). The use of the restless student (active life) at the beginning of the central text compensates by addition for the absence of tangible life in the initial text (the missing character). Conversely, the paper puppet (absence of life) at the end of the central text compensates by subtraction for the presence of life in the final text (the mobile lost character).

D. The Thoughts of the Text

If meaning comes from a relationship, then the abundance of similarities and symmetries in the work's arrangement of the referential dimension must have many semantic consequences. The central text is overtly presented, by its conspicuous simplicity and systematic rigor, as a 'machine' to produce certain implicit meanings. We can formulate meanings generated by the four principal connections on the two axes of perpendicular symmetries. (Fig. 11) Some have a certain banality, while the last is somewhat less expected.

The lower horizontal relationship connects the teacher and the pupils in their common feigned attentiveness and their simultaneous interest in entirely different sights: it makes use of the monotonous flavors of classroom boredom. The left vertical relationship connects the student and the pupils, both concerned by leaves (the student, leaves on the tree, the pupils, 'leaves' in the book). It implies in the mind of the teacher, who sees these two aspects of the scene, thoughts like, "If only they could all be outside!" The right vertical relationship connects the teacher and the puppet, both paper creatures (one, literally; the other, figuratively, because of his bookish teaching). It implies in the minds of the students a thought like, "If only he could be hung!" The upper horizontal relationship connects the puppet and the student, equally concerned with leaves ('leaves' of paper, tree leaves). It implies that the student, who had "returned to the spot below the lowest tree branch," is not beyond harboring certain ideas of suicide by hanging.

Here we must interject an anecdote, which we are not generally prone to do. Some ten years ago, when I mentioned this fourth semantic consequence to Alain Robbe-Grillet, he appeared doubly surprised. First, because it had already been suggested to him (by the painter, Bernard Dufour). Secondly, because it was untenable *when one knew*. In fact, this hypothesis lacked the information that the class was held in a study room in the Lycée Buffon; no student could possibly get the idea of hanging himself, in broad daylight, from one of the chestnut trees on the Boulevard Pasteur. The student, interested in botany, is observing symptoms of a disease on different parts of the tree. It is important to stress the extent to which ideological resistance to semantic production can be maintained, even by the author of the text. In general, this resistance makes use of two arguments. On

the one hand, the writer states that a particular meaning is an essentially subjective interpretation, a projection by the reader. On the other hand, he disputes the meaning by an essentially objective use of extra-textual elements.

Robbe-Grillet articulated the first argument when, during the discussion of this paper at a conference, he stated: "Why is it that a homosexual critic will find homosexual themes in a famous novelist of the 19th century, *etc.*?[8] There is, after all, a kind of personal relationship . . ." However, in criticism it is not the fact that a reader can read that counts, but that he can affect reading. Either he imposes his own projections and deflects attention from the text to his own discourse, or else he demonstrates certain relationships and inflects interest toward the problems of a particular line of reasoning. Our anecdote uses this first objection, but paradoxically enough, in order to cancel it. If two different readers independently arrive at the same unexpected semantic conclusions, a rigorous demonstration must make us understand the processes by which this common result was achieved.

The second argument offers a singularly hyperbolic example of the referential illusion. Not only is the work entirely taken for reality, but for a reality free of all formulation. Neither the Lycée Buffon nor the Boulevard Pasteur appears in the referential dimension of the work. To interfere with the production of meaning by the text, the writer resorts to a very strange obstruction: the use of elements which are external to the text, and which he alone knows. In short, we are witnessing the machinations of a perfect subjective illusion, under the pretext of stern objectivity. There is no demonstration of relationships in the text—only the pure and simple dictate of the author. Within this aggressive resistance, there certainly lurks a less obvious question. The writer would say, "Since I was thinking of the Lycée Buffon and the Boulevard Pasteur while writing, how could the idea of an eventual suicide of the student enter my mind?" This question allows us to clarify two characteristics of productive processes. First, reserving the right to revert to the reassuring delights of expressivity, the semantic consequences—or, if one prefers, the thoughts of the texts—do not by any means follow the thoughts of the writer. Secondly, unless he is careful, the writer is in a way the least well situated to think the thoughts of his text. No reader is more a stranger to the text than he himself. The extra-textual elements that he knows—fallacious under the present circumstances—create an obstacle to his grasp of what the text really produces. In brief, the writer is prevented from reading what he writes because he remains fascinated by what he has not written.

E. Interweaving

This final section begins by a play on words: that which is interwoven (*entrelacé*), that which is between the lakes (*entre les lacs*)—the armoire mirror being connected in the symmetries with the pond water. We will now attempt to

8. "Elements of a Theory of Generators."

consider places, seasons, conjugations in a network where words have their word to say. For example, as if by chance: the pond (*la mare*) and the armoire.

In its referential dimension. "The Wrong Direction" is situated in winter. The reason for this is clear. In order to obtain a pattern of squares on the surface of the pond corresponding to the one of the waxy oilcloth of the table, the tree trunks must be bared. The leaves, then, must have already fallen. It would seem that nothing in the first text demands winter in the same way, except the symmetry of the general schema. However, other similarities become plausible as a result. In "The Wrong Direction," the leaves in the transparent depth of the pond match the leafless trees reflected by the reflective surface of the water. But this connection by reflection itself reflects a vaster one throughout the system: the leaves at the bottom of the transparent pond in "The Wrong Direction," are connected by the reflection of the two texts with "the leafless trees" in the garden of "The Dressmaker's Dummy" standing in the transparency of the window. The reasons for winter do not stop there. If we do not reject the semantic effect of the sounds of words, we see immediately the over-determination governing the choice of the cold season: winter is the season of ice (*glace*), or, if one prefers, mirrors (*glaces*).

We therefore understand that the central text, lacking any optical mirror in the referential dimension of the story, takes place in summer: leafy trees; evocation of a fly and a butterfly, even if negative; general relaxation of scholastic activity. As we now know, with the warm season mirrors melt and disappear: only a reflection without a mirror thus remains in the referential space. But this space is hardly random: the abolished mirror which organizes it continues to exist in the word which determines it. Melting, the ice (*glace*) can still be read, by a perfect metaphor in . . . class.

While the first and last texts are written in the present tense, different past tenses are used in "The Replacement." This should not surprise us too much: *l'été* (summer and past participle of 'to be') is exactly where *Être* (to be) is placed in the past tense. A counter-proof will perhaps be judged necessary. In the central text, the only narrative passage in the present tense—the brief fantasy resulting from the reading of the book—evokes anything but a warm season through the men "wrapped in huge capes." As for the present of the first and last texts, if summer (*l'été*) is the season when *être* is placed in the past, the place where *être* is put in the present is *l'étang* (the pond—also pun on *étant*, present participle of 'to be') or if one prefers, the "mare" (pond) and the "armoire" (closet).

In this tryptich, the allusions to hearing (the famous ear), sight (the eyes of the owl), smell (the good odor of hot coffee), touch (warmth and smoothness) are clear. Is there a systematic play on the five senses? Taste is not missing, although indicated only indirectly by linking (we could say by matching, since the relationship of leaves and trees) two indirect evocations: the promising odor of hot coffee and "the little ball of chewed-up blotting paper."

However, 'the illusion of success' is to be feared. Should an element find a place in one group, we are less tempted to see if it belongs in any other. Now, new

relationships can be grasped here. First of all, the mouth is relatively deprived since the presence of taste is very indirect, but we can see that it is compensated for according to the rules revealed above, by the very active presence of another of its capacities, the spoken word, which is, as we know, so abundant in the central text. Secondly: hearing then forms a connection with this profuse spoken word and the active silence in the three texts:

$$\frac{\text{speech}}{\text{hearing}} = \frac{x}{\text{silence}}$$

The unknown which corresponds to this silence remains to be discovered. To find it, we shall write a new relationship based on the referential arrangement of the central story. The pupils and the teacher, all kept in class, are engaged in reading. The student outside engages in an apparently mysterious activity:

$$\frac{\text{reading}}{\text{inside}} = \frac{x}{\text{outside}}$$

The unknown which corresponds to this outside must be discovered. To do so, we will observe the student more closely. In one hand he holds a schoolbag which generally evokes books, notes writing implements, since it involves studies. With the other hand he strives to reach what can be called a white leaf, since it is virgin in its inaccessibility, as we have seen, and also symmetrical with the white paper puppet. This leads us to believe that writing is this unknown which is connected to the student outside. We will now establish the crossed connections in the referential dimension of the central story. (Fig. 11)

The dextro-ascending relationship connects the pupils and the puppet. It implies in the minds of the children, a thought like, "This course is mortal" (double meaning: very boring and mortal). The dextro-descending relationship assimilates the student and the teacher. It implies that the teacher is thinking a thought like, "I would rather be writing . . ." The upper horizontal relationship which connects the puppet and the student now provides us in a more general way with a relationship between death and writing.

A new, vertical, productive auto-representation can thus be found at the center of the system. The work is arranged as a metaphor for the activity which constitutes it: writing and reading. Reading, touching on the internal, on the word; writing, touching on the external, on silence. And the whole touching on death.

Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America

ROSALIND KRAUSS

1. Almost everyone is agreed about '70s art. It is diversified, split, factionalized. Unlike the art of the last several decades, its energy does not seem to flow through a single channel for which a synthetic term, like Abstract-Expressionism, or Minimalism, might be found. In defiance of the notion of collective effort that operates behind the very idea of an artistic 'movement', '70s art is proud of its own dispersal. "Post-Movement Art in America" is the term most recently applied.[1] We are asked to contemplate a great plethora of possibilities in the list that must now be used to draw a line around the art of the present: video; performance; body art; conceptual art; photo-realism in painting and an associated hyper-realism in sculpture; story art; monumental abstract sculpture (earthworks); and abstract painting, characterized, now, not by rigor but by a willful eclecticism. It is as though in that need for a list, or proliferating string of terms, there is prefigured an image of personal freedom, of multiple options now open to individual choice or will, whereas before these things were closed off through a restrictive notion of historical style.

Both the critics and practitioners of recent art have closed ranks around this 'pluralism' of the 1970s. But what, really, are we to think of that notion of multiplicity? It is certainly true that the separate members of the list do not look alike. If they have any unity, it is not along the axis of a traditional notion of 'style'. But is the absence of a collective style the token of a real difference? Or is there not something else for which all these terms are possible manifestations? Are not all these separate 'individuals' in fact moving in lockstep, only to a rather different drummer from the one called style?

2. My list began with video, which I've talked about before, attempting to detail the routines of narcissism which form both its content and its structure.[2] But now I am thinking about *Airtime*, the work that Vito Acconci made in 1973, where for 40 minutes the artist sits and talks to his reflected image. Referring to himself,

1. This is the title of a book by Alan Sondheim, *Individuals: Post Movement Art in America*, New York, Dutton, 1977.
2. See my "Video: The Structure of Narcissism," *October*, no. 1 (Spring 1976).

he uses 'I', but not always. Sometimes he addresses his mirrored self as 'you'. 'You' is a pronoun that is also filled, within the space of his recorded monologue, by an absent person, someone he imagines himself to be addressing. But the referent for this 'you' keeps slipping, shifting, returning once again to the 'I' who is himself, reflected in the mirror. Acconci is playing out the drama of the shifter—in its regressive form.

3. The shifter is Jakobson's term for that category of linguistic sign which is "filled with signification" only because it is "empty."[3] The word 'this' is such a sign, waiting each time it is invoked for its referent to be supplied. "This chair," "this table," or "this . . ." and we point to something lying on the desk. "Not that, *this*," we say. The personal pronouns 'I' and 'you' are also shifters. As we speak to one another, both of us using 'I' and 'you', the referents of those words keep changing places across the space of our conversation. I am the referent of 'I' only when I am the one who is speaking. When it is your turn, it belongs to you.

The gymnastics of the "empty" pronominal sign are therefore slightly complicated. And though we might think that very young children learning language would acquire the use of 'I' and 'you' very early on, this is in fact one of the last things to be correctly learned. Jakobson tells us, as well, that the personal pronouns are among the first things to break down in cases of aphasia.

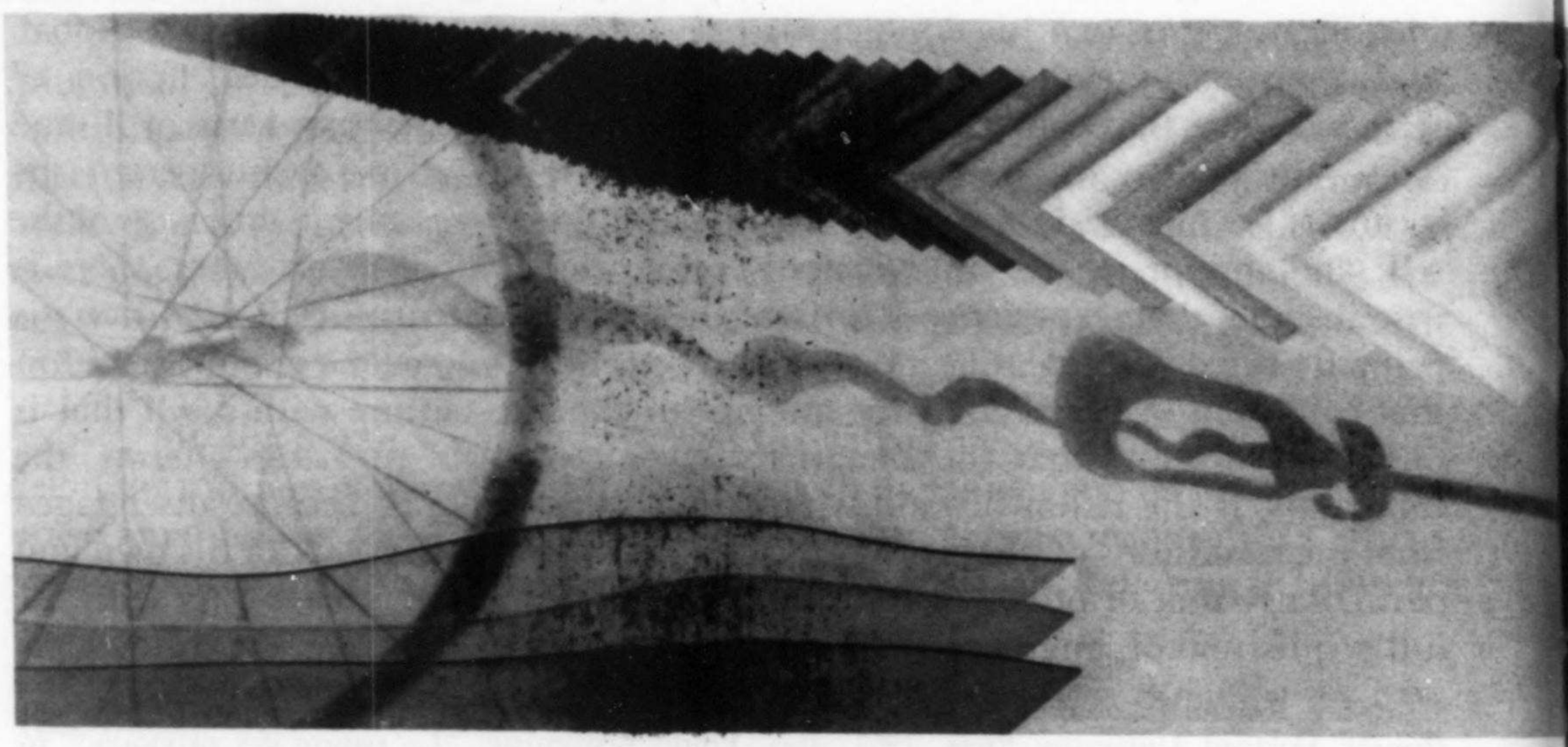
4. *Airtime* establishes, then, the space of a double regression. Or rather, a space in which linguistic confusion operates in concert with the narcissism implicit in the performer's relationship to the mirror. But this conjunction is perfectly logical, particularly if we consider narcissism—a stage in the development of personality suspended between auto-eroticism and object-love—in the terms suggested by Lacan's concept of the "mirror stage." Occurring sometime between the ages of six and 18 months, the mirror stage involves the child's self-identification *through* his double: his reflected image. In moving from a global, undifferentiated sense of himself towards a distinct, integrated notion of selfhood—one that could be symbolized through an individuated use of 'I' and 'you'—the child recognizes himself as a separate object (a psychic *gestalt*) by means of his mirrored image. The self is felt, at this stage, only as an *image* of the self; and insofar as the child initially recognizes himself as an other, there is inscribed in that experience a primary alienation. Identity (self-definition) is primally fused with identification (a felt connection to someone else). It is within that condition of alienation—the attempt to come to closure with a self that is physically distant—that the Imaginary takes root. And in Lacan's terms, the Imaginary is the realm of fantasy, specified as a-temporal, because disengaged from the conditions of history. For the child, a sense of history, both his own and particularly that of others, wholly independent of himself, comes only with the full acquisition of language. For, in joining himself to language, the child enters

3. See, Roman Jakobson, "Shifters, verbal categories, and the Russian verb," *Russian Language Project*, Harvard University Press, 1957; also, Émile Benveniste, "La nature des pronoms," in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1966.

a world of conventions which he has had no role in shaping. Language presents him with an historical framework pre-existent to his own being. Following the designation of spoken or written language as constituted of that type of sign called the symbol, Lacan names this stage of development the Symbolic and opposes it to the Imaginary.

5. This opposition between the Symbolic and the Imaginary leads us to a further comment on the shifter. For the shifter is a case of linguistic sign which partakes of the symbol even while it shares the features of something else. The pronouns are part of the symbolic code of language insofar as they are arbitrary: 'I' we say in English, but *'je'* in French, *'ego'* in Latin, *'ich'* in German . . . But insofar as their meaning depends on the existential presence of a given speaker, the pronouns (as is true of the other shifters) announce themselves as belonging to a different type of sign: the kind that is termed the index. As distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifters. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects. . . .

6. *Tu m'* is a painting Marcel Duchamp made in 1918. It is, one might say, a panorama of the index. Across its ten-foot width parade a series cast shadows, as Duchamp's readymades put in their appearance via the index. The readymades themselves are not depicted. Instead the bicycle wheel, the hatrack, and a corkscrew, are projected onto the surface of the canvas through the fixing of cast shadows, signifying these objects by means of indexical traces. Lest we miss the point, Duchamp places a realistically painted hand at the center of the work, a hand that is pointing, its index finger enacting the process of establishing the



Marcel Duchamp. Tu M'. *1918. Oil and pencil on canvas with bottle brush, three safety pins, and a bolt. 27½ × 122¾ inches. (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Bequest of Katherine S. Dreier, 1952.)*

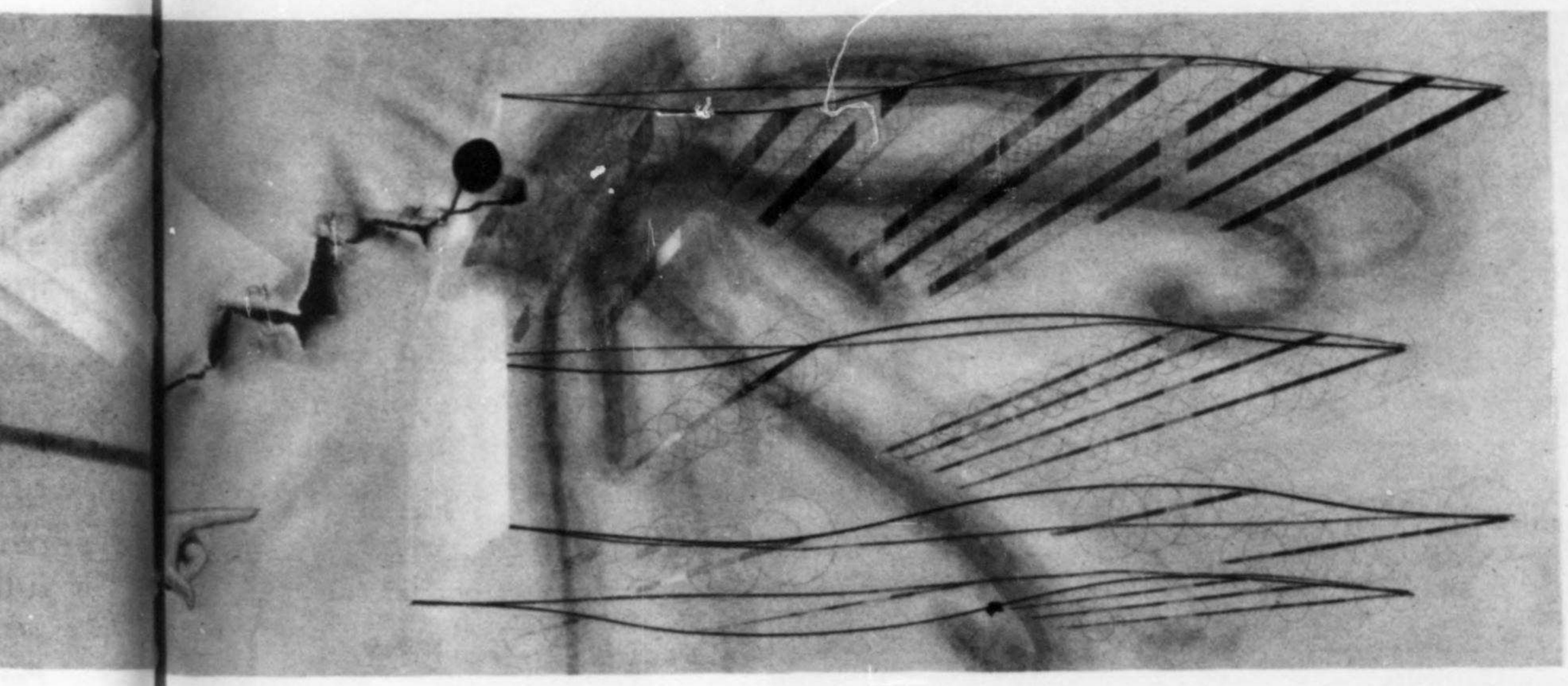
connection between the linguistic shifter 'this . . .' and its referent. Given the role of the indexical sign within this particular painting, its title should not surprise us. *Tu m'* is simply 'you'/'me'—the two personal pronouns which, in being shifters, are themselves a species of index.

7. In contributing an essay to the catalogue of the recent Duchamp retrospective, Lucy Lippard chose to write a mock short story about a personage she characterized in the title as "ALLREADYMADESOMUCHOFF."[4] Indeed, the seemingly endless stream of essays on Duchamp that have appeared over the last several years certainly does discourage one from wanting to add yet another word to the accumulating mass of literature on the artist. Yet Duchamp's relationship to the issue of the indexical sign, or rather, the way his art serves as a matrix for a related set of ideas which connect to one another through the axis of the index, is too important a precedent (I am not concerned here with the question of 'influence') for '70s art, not to explore it. For as we will see, it is Duchamp who first establishes the connection between the index (as a type of sign) and the photograph.

8. A breakdown in the use of the shifter to locate the self in relation to its world is not confined to the onset of aphasia; it also characterizes the speech of autistic children. Describing the case of Joey, one of the patients in his Chicago clinic, Bruno Bettelheim writes, "He used personal pronouns in reverse, as do most autistic children. He referred to himself as you and to the adult he was speaking to as I. A year later he called this therapist by name, though still not addressing her as 'you', but saying 'Want Miss M. to swing you.'"[5] In an

4. In *Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1973.

5. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Empty Fortress, Infantile Autism and the Birth of the Self*, New York, 1967, p. 234. My attention to this passage was called by Annette Michelson in the essay cited below.



important essay drawing the parallels between those symptoms that form the psychopathological syndrome of autism and specific aspects of Duchamp's art, Annette Michelson pointed to the autist's characteristic fascination with revolving disks, the fantasy (in some cases) that he is a machine, and the withdrawal from language as a form of communication by means of speaking in private allusions and riddles.[6] All of these features occur, of course, in Duchamp's art with a vengeance. But for the moment I would like to focus on the autist's problem with the shifter—the problem of naming an individuated self—a dramatization of which is also to be found throughout the later work of Duchamp.

Tu m' is one way of signaling this. Another is the division of the self into an 'I' and a 'you' through the adoption of an alter-ego. "Rrose Sélavy and I," Duchamp writes as the beginning of the phrase he inscribes around the revolving disk of the *Machine Optique* (1920). Duchamp's photographic self-portraits in drag, as Rrose Sélavy, announce a self that is split, doubled, along the axis of sexual identity. But the very name he uses for his 'double' projects a strategy for infecting language itself with a confusion in the way that words denote their referents. "Rrose Sélavy" is a homophone suggesting to its auditors two entirely different meanings. The first is a proper name; the second a sentence: the first of the double Rs in Rrose would have to be pronounced (in French) 'er', making Er-rose Sélavy into *Éros, c'est la vie,* a statement inscribing life within a circle of eroticism which Duchamp has elsewhere characterized as "vicious."[7] The rest of the sentence from the *Machine Optique* performs another kind of indignity on the body of language—at least in terms of its capacity for meaning. Overloaded with internal rhyme, the phrase "*estimons les ecchymoses des Esquimaux aux mots exquis*" (we esteem the bruises of the Eskimos with beautiful language) substitutes sheer musicality for the process of signification. The elisions and inversions of the *es, ex,* and *mo* sounds upset the balance of meaning through an outrageous formalism. The confusion in the shifter couples then with another kind of breakdown, as form begins to erode the certainty of content.

9. The collapsed shifter announced itself through a specific use of language, and through the doubled self-portrait. But then, up to 1912 Duchamp had been concerned as a painter almost exclusively with autobiography. Between 1903 and 1911 his major subject was that of his family, and life as it was lived within the immediate confines of his home. This series of explicit portraiture—his father, his brothers playing chess, his sisters playing music—climaxes with the artist's own self-portrait as *The Sad Young Man on a Train* (1911).[8] In most of these portraits there is an insistent naturalism, a direct depiction of the persons who formed the

6. Annette Michelson, "'Anemic Cinema' Reflections on an Emblematic Work," *Artforum,* XII (October 1973), 64–69.

7. This is from "the litanies of the Chariot" one of the notes from the *Green Box*. See, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. A typographical version by Richard Hamilton of Duchamp's *Green Box*, trans. George Heard Hamilton, London, Lund, Humphries, 1960, n. p.

8. The inscription on the back of this painting reads: *Marcel Duchamp nu (esquisse) Jeune homme triste dans un train/Marcel Duchamp.*

Marcel Duchamp. Machine optique. *1920.*

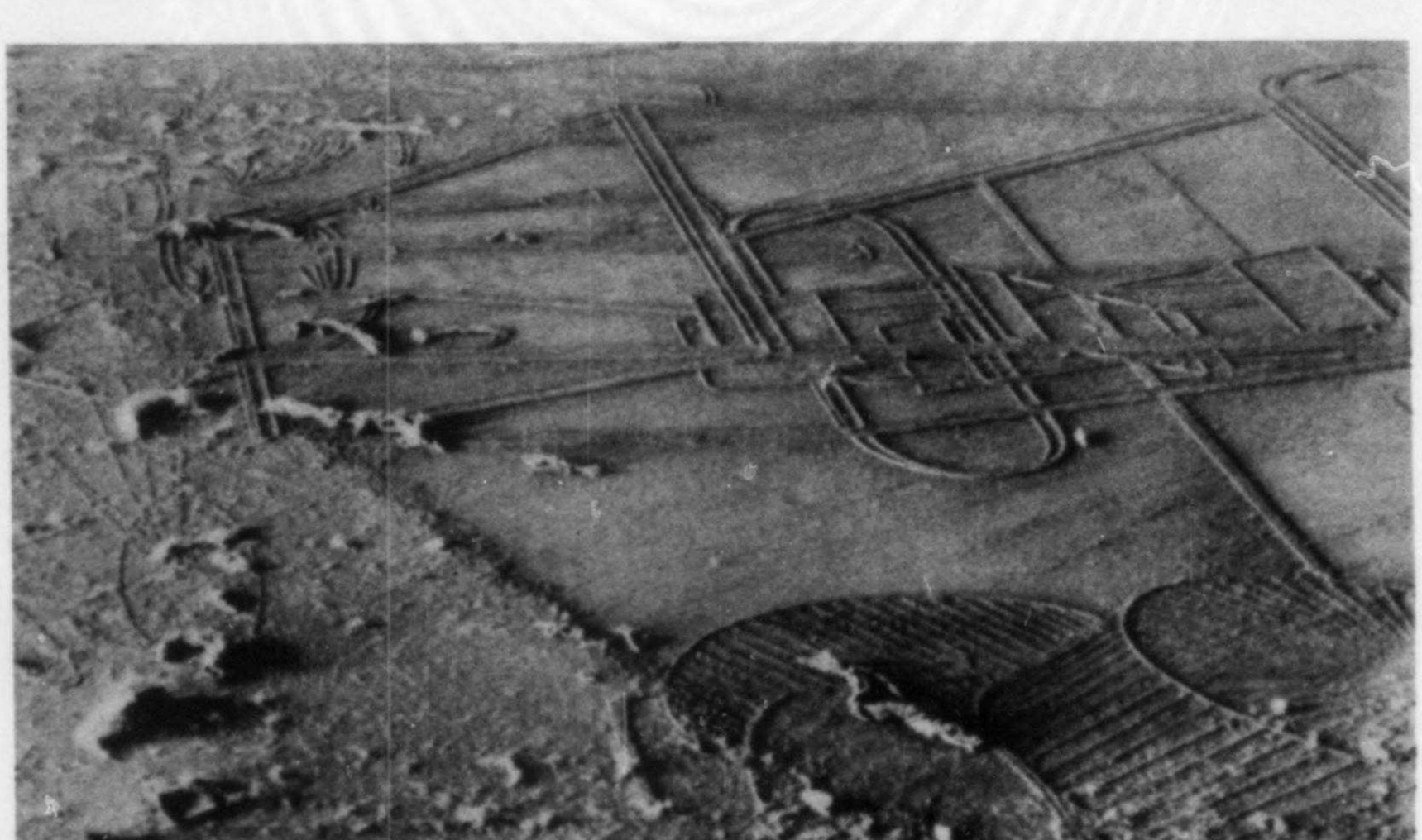




Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy, photographed by Man Ray in New York. c. 1920–21.

extensions of Duchamp's most intimate world. Only by the end, in *The Sad Young Man* . . . do we find that directness swamped by the adoption of a cubist-informed pictorial language, a language Duchamp was to continue to use for just six more months and then to renounce, with a rather bitter and continuing series of castigations, forever. It was as if cubism forced for Duchamp the issue of whether pictorial language could continue to signify directly, could picture a world with anything like an accessible set of contents. It was not that self-portraiture was displaced within Duchamp's subsequent activity. But only that the project of depicting the self took on those qualities of enigmatic refusal and mask with which we are familiar.

10. The *Large Glass* is of course another self-portrait. In one of the little sketches Duchamp made for it and included in the *Green Box* he labels the upper register "MAR" and the lower half "CEL." And he retains these syllables of his own name in the title of the finished work: *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires même*; the MAR of *mariée* linked to the CEL of *célibataires*; the self projected as double. Within this field of the split self-portrait we are made to feel the presence of the index. The "Sieves," for example, are colored by the fixing of dust that had fallen on the prone surface of the glass over a period of months. The accumulation



Elevage de poussière (Dust Breeding). *1920.*
(Photograph by Man Ray.)

of dust is a kind of physical index for the passage of time. *Dust Breeding* (*Elevage de poussière*) Duchamp calls it, in the photograph of the work's surface that Man Ray took and Duchamp included in the notes for the *Large Glass*. The signatures of both men appear along the bottom of the photograph.

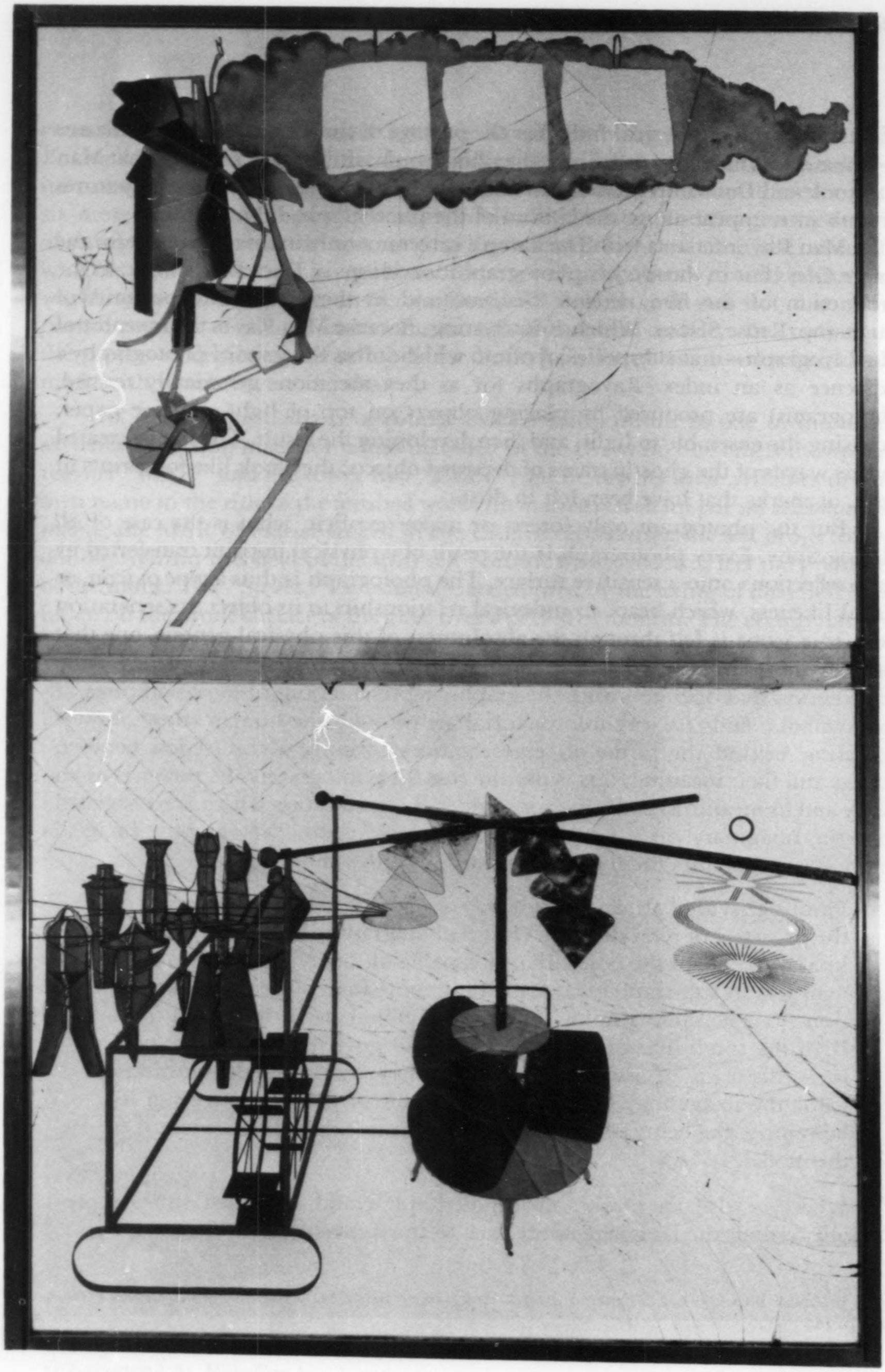
Man Ray intersects with Duchamp's career not only in this document for the *Large Glass* but in those other photographic occasions of Duchamp's work: in the production of the film *Anémic Cinèma*; and in the transvestite portraits of Duchamp/Rrose Sélavy. Which is interesting. Because Man Ray is the inventor of the Rayograph—that subspecies of photo which forces the issue of photography's existence as an index. Rayographs (or as they are more generically termed, photograms) are produced by placing objects on top of light-sensitive paper, exposing the ensemble to light, and then developing the result. The image created in this way is of the ghostly traces of departed objects; they look like footprints in sand, or marks that have been left in dust.

But the photogram only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of *all* photography. Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object. Its separation from true icons is felt through the absolutness of this physical genesis, one that seem to short-circuit or disallow those processes of schematization or symbolic intervention that operate within the graphic representations of most paintings. If the Symbolic finds its way into pictorial art through the human consciousness operating behind the forms of representation, forming a connection between objects and their meaning, this is not the case for photography. Its power is as an index and its meaning resides in those modes of identification which are associated with the Imaginary. In the essay "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," André Bazin describes the indexical condition of the photograph:

> Painting is, after all, an inferior way of making likenesses, an ersatz of the processes of reproduction. Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation . . . The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model.[9]

Whatever else its power, the photograph could be called sub- or pre-symbolic, ceding the language of art back to the imposition of things.

9. In André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967, p. 14.



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11. In this connection the preface to the *Large Glass* makes fairly arresting reading. It begins, "Given 1. the waterfall 2. the illuminating gas, we shall determine the conditions for the instantaneous State of Rest . . . of a succession . . . of various facts . . . in order to isolate the sign of the accordance between . . . this State of Rest . . . and . . . a choice of Possibilities . . ." And there follow two other notes: "For the instantaneous state of rest = bring in the term: extra-rapid;" and "We shall determine the conditions of [the] best exposure of the extra-rapid State of Rest [of the extra-rapid exposure . . ." This language of rapid exposures which produce a state of rest, an isolated sign, is of course the language of photography. It describes the isolation of something from within the succession of temporality, a process which is implied by Duchamp's subtitle for *La mariée mise à nu* . . . which is "Delay in Glass."

If Duchamp was indeed thinking of the *Large Glass* as a kind of photograph, its processes become absolutely logical: not only the marking of the surface with instances of the index and the suspension of the images as physical substances within the field of the picture; but also, the opacity of the image in relation to its meaning. The notes for the *Large Glass* form a huge, extended caption, and like the captions under newspaper photographs, which are absolutely necessary for their intelligibility, the very existence of Duchamp's notes—their preservation and publication—bears witness to the altered relationship between sign and meaning within this work. In speaking of the rise of photography in the late 19th century, Walter Benjamin writes, "At the same time picture magazines begin to put up signposts for [the viewer], right ones or wrong ones, no matter. For the first time, captions have become obligatory. And it is clear that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting. The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones."[10] The photograph heralds a disruption in the autonomy of the sign. A meaninglessness surrounds it which can only be filled in by the addition of a text.

It is also, then, not surprising that Duchamp should have described the Readymade in just these terms. It was to be a "snapshot" to which there was attached a tremendous arbitrariness with regard to meaning, a breakdown of the relatedness of the linguistic sign:

> Specifications for "Readymades."
> by planning for a moment
> to come (on such a day, such
> a date such a minute), "to inscribe
> a readymade."—the readymade
> can later
> be looked for. (with all kinds of delays)

10. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 226.

Marcel Duchamp. The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass). *1915–23. (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Bequest of Katherine S. Dreier, 1953.)*

> The important thing is just
> this matter of timing, this snapshot effect, like
> a speech delivered on no matter
> what occasion but at such and such an hour.[11]

The readymade's parallel with the photograph is established by its process of production. It is about the physical transposition of an object from the continuum of reality into the fixed condition of the art-image by a moment of isolation, or selection. And in this process, it also recalls the function of the shifter. It is a sign which is inherently "empty," its signification a function of only this one instance, guaranteed by the existential presence of just this object. It is the meaningless meaning that is instituted through the terms of the index.

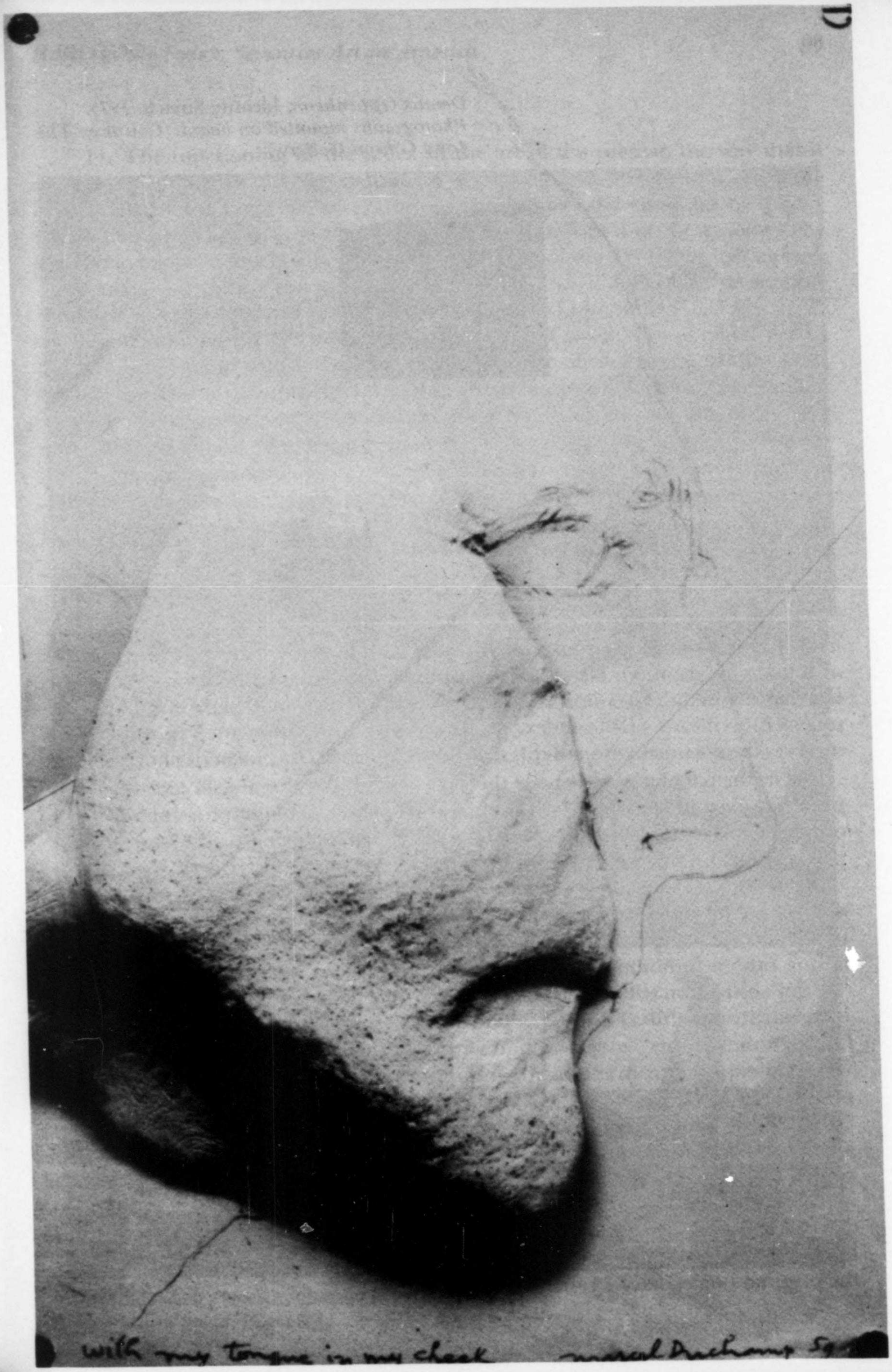
12. There is a late work by Duchamp that seems to comment on this altered relationship between sign and meaning given the imposition, within the work of art, of the index. *With My Tongue in My Cheek* (1959) is yet another self-portrait. This time it is not split along the lines of sexual identity, but rather along the semiotic axis of icon and index. On a sheet of paper Duchamp sketches his profile, depicting himself in the representational terms of the graphic icon. On top of this drawing, coincident with part of its contour, is added the area of chin and cheek, cast from his own face in plaster. Index is juxtaposed to icon and both are then captioned. "With my tongue in my cheek," is obviously a reference to the ironic mode, a verbal doubling to redirect meaning. But it can also be taken literally. To actually place one's tongue in one's cheek is to lose the capacity for speech altogether. And it is this rupture between image and speech, or more specifically, language, that Duchamp's art both contemplates and instances.

As I have been presenting it, Duchamp's work manifests a kind of trauma of signification, delivered to him by two events: the development, by the early teens, of an abstract (or abstracting) pictorial language; and the rise of photography. His art involved a flight from the former and a pecularilarly telling analysis of the latter.

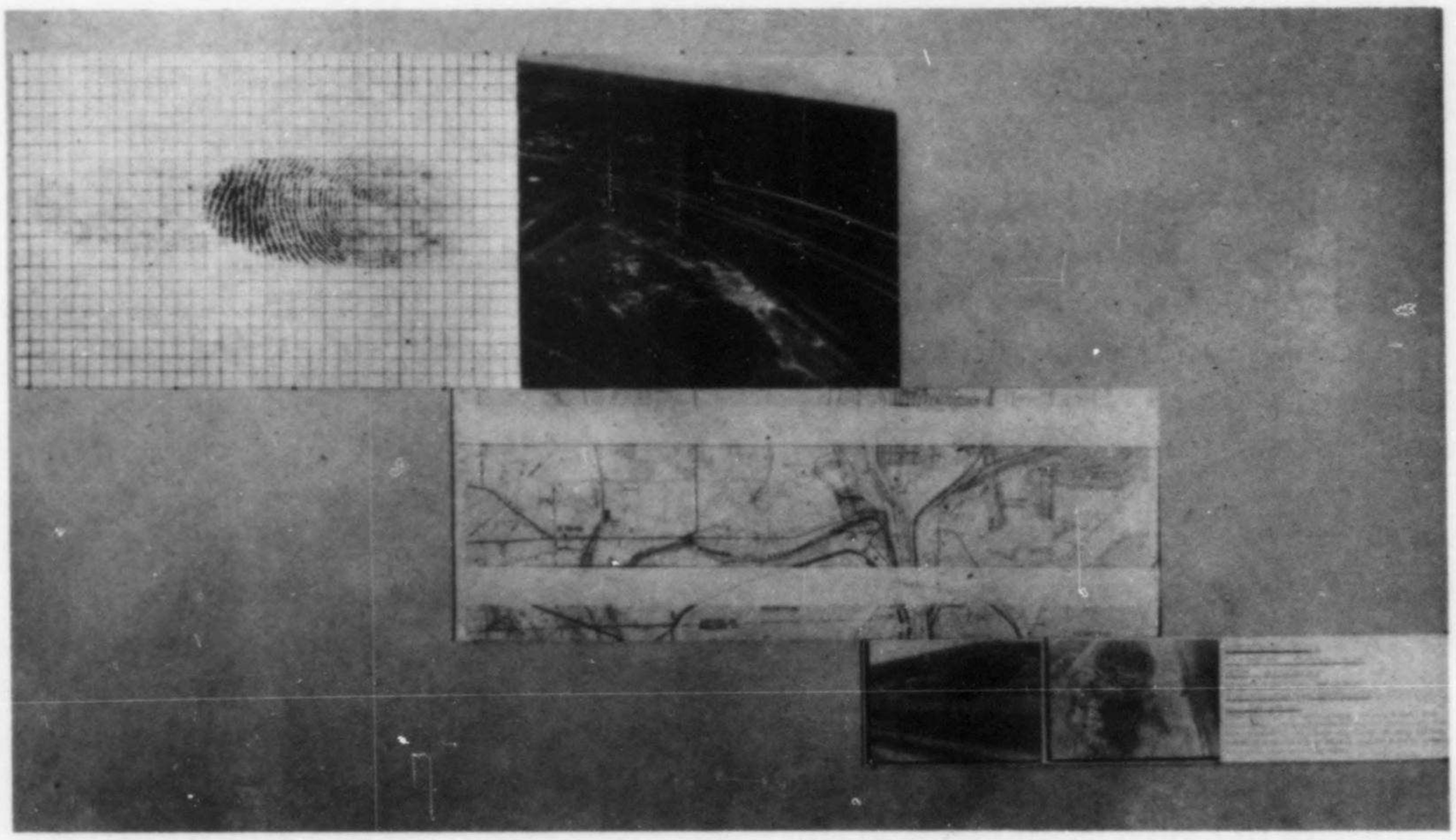
13. If we are to ask what the art of the '70s has to do with all of this, we could summarize it very briefly by pointing to the pervasiveness of the photograph as a means of representation. It is not only there in the obvious case of photo-realism, but in all those forms which depend on documentation—earthworks, particularly as they have evolved in the last several years, body art, story art—and of course in video. But it is not just the heightened presence of the photograph itself that is significant. Rather it is the photograph combined with the explicit terms of the index. For, everywhere one looks in '80s art, one finds instances of this connection. In the work that Dennis Oppenheim made in 1975 called *Identity Stretch*, the

11. See *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even.* A typographical version by Richard Hamilton, *op. cit.*, n. p.

Marcel Duchamp. With My Tongue in My Cheek, *1959. Plaster, pencil and paper, mounted on wood.* $9^{13}/_{16} \times 5^{7}/_{8}$ *inches. (Coll: Robert Lebel, Paris.)*


with my tongue in my cheek

Dennis Oppenheim. Identity Stretch. *1975. Photographs mounted on board. (Courtesy: The John Gibson Gallery.)*



artist transfers the image (index) of his own thumbprint onto a large field outside of Buffalo by magnifying it thousands of times and fixing its traces in the ground in lines of asphalt. The meaning of this work is focused on the pure installation of presence by means of the index. And the work as it is presented in the gallery involves the documentation of this effort through an arrangement of photographs.

Or, the panels that comprise the works of Bill Beckley are also documents of presence, fixed indexically. A recent object combines photographic enlargements of fragments of the artist's body with a panel of text giving us the 'story' of his physical position at a given time and place.

Or, David Askevold's work *The Ambit: Part I* (1975) is likewise made up of photographic panels captioned by text. In his case, like Oppenheim's, we find the index pure and simple: the images are of the cast shadows of an outstretched arm falling onto a luminous plane. The text speaks of an interruption of meaning: ". . . an abstraction within the order of reference which resembles another and also is the identity within this order." The meaning of these three works involves the filling of the "empty" indexical sign with a particular presence. The implication is that there is no convention for meaning independent of or apart from that presence.

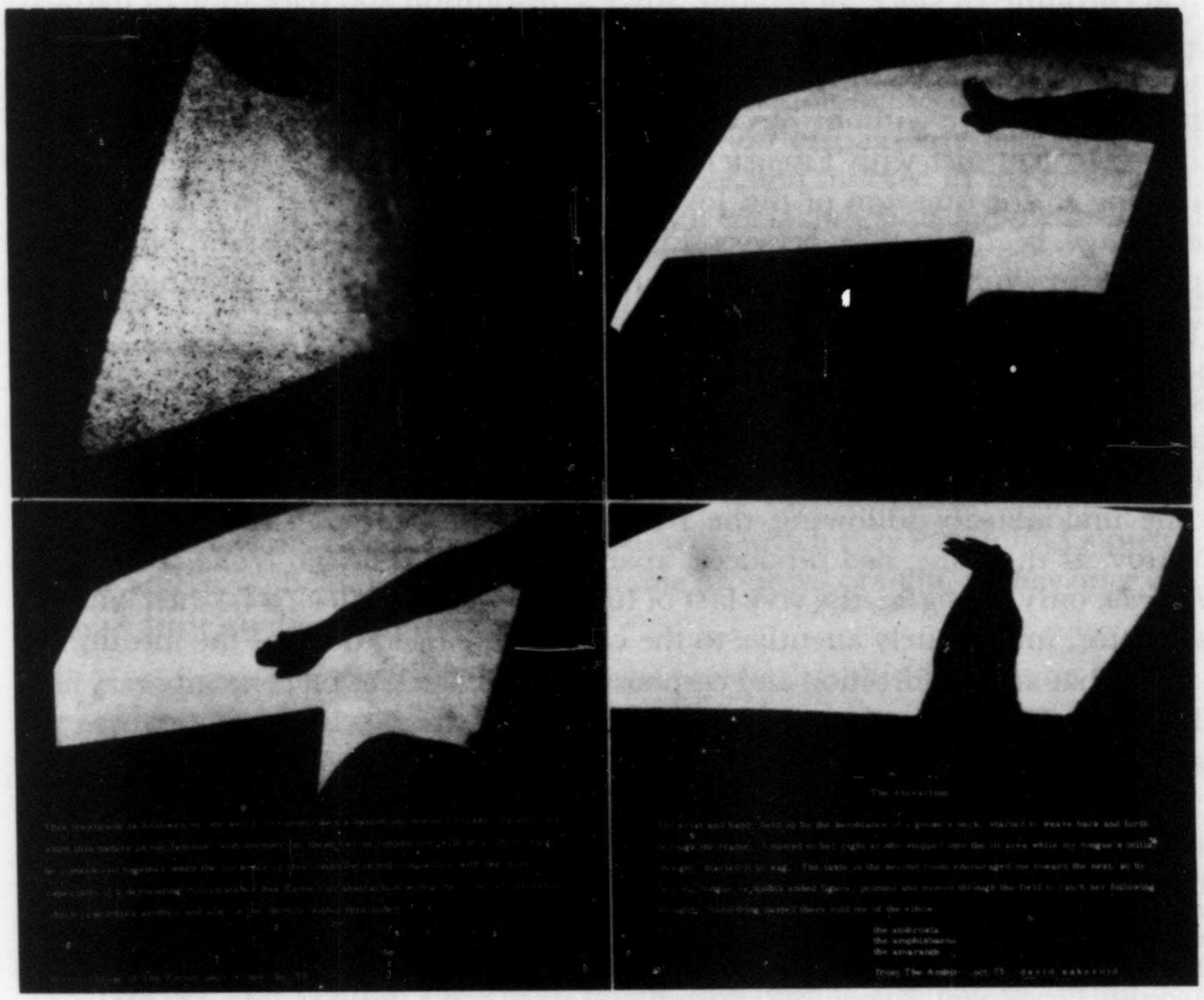
This sense of isolation from the workings of a convention which has evolved as a succession of meanings through painting and sculpture in relation to a history of style is characteristic of photo-realism. For there the indexical presence of either the photograph or the body-cast demands that the work be viewed as a deliberate short-circuiting of issues of style. Countermanding the artist's possible formal intervention in creating the work is the overwhelming physical presence of the original object, fixed in this trace of the cast.

14. The functioning of the index in the art of the present, the way that it operates to substitute the registration of sheer physical presence for the more highly articulated language of aesthetic conventions (and the kind of history which they encode), will be the subject of the second part of these notes. The instances involve a much wider field than the types of objects I have just named. They include a shifting conception of abstract art as well, one collective example of which was mounted last spring in the opening exhibition of P.S. 1.

An enormous, derelict building in Long Island City, P.S. 1 was taken over by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources and, renamed Project Studios One, became the site for showing the work of 75 artists, most of whom did "installation pieces." There was tremendous variation in the quality of these works, but almost none in their subject. Again and again this group of artists, working independently, chose the terminology of the index. Their procedures were to exacerbate an aspect of the building's physical presence, and thereby to embed within it a perishable trace of their own.

(*Part one of an essay in two parts.*)

N.Y., 1976



David Askevold. The Ambit. Part I. *1975. Photographs mounted on board. (Courtesy: The John Gibson Gallery.)*

Reading Eisenstein
Reading *Capital*
(Part 2)

ANNETTE MICHELSON

Eisenstein's double dedication of the projected film of *Capital*[1] at the end of the silent era of film, epitomizes a crisis of representation. Although we do not know and cannot even speculate as to the precision of his cinematic plans for Joyce, one thing is plain and certain: *Ulysses*, read in 1928 with the help of Madame Ivy Litvinov, offered him the deepest and most enduring challenge he had encountered since Meyerhold. Joyce's dissolution and relocation of narrative space, his explosion and regeneration of its language, continued, as we shall see, to inflect Eisenstein's thinking well into the middle 1930s. This challenge was not, however, entirely without precedent. Obscurely and in a different register anticipated, it had met with Eisenstein's resistance. It is therefore instructive, before turning to the question of the Joycean challenge, to consider in some detail an exchange, begun in 1925, between Eisenstein and Malevich. Most important is the manner in which this encounter articulates a series of misunderstandings. Their's was, in fact, *un dialogue de sourds.*

It was Malevich who began this exchange, publishing, in 1925 and 1926, two strongly polemical essays: "And Images Triumph on the Screen" and "The Artists and the Cinema."[2] The dates of these texts are interesting. In them, the films of Eisenstein and of Vertov are discussed as seminal and problematic—and this at a time undoubtedly following the release of *Strike*, and possibly of *Potemkin*. Vertov, at this time, had produced, apart from the early *Kino Nodelia* and *Kino Pravda*, only *Kinoglaz*, the very first of his major films. Malevich is, then, an early spectator, immediately attentive to the claims and aspirations of the medium.

What are the direction and emphasis of his reflections on contemporary film? They are, of course, determined by the position from which, as a painter, he speaks: it is the outermost limit of pictorial enterprise in our century, an extremity

1. "*Capital* will be dedicated—officially—to The Second International! They're sure to be 'overjoyed'! For it is hard to conceive of any more devastating attack against social democracy in all its aspects than *Capital*. The formal side is dedicated to Joyce." In "Notes for a Film of *Capital*," *October*, no. 2 (Summer, 1976), 71.

2. K. S. Malevich, *Essays on Art*, trans. Xenia Clowacki-Prus and Arnold McMillin, ed. Troels Andersen, Copenhagen, Borgen, 1968. Passages cited are all drawn from Vol. 1, pp. 226–238.

of innovation exemplary for 50 years to come. Like Vertov's, his true posterity (one thinks of Robert Ryman, Ad Reinhardt, Agnes Martin, Jo Baer) will emerge in the 1960s.

> Until now we have had realism of objects, but not of painted units of colour. . . . Any painting surface is more alive than any face with a pair of eyes and a grin sticking out. A face painted in a picture gives a pitiful parody of life, and this allusion is only a reminder of the living. But a surface lives, it has been born . . . A living face, a landscape in nature, reminds us of a picture, *i.e.* something dead. That is why it is strange to look at a red or black painted surface.

For Malevich, then, contemporary art will be non-objective or abstractionist (he will use the two words interchangeably) or it will not be. This intransigent call for pure abstraction (the term, again, is his) is predicated upon the realization that what has been called into question is not the object, but rather the scene which it occupies, a space, for that time, at least, exhausted. That space is the scene of the action and its objects. It is, finally, the codes of representation governing the projection of that scene, its landscape, which are annulled by Malevich. And he does so, in the full knowledge of the manner in which those codes are the instrument of a dominant ideology, itself assaulted by a Marxist revolution. He has confronted the problem of the crisis of representation in the arts from within a revolutionary perspective, identifying the tradition of painterly and sculptural representation with that of a deposed bourgeoisie, and shocked by the proletariat, now victorious, whose art appropriates both the social function and the structural forms of bourgeois ideology.

Thus, "The proletariat is translating its domination into reality, and this at the time of great technical improvement in the organs of the human body—ears, eyes, arms. One such improvement in the sphere of art is the cinema. It has created new cinema artists, picture producers. Each production is simply called a picture, and a study for the picture has begun to be called a still. There, all producers and directors are to a large degree reincarnations of the old painters: they simply dispose of a new instrument of production, with which they can unfold a picture in time and fix a phenomenon in a film frame by means of light, as they once used to paint little studies by means of light.

> Every film producer has his own peculiarity; this depends on his painter parents, and on their compositional upbringing; some have inclinations toward antiquity, the times of Rembrandt, whilst others adhere to the Barbizon school, and still others to the Impressionist or Wanderer reproductions of phenomena . . .
>
> Eisenstein intends to liquidate easel-painting, he says, since he doesn't see its value as propaganda. He ought to strive for the consolidation of agitational easel painting, which he approves at present in practice, deepening the truth of its agitational content by using

contrast to express that content. His stills consist of the contents of content; translated into the language of painting this means the style of the Wanderers, where painting made use of the same sort of content. Painters at that time concerned themselves with facial traits, with psychological states, 'moods', as they expressed happiness and sadness, everyday life, history, various forms of grief, hope and gaiety—instead of revealing painting 'as such', or in our present case, 'the cinema as such'.

Eisenstein, however, has one advantage over other directors—he has a certain understanding and ability to use the law of contrasts; the depth of that understanding should lead him, eventually, to complete victory over content, through construction in contrast.

Eisenstein and Vertov are truly first-class artists, with an inclination to the left, for Eisenstein relies on contrast and Vertov on showing us the object as such. Both, however, still have a long way to go to reach Cézanne, Cubism, Futurism, and non-objective Suprematism: the path of their future development lies only in an understanding of these movements . . . Experimental cinema is the most important problem in that medium; only by means of an experimental laboratory can we create cinematology, in a special pharmacy without which the cinema will develop catarrh . . . In the West, important painters are gradually beginning to work in the cinema, and in beginning their work with purely abstract elements, they are beginning with our future source of new forms. This entry of the contemporary painter into the cinema should bring us, and him, to a new essence and significance for the screen, as a new way of showing the art of our new life to the masses.

Some contradictions and limitations of this position are immediately evident. This modernist, aware of the relationship between still and motion picture, is stubbornly resistant to its acknowledgement. That moment of release of still into motion, the constitution of the cinema inscribed within that relationship, was being celebrated, even as he wrote, as in the early, seminal work of René Clair, in *Paris Qui Dort*, a film that was to assume vital importance for Vertov himself. The properties inherent in photography as such receive no attention from Malevich; their materiality receives neither recognition nor location in that array of ideal essences which compose the Suprematist canon. The photo-montage is consequently dismissed as a somewhat perverse variation upon the codes of representation. Heedless of the manner in which it may inscribe Klee's "convergence of a hundred spaces," he ignores Eisenstein's energetic use of it in the superimpositions of *Strike*. Contesting film's subjection to pictorial conventions he seems, nonetheless, prepared to enlist it as the handmaiden of pictorial modernism, elevating that enlistment to the status of a cinematic ontology, prescriptive, ignoring the material and historical conditions of film's production,

the complex constraints and possibilities inherent in its insertion into the intertextuality of 19th-century culture.

Eisenstein's reply is brief and dismissive. It is also somewhat tardy, offered in "Methods of Montage," an important text of 1929 in which he explicates the modes of montage, metrical, rhythmic, tonal and overtonal. Having explained the organic transitions which characterize the progressive radicalization of montage construction, he then says,

> These considerations provide, in the first place, an interesting criterion for the appreciation of montage-construction from a 'pictorial' point of view. Pictorialism is here contrasted with 'cinematicism', asthetic pictorialism with physiological reality. To argue about the pictorialism of the film-shot is naïve. This is typical of persons possessing a decent aesthetic culture that has never been logically applied to films. To this kind of thinking belong, for instance, the remarks on cinema coming from Kasimir Malevich. The veriest novice in films would not think of analyzing the film-shot from an identical point of view with landscape painting.
>
> The following may be observed as a criterion of the pictorialism of the montage construction in the broadest sense: the conflict must be resolved *within* one or another category of montage, without allowing the conflict to be one of different categories of montage.
>
> Real cinematography begins only with the collision of various cinematic modifications of movement and vibration. For example, the pictorial conflict of figure and horizon (whether this is a conflict in statics of dynamics is unimportant). Or the alternation of differently lit pieces solely from the viewpoint of conflicting light-vibrations, or of a conflict between the form of an object and its illumination, etc.[3]

But Malevich is not, of course, analyzing the film shot from a point of view identical with landscape painting; he is arguing for the dissolution of that space constructed by the codes of representation. For him, certain issues had been definitively settled and certain consequences inevitably followed. Abstractionist innovation had severed art from the ideological function of representation, marked off the *scene of action* and its objects from the *space of movement*, that space which, like that of Malevich's painting, addresses itself to the eye, to sight, rather than to the body and its kinesis. Malevich, in dismissing the codes of filmic representation, laid waste the scene of narrative action, replacing it by the painterly space of movement. He had not however—and Eisenstein knew this—given to film the same relentless attention he could give to the painting of Léger and Juan Gris. And certainly not, in any case, to Eisenstein's own films. For it is not Eisenstein's writing of that period, but his work that argues most con-

3. S. M. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda, New York, Meridian Books, 1949, p. 79.

vincingly against Malevich's strictures. Eisenstein's work tends increasingly throughout the 1920s to call into question the conventions of filmic representation. It is the hyperbolic montage of *October* and *The General Line*, his last two films of the silent period, which most forcefully articulates the commitment to a radically synthetic space. It was the work of Griffith which had animated the space of Repin. Eisenstein (whose allusions to Repin are critical, as in the procession episode of *The General Line*), moves, increasingly, in his mature work, toward the radically synthetic spatio-temporality of the optical mode, acknowledging cinema's confrontation with the crisis of representation. One might, in fact, say that the crisis is largely articulated and resolved in the elaborate spatio-temporal distensions and syntheses of *October* (as in the lifting of the bridge, the shelling of the trenches, the ascent of Kerensky), constituting the central axis of his most radically innovative work.

It is, however, the two closely related utopian projects, *Ulysses* and *Capital* that elicit Eisenstein's fullest explicitation of that crisis. Struggling still in 1932 to constitute a systemics for the articulation of a primary modernist text, remembering, in California, his wish to film *Ulysses*, he describes his "cinema of the mind, a film capable of reconstructing all phases and all specifics of the course of thought." He is shifting, at this point, from a pristine conception of 'intellectual cinema', which had culminated in a projected film version of *Capital* and its rendering of analytic, dialectical method, to another aspiration, more complex, even more problematic: the rendering of the movement of consciousness. He posits the filmic "interior monologue" as the agent of the dissolution of "the distinction between subject and object," undertaken in the novels of Edouard Dujardin, and completed in the work of Joyce. *Ulysses*, then, had become the other prime utopian project of the 1930's, out of which Eisenstein's notion of intellectual cinema continued to be refined. He informs us, in his excitement, of a period of preliminary work upon his script for *An American Tragedy*, another project of that period, which stimulated this sort of speculation, and of the "wonderful sketches" produced in the process. Here is Eisenstein's description:

> Like thought, they would sometimes proceed with visual images. with sound. Synchronized or non-synchronized. Then as sounds. Formless. Or with sound—images with objectively representational sounds . . .
> Then suddenly, definite intellectually formulated words—as 'intellectual' and dispassionate as pronounced words. With a black screen, a rushing imageless visuality.
> Then in passionate disconnected speech, nothing but nouns. Or nothing but verbs. Then interjections. With zigzags of aimless shapes, whirling along with these in synchronization.
> Then reacing visual images over complete silence.
> Then linked with polyphonic sounds. Then both at once.
> Then interpolated into the outer course of action, then
> interpolating elements of the outer action into the inner monologue.

> As if presenting inside the characters the inner play, the conflict of doubts, the explosions of passion, the voice of reason, rapidly or in slow-motion, marking the differing rhythms of one and the other in slow-motion, marking the differing rhythms of one and the other and, at the same time, contrasting with the almost complete absence of outer action: a feverish inner debate behind the stony mask of the face. The syntax of inner speech as distinct from outer speech. The quivering inner words that correspond with the visual images. Contrasts with outer circumstances. How they work reciprocally . . .[4]

And Eisenstein ends by remarking, "These notes for this 180 degrees advance in sound film culture languished in a suitcase—and were eventually buried, Pompeii-like beneath a mass of books . . ." There they remained. Sound was to lead Eisenstein in quite another direction, to the hieratic exacerbation of *Ivan the Terrible.*

This buried page, however, might figure as a blue-print for a cinema that was still to come. Its affirmation of disjunction, of the shifting relations of image and sound, its stress on polyphony, upon the use of silence and of the black screen as dynamic formal elements are familiar to us; Eisenstein, in a dazzling leap of the imagination, had invented on paper, the essential tenor, the form, the thrust and strategies of American Independent Cinema of our own last two decades.

Malevich's injunction, then, recalled perhaps by Eisenstein in his attempt to construct the visual systemics of a Joycean subjectivity, was to be reinvented by American film-makers of the independent persuasion in that immediate post-war period of the 1940s which sees the flowering of painting in this same country. They discovered a viable continuity with a European tradition of the painterly avant garde, whose major cinematic figures—Richter, Duchamp, Léger, Man Ray—had, of course, taken refuge in the United States.

This latterday re-invention, grounded in the rejection of the material conditions of industrial cinematic production and of the alienation inscribed within the division of labor upon which that is postulated, was grounded in a thorough-going critique of the codes of representation in western art and film. This critique has been the subtext of the recent, collective enterprize of Brakhage, Breer, Snow, Landow, Frampton, Gehr, Kubelka, and their fellows. The work of some two or three generations of film-makers, it is most elaborately exemplified in the film practice and theory of Stan Brakhage. Here, then, is a passage from "Metaphors on Vision":

> And here, somewhere we have an eye (I'll speak for myself) capable of an imagining (the only reality). And there (right there) we have the camera eye (. . . its lenses ground—to achieve 19th century Western compositional perspective—as best exemplified by the 19th-century architectural conglomeration of details of the classical ruin) in

4. *Film Form*, p. 182.

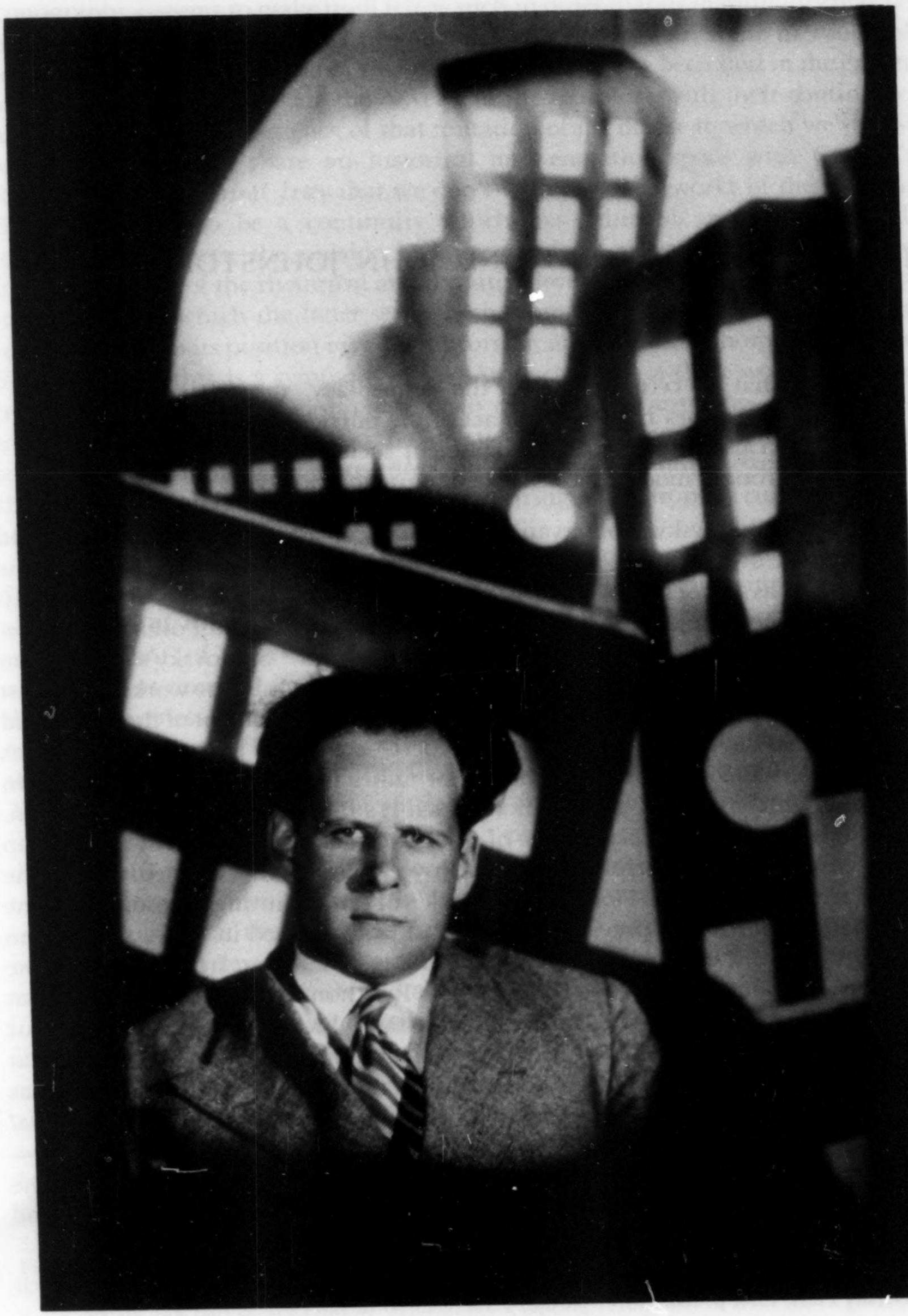
> bending the light and limiting the frame of the image just so, its standard camera and projector speed for recording movement geared to the feeling of the ideal slow Viennese waltz and even its tripod head, being the neck it swings on, balled with bearings to permit it that *Les Sylphides* motion ideal for the contemplative romantic and virtually restricted to horizontal and vertical movements (pillars and horizon lines), a diagonal requiring a major adjustment, its lenses coated or provided with filters, its light meters balanced and its colour film manufactured, to produce that picture post card effect (salon painting) exemplified by those oh so blue skies and peachy skins.[5]

What was the cinematic strategy that would implement this insistence, like that of Malevich, on the pre-eminence of interiority and the assault upon the space of representation? How was this assault to be accomplished? Not by the destruction of the objects and actions of narrative representation, but *rather by the transformation of the spatio-temporality which is their pre-condition, of the coordinates which locate and define them.* Brakhage's major strategy was the *radical re-definition of filmic temporality, the creation of a perpetual Present,* one frame or sequence succeeding another in the most rapid fluidity of editing, devouring or eliminating expectation, as a vector of cinematic experience. Memory and expectation are annulled by images which have the intimacy and elusiveness of those we call hypnagogic, those experienced in the half-waking state. And like the hypnagogic image, the Brakhage film presents itself perceptually in a perpetual renewal, resisting observation and cognition. The hypnagogic image is immediate, appears and disappears all at once; it is not subject to the laws of perception—to those pf perspective, for example. It has, as Sartre once remarked, the property of exciting attention and perception: one sees something, but what one sees *is* nothing.

In Brakhage, then, there is no time, no room, as it were, for expectation; the spatial *données* are obscured or fractured by hand-movement of the camera, by painting upon film, by speed; continuity is rhythmic, postulated on the metaphoric syntheses elicited in the viewer by cutting rapidly from one frame to the next. The painting upon film, which asserts the image plane; the use of fades, of superimpositions which, in setting movement upon movement, contract the space in which each develop; the frequent use of the empty frame, all tend, in one way or another, to contract space, to render it increasingly optical. It was the radical subversion of the spatio-temporal *données* that dissolved the scene of narrative action, constituting thereby another space, of movement. Eisenstein's eventual intimation of this was to come in 1939, and is clear: "Cinema is not only a solution for the problem of movement in pictorial images, but is also the achievement of a new and unprecedented form of graphic art, an art that is a free stream of changing, transforming, comingling forms, pictures and compositions, hitherto possible only in music."[6]

5. Stan Brakhage, "Metaphors on Vision," *Film Culture,* no. 30 (Fall 1963), n.p.
6. S. M. Eisenstein, *Film Form,* p. 105.

(This



(This is the second section of an essay in three parts.)

Gravity's Rainbow and the Spiral Jetty (conclusion)

JEREMY GILBERT-ROLFE AND JOHN JOHNSTON

> What is certain is that the immediacy, the retrievability of different tongues in the speech act of the polyglot is, in crucial part, a function of the environment. Different social settings, different locations strongly modify the sense of linguistic priority.[1]

Viktor Shklovsky's observation that art consists of the rediscovery and development of peripheral forms seems to apply to *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* as it does also to Joyce's *Ulysses* and to such events in the recent history of American painting and sculpture as Newman's and Pollock's involvement with (different varieties of) American Indian art.[2] Shklovsky's speculation has been confirmed by the art that's come after as much as by the works of the past on which the original remark relied. Moreover, the development of the peripheral as a structural device has—as one would expect—continued to undergo mutations which underscore its indispensability to, or rather inextricability from, a certain kind of artistic ambition, an ambition which it's fair to say identifies a tradition.

Perhaps it is as a consequence of this continual development of attitudes to the manipulation of peripherality that Joyce's use of the vernacular and the domestic to defamiliarize Homer, or Pollock's of sand painting to reconstitute the pictorialism which had previously been most fully realized in Paris, seems from the vantage point of the mid-seventies qualitatively different from the use of the peripheral found in the work of Smithson or Pynchon. (It might be objected that we are too inclined to define as 'peripheral' that which is simply different. Our reply would be that this is precisely what the term means when one is looking at anything, and that it is in this way that things and events are made to be read as peripheral when they occur in works of art.) In *Gravity's Rainbow* or the *Spiral Jetty* the peripheral, introduced as that which is on the fringes of culture—linguistically and historically, as in Pynchon's use of Balto-Slavic and of the Kirghiz, or Smithson's use of Utah and of American Indian lore and

1. George Steiner, *After Babel*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 291.
2. Viktor Shklovsky, *Sentimental Journey*, trans. Richard Sheldon, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1970, p. 180.

iconography—seems to make itself felt as such in order that its marginality may be experienced as the reverse. The peripheral becomes the main route or routes of access to the work, a function of that digression which has been said in the earlier parts of this essay to provide the novel and the sculpture with their continuity. And because of our experience of that mutation of the device to which we've just referred—in that we share an historical and empathic space with *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* that we don't with the great works of the 1920s or '50s—this seems to be a continuity which has achieved an 'unprecedented' relationship between the outside and the inside of the art object; a renewed interpenetration of the rhetorical and narrative levels of the work. That is to say, a relationship in which the latter seems both more relative—in the sense of being more mobile—in its position *vis à vis* the former, and also more thoroughly buried by it. Whether this is a symptom of the 'Americanness' of these works is for the reader to ponder. He or she isn't necessarily committed to anything—certainly not to what has been usefully termed the Affective Fallacy,[3] since representation in the sense of signifying an as it were *anthropological* order is not at issue—by noting that America itself is an entity recently on the fringes of European culture but now at its center.

In any case, it makes little sense, then, to say of *Gravity's Rainbow* or the *Spiral Jetty* that such and such lies at the center of either work, since, as we have also attempted to establish in the previously published sections of this essay, a concommitant of their reliance on digression is that anything either work contains is as much at its center as anything else. Further, they are committed to the digressiveness shown by Auerbach to be the paradigmatic armature of the epic form in a manner which invokes the qualifications made on that form in and by the age of cinema. Epics are built out of discrete parts of an accumulating whole. The kind of mutual discretion found in the works under discussion has behind it that cinematic influence which Benjamin perceived as having an effect on the theater of Bertolt Brecht: "The forms of epic theater correspond to the new technical forms—cinema and radio . . . In film, the theory has become more and more accepted that the audience should be able to 'come in' at any point, that complicated plot developments should be avoided and that each part, besides the value it has for the whole, should also possess its own episodic value."[4]

What is interesting here is not so much the question of being able to 'come in' at any point—we should prefer to think of this capacity, which we have noted as an attribute of Cézanne's use of the grid as an aspect of cinematic structure anticipated by the development of anti-hierarchical ways of ordering the art object which defined the modernist enterprise in general by the end of the last century[5]—but rather the impetus given by the example of film to manipulations of the device

3. W. K. Wimsatt and Munroe Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy," *The Verbal Icon*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1954, pp. 21–39.
4. Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock, London, NLB, 1973, p. 6.
5. See the first part of this essay in *October*, no. 1 (Spring 1976),

which result in ever greater separations between episodes. This is the sense in which *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* seem in one way or another to achieve an 'unprecedented' kind of articulation. One respect in which Pynchon's novel differs from *Ulysses* is that the encyclopaedic properties of the more recent work are predicated upon a visual descriptiveness which is more likely, while it reinforces literary interiority, to cause continuity to be effected through the memory of the preceding visual description. This too has already been mentioned.[6] Freedom of movement in *Gravity's Rainbow* is deeply indebted to the freedom of movement provided by the shot in cinema. When transitions become especially rapid and complex—as in the sequence which begins by talking about cathedral spires and proceeds through a series of visually comparable convergences which include the clasping of a stocking by a suspender belt and the Brenschluss point[7]—their fluency is provided by the reinforcement given to the act of reading by cinematic practice, notably in a way which if anything points to the semiotic density of any visual image and in doing so imputes that same multiplicity of reference to the language which summoned it up. The disjunctiveness upon which *Gravity's Rainbow's* transitions rely is similar to what Joyce does by placing quite different kinds of prose next to one another—a device which Pynchon too employs in and for itself—which makes it possible to say that where Pynchon differs from Joyce is where he reconstitutes the latter's ambition.[8] It is in

6. *October*, no. 1, p. 82ff.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
8. Edward Mendelson's essay, "Gravity's Encyclopaedia," which appeared as this last part of our own study was going to press, confirms from a different perspective several of the points made here. His effort to account for the salient features of *Gravity's Rainbow* by examining it in terms of a special genre—the encyclopaedic narrative—leads him to compare Pynchon and Joyce at some length, particularly in their attitude to language, their use of models based on the family (Joyce) and paranoia (Pynchon), and their assumptions about what is important in the depiction of character.

Most relevant here is Mendelson's assertion that the novel's ideological and thematic center lies in the Kirghiz episode, because it clearly depicts a situation in which history is shaping language most directly: "For the Kirghiz people, before the arrival of Tchitcherine and his bureaucracy, language 'was purely speech, gesture, touch . . . and even an Arabic script to replace'." (p. 338) With the introduction of the New Turkic Alphabet, or NTA, various divisions of labor and authority now organize and articulate themselves over the buried strata of the local folk culture. Unlike the language of Joyce's 'Oxen of the Sun,' the NTA does not develop according to an organic model but is shaped deliberately by the forces of government, forces which are themselves ultimately directed and initiated by the cartels which organize the book's secular world. If Joyce's 'Oxen of the Sun' chapter in *Ulysses* offers a linguistic history modelled on embryology and concerned mainly with the history of literary styles and their relationship to social convention, then, according to Mendelson, *Gravity's Rainbow*, by demonstrating how changes in language are politically motivated, may be said to assert the non-availability of that organic model. For Mendelson, this has all the consequences of a 'Fall': "All the book's efforts at truth-telling, all its thrusts at the increase of freedom through the revelation of necessity, are *infected* by the inevitable fact that the book itself must use a language that is, unavoidably, a system shaped by the very powers and orders that it hopes to reveal. Language can never be liberated from lies. One cannot speak outside of language, and one cannot directly speak the truth from within it—this not only the reflective sense proclaimed by recent critical theory, but in a political sense as well. To separate oneself from language, in an attempt to be free from its imposed order, is to enter a world of chaos and vacancy. This tragic realization is at the ideological center as well as on the stylistic surface of the book." Mendelson's essay appears in *Mindful Pleasures: Essays on Thomas Pynchon*, ed. George Levine and David Levereny, Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1976.

its assumptions about allusiveness, its communication of a potential for expansion into multi-dimensionality of any message whatsoever, that *Gravity's Rainbow* identifies itself with the ambition of *Ulysses* as it simultaneously distances itself historically by recognizing and employing the priority of cinema in the sensibility of its own time.

Techniques of transition are important to this discussion because it is in them that one recognizes the text functioning so as to ensure that to move from one episode to another is to maintain a relationship between disparate states whose legibility depends on an experience of displacement. It is there, as we shall shortly explain, that one sees in them a particular treatment of the theme of repression as a characteristic of language. *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* are polyglot enterprises which, acknowledging their own intersection with history as things of a certain kind, make a specifiable use of the history they inherit. In presenting the work itself as a generative device—in a manner responsive to Mallarmé's example of the successive exclusion by one of all other pages as a model for reading—*Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* invite an analysis which, as Starobinski says of Saussure's, "is oriented not towards a generative psychic faculty (the imagination) but towards antecedent verbal and historical fact."[9]

*

> One . . . realizes that there are some signs that seem better adapted to the expression of abstract correlations (like *symbols*) and others that would appear to be more useful in direct reference to states of the world, *icons* or *indices*, which are more immediately involved in the direct mentioning of actual objects.[10]

To talk of a sign which acts as a generative device being a consequence of "antecedent verbal and historical fact" is hardly to lapse into intentionalism of any sort, since we see that whether anagrammatic reconstitution takes place consciously or unconsciously the effect, inasmuch as the result is a work of art dependent on the redistribution of some 'hidden' order, is the same in either case. However, the Russian scholar Vyacheslav Ivanov, in contradistinction to Saussure's claim that he knew of no employment of anagrammatic generation in which the artist was aware of the original meaning of the device he or she was engaged in redeploying, has offered an historical observation regarding a conscious use of it that seems relevant to the work of Smithson and Pynchon. Through the example of Sergei Eisenstein, it sets the scene for the modernist practise of unveiling—as it were 'de-anagrammizing'—the work:

9. Jean Starobinski, *Les mots sous les mots*, Paris, Gallimard, p. 17.
10. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1976, p. 157.

> The degree of conscious understanding of one's own poetical devices varies within the epoch and the personality. It might be supposed that the critical periods (such as the beginning of the Renaissance and the 20th century) could make it possible to develop fullest consciousness of one's own poetics, as might be shown by the example of the great Russian writer Andrei Belyi, who was one of the founders of modern poetics and of the filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, whose theoretical legacy remains the source of inspiration for recent studies of the art . . . if one accepts Lévi-Strauss's idea about the influence of the attitude of the society preventing the poet from understanding his own devices it might be supposed that the epoch of spiritual and aesthetic revolt makes this social pressure less important. Thus the whole position of art . . . in the 20th century might be connected with the sudden rise of poetics studied also by poets and artists themselves—as geometrical studies of perspective and other foundations of visual arts were made possible for Dürer and Leonardo by the spiritual atmosphere of the Renaissance. The society that suppresses the free will for self-recognition is hostile to the exact science of art. It is by no means accidental that a man of genius such as Eisenstein felt inclined to go through the complete investigation of his own creative process as well as his own psychology (as shown by his diaries). Practically he was a man without an unconscious, if the latter might be understood as a function of social censorship (in Freud's sense) then the absence of a border between the conscious and the unconscious is typical of such Renaissance-type persons as Leonardo and Eisenstein . . .[11]

In common with Eisenstein's, works such as *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* posit not only an author without an unconscious which is hidden—from him- or herself and the rest of the world—but also the idea of mankind itself as being without a concealed unconscious. The modernist work, consistent with Lacan's description of language as the external force which brings the unconscious into being, is made preëminently out of the public, the archetypal, the known, in short out of the materials which define the consciousness of the group. By virtue of their antecedence, the verbal and historical facts involved are primarily public rather than private significations. This is the sense in which Ivanov's description of Eisenstein is a picture of modernism itself at work:

> Eisenstein's interest in myths and rituals as cues to the archetypes that he studied in his last aesthetic works (that remain unpublished) was connected with his conception of the 'Grundproblem' of the art.

11. Vyacheslav V. Ivanov, "Growth of the Theoretical Framework of Modern Poetics," *Current Trends in Linguistics, XII, Linguistics and Adjacent Arts and Sciences*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok, The Hague, Mouton, p. 838.

> The 'main problem' consisted in the necessity of the conflict of at least two evolutionary levels in the structure of each work of art. According to Eisenstein's theory . . . the authentic form should be based on lower archaic levels cognate to those reflected in myths, rituals, symbols of the unconscious, *etc.*; at the same time it is possible to use art to express modern intellectual conceptions . . . His conception of the 'Grund-problem' was connected with the diachronically motivated understanding of the role of regressive movements in art and in history.[12]

Pynchon's use of the mandala, Smithson's of the spiral, as devices which generate the text that is our reading of them, determine, as we have said, the internal relationships of each piece through the same device which identifies its relationship to the world. Because they have associated meanings which antedate the works—in *Gravity's Rainbow*, associations which are enumerated within the narrative itself—the mandala and the spiral mark the interaction between the reader or viewer and the novel or sculpture in such a way as to ensure the recognition that the generation of signification occurs not so much within the work as between it and its audience; to this extent the narrative level takes its shape from the rhetorical.

In addition, to the extent that the shape of its content has literally been prescribed, the 'unveiled anagram' is a device which robs the work of any pretensions to autonomy. On the other hand, in that prescription is the ability to achieve a 'complete' interaction between the shaping device and that which it shapes. The ending of *Gravity's Rainbow* achieves resolution within the work by addressing the reader directly, as to come to the 'end' of the *Spiral Jetty* is to be placed at the very center of the work.

What is involved in this use of the mandala and the spiral may not be as strict an invariant order as that which Saussure found in Latin poetry. But, as the passages from Ivanov might be taken to suggest, that which binds poetics—through metaphor—close to the workings of language, may be more generally, or otherwise, so of the other arts. In any event it remains the case that the most ambitious works of 20th century art have taken their inspiration from a dilemma hitherto discussed here in rather different terms but quintessentially the subject of models of language, the paradox that tells us that language cannot be described from outside, in terms it did not itself provide. One need only add that works like Smithson's and Pynchon's make it very apparent that to recognize an anagram is not to know it, that what provides order simultaneously signals the obscurity of its origin. It seems unlikely that any artist's grasp of the anagram he or she employs could be shown to be different in anything but degree from the ignorance which disenchanted Saussure with his study of it.

All that in the work which has to do with change is referred to the anagram

12. *Ibid.*, p. 848.

in its role as an invariant metonymically connected to details of the whole. Since the device *is* the work—a square painting is a painted square and also a painting of a square—it is, further, an invariant which is only immanent when a detail of the whole is being ingested. This provisional absence allows the structuring device to penetrate detail while maintaining its difference from it, which is important insofar as it is this that guarantees an experience of the work which is dialectic. The spiralling growth of salt crystals is contextualized, as are the myth of the whirlpool and the representational potential of the conch shell,[13] by the *Jetty* itself, a fourth expression of the shape that links these three, and the mechanism which is none of them but gives back to them their mutual allusiveness.

The anagram is then that which, in accordance with Ivanov's description of Eisenstein's proposals, permits the introduction of contemporary thinking into that milieu of allusion. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, as we noted above, the implications and also the working of that juxtaposition are represented within the narrative itself, as, for example, when Slothrop is described as:

> . . . trying to dope out the trajectory of arrow-stable trajectories, or tracing nearly with the end of his nose some German circuit schematic whose resistors look like coils, and the coils like resistors—"What bizarre shit," once he got hep to it, "why would they go and switch it around like that? Trying to camouflage it, or what?"
>
> "Recall your ancient German runes," suggests Sir Stephen Dodson-Truck, who is from the Foreign Office P.I.D. and speaks 33 languages including English with a strong Oxonian blither to it.
>
> "My what?"
>
> "Oh," lips compressing, some kind of brain nausea here, "that coil symbol there happens to be very like the Old Norse rune for 'S', *sôl*, which means 'sun'. The Old High German name for it is *sigil*."
>
> "Funny way to draw that *sun*," it seems to Slothrop.
>
> "Indeed. The Goths, much earlier, had used a circle with a dot in the center. This broken line evidently dates from a time of discontinuities, tribal fragmenting perhaps, alienation—whatever's analagous, in a social sense, to the development of an independent ego by the very young child, you see . . ."[14]

What we are suggesting, albeit hesitantly, in observing the role played by the overall shape of Smithson's sculpture, and our reproduction of the above passage from Pynchon's novel, is that these works are of a type in which, in the terms set by Umberto Eco's use of Pierce's categorization of signs into some that are

13. See *October*, no. 2 (Summer 1976), 87.
14. *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 206.

symbolic and others that are iconic or indexical, the inside-outside relationship whose recognition constitutes our reading of the work is one in which the indexical structures the narrative level by constantly assuming a symbolic identity which connects it to the whole. This is to say that all indexical or iconic references to the concrete contain a dimension which places them in the realm of the abstract—the symbolic. This interchange between the indexical and the symbolic is in other words necessary because it is there that things mutate into principles, the particular into the pervasive. It is a necessity which suggests that *Gravity's Rainbow* and *The Spiral Jetty* are works of a type which seeks to restore the notion of the sublime through techniques brought to fruition in its 19th century heir, the fantastic.

*

Tzvetan Todorov defines the fantastic as a literature based essentially on a hesitation provoked in the reader as to the nature of an uncanny event. In the conclusion to his study of the subject, after noting the relatively brief life of this literature—from the late 18th to the late 19th century—he provides a connection to his discussion of the transmutation of the fantastic in more recent fiction:

> The nineteenth century transpired, it is true, in a metaphysics of the real and the imaginary, and the literature of the fantastic is nothing but the bad conscience of the positivist era. But today, we can no longer believe in an immutable, external reality, nor in a literature which is merely the transcription of such a reality. The literature which has always asserted this other vision is doubtless one of the agencies of such a development. Fantastic literature itself—which on every page subverts linguistic categorizations—has received a fatal blow from these very categorizations. But this death, this suicide generates a new literature.[15]

Todorov takes the familiar example of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, in which a supernatural event, given in the first sentence, is gradually 'naturalized' in such a manner as to eliminate any possibility of either hesitation or astonishment; that is, the movement of the narrative is in effect one of adaptation to the unacceptable:

> What does such a narrative structure signify? In the fantastic, the uncanny or supernatural event was perceived against the background of what is considered normal and natural: the transgression of the laws of nature made us even more powerfully aware of them. In Kafka, the supernatural event no longer provokes hesitation, for the world de-

15. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic, A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard, Cleveland, The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973, p. 168.

> scribed is entirely bizarre, abnormal as the very event to which it provides a background. We therefore find here (but in an inverted form) the problem of the literature of the fantastic—a literature which postulates the existence of the real, the natural, the normal, in order to attack it subsequently—but Kafka has managed to transcend this problem. He treats the irrational as though it were part of a game: his entire world obeys an oneiric logic, if not indeed a nightmare one, which no longer has anything to do with the real. Even if a certain hesitation persists in the reader, it ceases to affect the character; and identification, as we have previously noted it, is no longer possible. The Kafkaesque narrative abandons what we had said was the second condition of the fantastic and the one that more particularly characterizes the nineteenth century example: the hesitation represented within the text.[16]

With Kafka, says Todorov, we are confronted with a *generalized fantastic* which swallows up the entire world of both book and reader. What in the world of the fantastic was an exception is now the rule. This is a development which *Gravity's Rainbow* may be said both to assume and to complicate. The hesitation represented within the 19th century novel has been replaced by devices of defamiliarization that—as we have remarked—insure that signification occurs between the work and its audience, thereby allowing the fiction to maintain a constant, metonymic interaction with the actual world. In contrast Kafka's seems essentially metaphoric. In Pynchon's novel the mechanisms of culture, made strange by the attribution of negative motivation—simultaneously triggering a collective memory which they inhibit or shunt off elsewhere—are depicted as part of an historical process which creates but also obscures the terms of its own unveiling. The uncanny event, from which the central movement of the narrative follows and which remains mysterious or inexplicable throughout while never seeming unacceptable, is the exact correspondence of Slothrop's sexual encounters and the spots in London hit by V-2s. By making Slothrop's personal past a product of the same technology that produced the rocket, making the former inextricable from the latter in his insistence on rendering personal history inextricable from the historical condition of the culture, Pynchon activates within fiction the institutional determinates of modern life, and it is this aspect of his fiction which encroaches upon and reveals those taboos which have replaced, in contemporary American fiction and poetry, the ones destroyed by the advent of psychoanalysis earlier in the century.

Todorov, although he notes the importance of Freud and psychoanalysis in general in regard to the elimination of the taboos which provided the themes of the Fantastic, is at no time actually obliged by his argument to refer to Freud's

16. Todorov, p. 173.

own essay on the uncanny. That document, which marks a crucial shift in thinking about the fantastic and supernatural in both literary and non-literary contexts, does however have a special relevance for the present discussion inasmuch as the three levels on which Freud's treatment of the subject proceeds correspond to three aspects of the ambition we've attributed to *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty*.

First, Freud's essay begins as an attempt to account for a linguistic anomaly—the fact that in German *heimlich* (familiar, homely, and also secret) and its antonym *unheimlich* are synonymous across several shades of meaning—and assumes throughout very close ties between the workings of language and all psychic—including literary—processes. Derrida says that Freud is here responding to an undecidable ambivalence, "the game of the double, the endless interplay between the fantastic and the real" initiated by this correspondence.[17]

Second, Freud's attempt to provide a rational explanation for the appearance of the uncanny at the simplest empirical level leads him to postulate the re-emergence of a sedimented and archaic mental organization:

> It would seem as though each one of us has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to that animistic shape in primitive man, that none of us has traversed it without perceiving certain traces of it which can be re-activated, and that everything which now strikes us as 'uncanny' fulfills the condition of stirring those vestiges of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression.[18]

And third, Freud's definition of the uncanny as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar"[19] suggests a recursive movement similar to that which we have said is a characteristic of one's response to *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty*.[20] Insofar as Freud describes the uncanny as the effect produced by the re-emergence of something familiar and long established in the mind which had become estranged through the process of repression, it is in his terms that *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* illustrate the sense in which the uncanny—a consequence of producing extraordinary signification by and through the ordinary—provides the conditions for a reconstitution of the sublime; nor does it escape our notice that Freud describes the one and Burke the other in very similar terms.

17. Jacques Derrida, *La Dissémination*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1972, pp. 300-301.
18. Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'," *On Creativity and the Unconscious*, trans. Alix Strachey, New York, Harper, 1958, p. 148.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 123ff.
20. See *October*, no. 1, 77.

*

> Memoirists describe the futurists making preperformance publicity strolls through town with painted faces and wearing strange, colorful costumes. Burliuk, for instance, in addition to a gilded nose, a raspberry coat, a powdered face, and a woman's lorgnette, had the inscription "I'm Burliuk" on his forehead. All three had radishes in their buttonholes. Street urchins would shout, "Are these Americans?"[21]

No tendency in 20th century art has been more dependent on the modernism of Paris, while thoroughly separated from it, than that made in Russia between (very roughly) 1900 and 1935, except for American art since Abstract Expressionism. Both have as a primary stimulus the wish to achieve a new—rediscovered—zero degree in the transaction between object and viewer (in the literature on the subject this is more often than not described as a zero degree *within* the object). Malevich's *White on White* and a painting by Robert Ryman are quite different except in this one respect. Both American and Russian art present this reductive ambition as a pathway to a matter-of-factness which will both preserve the work from preciousness and bring it closer to the world. Smithson called his cinematic documentation of the *Spiral Jetty* an "industrial film" and this attitude echoes, however distantly, the ambition expressed by Dziga Vertov.

In proposing, as we have said *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty* do, that the world speaks through the work—*i.e.*, by presenting the work as an instrument of retrieval—Smithson and Pynchon exhibit a commonality of ambition which is more Mallarméan than that of most of their contemporaries. Both attach importance to the organization of the work which invokes Mallarmé's sentiments when, referring to the letters of the alphabet as corresponding "like a subtle piano-key to an attitude of Mystery," he says:

> That is precisely what the modern requires: to look at himself in the mirror, commonplace as he is—waited upon by his obsequious ghost woven from the word ready for opportunities.
>
> While, during the reign of language, it had first to be harmonized according to its origin, in order that some august meaning might be produced: in the line of verse, dispenser, organizer of the play of pages, master of the book. Whether its entireness appear visibly amid margins and white; or whether it be hidden—call it Prose—none the less it is itself if there remain some secret pursuit of music in the discretion of Speech.[22]

21. Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism, A History*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968, p. 138.
22. Stephane Mallarmé, "Quant au Livre," *Mallarmé*, ed. and trans. Anthony Hartley, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 182ff.

Unlike Russia for the Russian avant-garde, America offers themes of displacement different from those of the old world. America is a country of conquerors rather than inheritors, albeit conquerors as a consequence of exile. Pynchon's use of the town of Kinosha, whose population is almost entirely made up of people from countries absorbed at one point or other by the Axis, is of note here. American art has recurrently sought to activate itself through its environment, and it is for that reason that its most successful products have been those which recognized why it was so essential to avoid Pathos.

The works which have been discussed here aspire most to the condition of language in their quadriviality—*langue* and *parole*, big Other and small other, in the work and the recipient—and in the persistent awareness of immanent signification which that implies and on which it in fact depends. Jakobson has explained the necessity of the concept of the zero to any explanation of the differentiating function of language,[23] and in this connection one might want to say that Pynchon's titling of the first part of his novel "Beyond the Zero" ought to be taken literally in the same way that it has been said of Mallarmé: "It must not be forgotten that when Mallarmé used *hyperbolic* to designate the paradox of the work of art, he was playing with the double meaning of that word and making use of both its rhetorical and mathematical significance."[24]

Finally, the persistent use of *indices* and icons within the context of a transmutation through a symbolic form is itself a primary task of language as such. This is also an ideological question, in that, as Lucio Coletti has shown, a distinction analogous to that which lies between these two has been the subject of apparent confusion throughout the history of the dialectic, inasmuch as he shows that one cannot talk of a dialectic of things in the world, because: "Reality cannot contain dialectical contradictions but only real oppositions, conflicts between forces, relations of contrariety. The latter are *ohne Widerspruch, i.e., non-contradictory* oppositions, and not dialectical contradictions." Indexical signification cannot, then, present dialectical contradiction but only imply it. "On the other hand," Coletti goes on to say, "capitalist oppositions are, for Marx, dialectical contradictions and not real oppositions."[25] We have said that an analogous conviction of the presence of the symbol in the index characterizes *Gravity's Rainbow* and the *Spiral Jetty*.

N.Y., 1975–6

(*third part of an essay in three parts*)

23. Roman Jakobson, "Implications of Language Universals for Linguistics," in *Universals of Language*, ed. Joseph H. Greenberg, Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1966, p. 270.
24. Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, New York, Harper, 1971, p. 201.
25. Lucio Coletti, "Marxism and the Dialectic," trans. John Matthews, *New Left Review* (Sept-Oct., 1975), 14.



Robert Smithson. Spiral Jetty. *1969–70. (Photo: Gianfranco Gorgoni.)*

ROBERT PINCUS-WITTEN

Several issues prompt a retrospective glance, not the least of them, a need to rid myself of an ambivalence felt towards my past. A journal challenges memory, a stab at making the rapid passing of life's minute increments more real, more mine, not only for having lived them but for reliving them in their record and reading.

An important cohesive style is ending, one which I rank with the highest efforts of modern art. Like all energized moments in that history, a new stylistic beginning first seems to fuse disparate elements cohesively. Yet all the while the artists in whom the new consciousness is embodied are developing in their own ways. The period I am speaking about—roughly between 1968 and 1973—I call post-minimalism (aspects of which are reflected in these entries), a phase marked by the emergence (and in two instances, the untimely deaths) of such diverse figures as Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, Keith Sonnier, Barry Le Va, Lynda Benglis, Mel Bochner, Dorothea Rockburne, Vito Acconci. Then too there is a whole slightly younger suite: Bruce Boice, Jan Groover, Jackie Ferrara, Peter Campus, Lizzie Borden, James Collins, Scott Burton, among others. Since that time the ever more elaborate conceptual possibilities of post-minimalism have emerged. The central figures of the style continue to make art of high quality. The main difference being that they now make it in the absence of that early keyed-up buoyant sense of communal achievement.

It must always be kept in mind that post-minimalism, like all other styles, responds to its own independent internal logic, its formal changes no more or less a function of social and economic factors than those of other styles. Yet the overflow of European neo-Marxism has reemphasized this frame of reference, making it easy, today, to discount the internal logic of the style (developing from an inert abstract reductivism to a coloristic expressionism to an even more marked concern for system and concept) and instead to lay the explanation of its formal mannerism foundling-like at the Marxist door. To be sure, the social and economic pressures that mark this sensibility cannot be scanted; post-minimalism coincides with the computerized abuses of the American adventure in Vietnam, the cool lubricated machinery of Nixonianism during its sway, a machinery still in motion in the current promotion of glossy new national leaders.

Robert Pincus-Witten's narrative of his experience as Associate Editor of Artforum magazine is offered as a document of particular interest to the readers of OCTOBER. It is our view that this personal and fragmentary account of the career of a journal which was, for a decade, of central importance to the plastic arts and to their understanding, by no means exhausts the issues essential for a comprehension of that career, now at a very critical stage. A full understanding requires analysis of the contradictions under which Artforum operated and the intensification of those contradictions which impelled our own dissociation from the magazine and the founding of OCTOBER as presented in our first issue of Spring, 1976.

The Editors.

On still another level, post-minimalism's early moment coincided with a widespread belief in the august clairvoyance of modernist art criticism generally, and the preeminence amounting to a mystique of *Artforum* specifically; thus a secondary consideration of "Naked Lunches" addresses in an unfocussed way the question, just who killed *Artforum* (assuming, for argument's sake, that the magazine, as an editorial enterprise is, in fact, dead)? A reply is fragmentarily hinted at in the desultory journal I resumed keeping in 1970, occasional entries of which have already appeared in various magazines as the basis of numerous exhibition reviews, studio descriptions, and generalized notations on modern aesthetics. Naturally, a journal is a personal document—the excized considerations on art form only a small part of the broader evaluations of experience—public and private, set down more or less regularly, week to week. On the one hand there is the need to be honest; on the other a reticence before broadcasting gratuitous affront.

The entries that concern me here relate to the telling peculiarities of the critics who at one point contributed, or continue to contribute, to the magazine. Hence a third impulse of this piece is generated by dumb happenstance—my having come into contact, sometimes intimacy, willy-nilly with a remarkable body of artists and intellectuals, persons who have in varying degrees set the tone or standard of the art of their moment. Simple experience of the art world has led me to recognize the widespread curiosity about critics and the critical life. Thus the publication of these entries might serve to debunk further a world in which, for better or worse, a dubious mystique and glamor has been invested.

A journal is a funny thing. To say that someone is odious or genial—those are opinions, fugitive assessments. Such views are predicated on the unwritten, unspoken phrase "it seems to me," as is everything we write or think preceded by that exculpation. The mute "it seems to me" is tacitly assumed to be the basis of any kind of conversational exchange. By contrast, to say that on such-and-such a date I wrote that someone behaved in an odious or genial way, that is a fact, an incidental manifestation of truth, whether or not the actions or words noted were in fact pernicious or inspired.

A kind of history emerges from the record of my opinion. The journal mirrors art-life generally. It records vagrant impressions, reverberating the stray echoes, appetites, and cant of the art world. Little features fascinate. Tiny particulars, the psychological or physical peculiarity that informs the diagnostic profile.

A list of characters seems necessary, 'the good guys' versus 'the bad guys', though the personae have a way of jumping camps, of academizing radicalism or of radicalizing academism, so that it's not so easy in places to designate 'my side' or 'their side'. For example, at the beginning I would have placed Rosalind Krauss on 'the other team'—not so today; nor was I at the outset sensitive to the struggle Annette Michelson has made over the years in favor of new art. Earlier on, uncomprehendingly, I tended to see her as somewhat genteel; with her musty

elegance and woodwind speech, Annette was an especially easy target for caricature. While we all were smugly celebrating the death of French Art and the Miraculous Transfer of the House of Art from Paris to New York, Annette insisted on the continued vitality of French philosophy, linguistics, and anthropology. She had read, in some cases knew personally, Lévi-Strauss, Saussure, Barthes, while we only guessed at their intentions. Our information was secondhand, Annette's first.

Hers was a classic journey, the New York intellectual come of age after the Second World War when the pervading myth of modernism—Paris, queen city of the new—still held sufficiently strong to bring her there for a long sojourn. I knew the tag end of this belief. In the late fifties, as Michelson found the philosophical ore, I found the pictorial dross. Then too, Annette's nuanced use of English, discriminating say between 'film', 'cinema', and 'movies', once struck me as affected—in a way I suppose it still does—but it stems from a staunch need to protect language, and not from simple mandarin mannerism.

Were I at this moment then to draw up at least a 'them' team, I suppose the prime requirement would be whether or not the critic has maintained an openness to the contemporary experience, or whether this has been closed out, clogged by virtue of prior commitments, of *a priori* systems of response which lock the critic into partisan immobility. It goes without saying, Clement Greenberg excepted, that the 'Household Words' of art criticism do not enter these notations at all: Harold Rosenberg, Hilton Kramer, among others. No matter what the contemporary dilemma, they illuminate it in no way, though they often exacerbate its consequences through a publication of pat predictable judgments in magazines and newspapers of startling power and prestige but of no authentic interest to the art world.

In 1976 it's a bit easier for me to say who the 'them' are. 'They' are John Coplans, an energizing catalytic personality who often acts with a seeming arbitrariness. An assimilated South African, he trained for the British military, but following the Second World War he reacted against this repressive, caste-defending ethos. He became a painter in the train of the cool side of Abstract Expressionism, coming to the vigorous defense of post Second World War American art. An early champion of West Coast art, Coplans was one of the California founders of *Artforum*, at length taking over the New York Editorship after Philip Leider's profound alienation from the art scene made it no longer possible for him to continue in that role. Meantime, Coplans undertook to develop the California museum world, first as an artist among artists, then animating the Pasadena Museum and finally the museum of the University of California at Irvine. Despite his real successes—as a painter, a writer, a curator, an editor and now, as publisher/editor of the magazine—Coplans, as I recall him, was hounded by a sense of failure, one which has of late exacerbated strong (and for a long time dormant) class hostilities. It's clear from these entries how much I am of two minds about him. I see his flaws as those of vanity and selfishness—

possibly of duplicity—but, for all that, his achievements rank among the most admirable, both critical and museological, in mid-century American art life.

Lawrence Alloway: from ambiguous motives he gives voice to the frustrations and aspirations of disenfranchised sectors of the art world. Alloway's early career, like that of Coplans, was first played out in London where in the 1950s, following the lead of among others, Reyner Banham, Edouardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton, and the architect Peter Smithson, *i.e.* the Independent Group—he became a spokesman for a new technological iconography, one which led him to his support of Pop Art. Called at length to this country to be a curator at the Guggenheim Museum, he has had a checkered career—ranging from the Guggenheim itself to teaching at the University of Southern Illinois, writing for reviews as diverse as *The Nation* and *Artforum*, from the tension of unemployment to a tenured professorship at Stony Brook, SUNY, one he still holds. In many respects his power as a critic, if it is power, was extended to him because of his disingenuous dissembling as an uninstructed naif—making it in academia by adopting one of its classic travesties, the learned auto-didact.

Max Kozloff: ever placing carts before horses, Kozloff invariably misapprehends the intentions of contemporary art, attributing to it all the turgid content that typifies the readings of unreconstructed Marxists born of the urban depression. What is amusing is Kozloff's musical sense of language, the legacy of the *belle-lettristic* tradition which he always so solemnly castigates. "Oh—still another show for poor Max to dislike," drawled ironically, is a catchphrase by which new art is greeted. What is finally sad in all of this is that Max (and to lesser degrees, Coplans and Alloway) is animated by convictions, convictions often reduced to a stolid complaint: "yes, but . . . yes, but . . ." Such a ponderous ruse always wins if only because one just loses patience with it.

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4 October 1970. Philip said that there would be an *Artforum* luncheon this Tuesday. It seems they began about three years ago in the fall of 1967 when Emily Wasserman first came to write for us. Desultory meetings since then; what might have become the Magny Dinners, had we been up to it, have degenerated into an occasional lunch over a bad sandwich at Reuben's.

We first met at *Le Voisin* because we took their advertising costs out in edibles. The first luncheon was attended by Max Kozloff, Annette Michelson and/or Barbara Rose, I forget which, but both appeared at subsequent meetings, Emily and me. It just seemed a good idea to put us in touch with ideas and projects floating around. Emily and I sat awed by the others until Barbara Rose's mannerisms began to pall. Annette cut a poignant figure with her Parisian nostalga: "*Que ça me manque*, Le Monde."

Max was obsessed by Michael Fried, whose views he found unsympathetic

and totalitarian (I suppose they were), but since so much of Fried's writing serves to counterpoint Max's work, the resentment was to have been anticipated. Fried, then the heir of Greenberg, had also attacked Kozloff at a critic's colloquium at Brandeis. [The papers by Barbara Rose, Michael Fried, Max Kozloff, and Sidney Tillum were delivered on May 7, 1966 and subsequently published as *Art Criticism in the Sixties* (The Poses Institute of the Arts, Brandeis University, 1967).]* I, too, had found Fried's writing turgid and teutonic (we still had not met), but I converted when I read his remarkable *Three American Painters* and the issue of *Artforum* given over to his Manet studies. At the time I took this article to represent a revitalization of traditional art history through the intuitions of art criticism.

[Still green myself—and recently back from a long stint in France and Chicago—I was insufficiently aware of the nexus of power that the sequence Greenberg, Fried, Leider, and the painter Frank Stella embodied. Not incidentally, although justifications are to be found, the artist whose work figured most frequently on *Artforum* covers was Stella, a choice ratified by his friendship with Leider, and Leider's intellectual dependence on Fried. Philip was at that time cowed by his makeshift knowledge of art history, although at the moment he left New York in 1971 he was of all editor/critics, the person best equipped to run the magazine. He had grown sympathetic to the deep breaches that had taken place in modern Artican art with the advent of a Post-minimalist and counter-formalist sensibility. Convinced of the importance of Serra and Smithson and open to the work of Bochner, he had by then broken with Greenberg over Reinhardt, and even came to question what seemed the 'legitimacy' of Fried's succession.]

I take it Leider thought me funny, quirky in my art historical attachments, but necessary because dependable for the New York reviews; neither expendable nor important. Eventually his relation to Barbara Rose became strained both professionally and personally; the latter feelings intensified by his friendship with Stella, from whom Barbara (then Mrs. Stella) was estranged. Leider was impatient with Emily Wasserman who was neither strong enough to bear his disparagements nor to retort in kind. At length, drawn by India and the Eastern occult, she stopped writing. Still, hers was among the earliest voices raised in support of a newly emerging sensibility. Finally Philip fell out with Max over the Emergency Cultural Government, though they had long ceased to feel affection for one another. Philip returned Max's article on this last summer's political events with a sarcastic rejection. Max, taking umbrage, asked that his name be removed from the masthead.

[These last remarks will be made clearer if I quote—out of sequence—an entry of:]

* The material in brackets has been interpolated into the journal entries for the purpose of clarification.

31 September, 1970. The late spring through the summer of 1970 was marked by radicalized agitation in the art world which, if it in no way affected the American credo, still provoked a sense of potency and euphoria among us. Utopian "artist-worker coalitions" and "Emergency Cultural Governments" were established, animated by such goals as the exposure of the cultural hollowness and ethical duplicity inherent in the American participation and support of national and international cultural events such as the Venice Biennale and C.I.A. and U.S.I.A. sponsored travelling exhibitions and lecture tours. Art schools were transformed into propaganda centers and liberal arts colleges programmed courses and sessions aimed at consciousness-raising, agitation, and canvassing. Private galleries as well as public museums were actually closed for short periods or pressured to close as a gesture of solidarity with the artists' broad range of social and political ideas.

These results often were at odds with the outraged feelings of thwarted ambition and personal advancement which many individual artists, particularly those who came from long-disenfranchised quarters, felt they were sacrificing in joining communal agitation. The solemnity of manner and tone associated with art mandarinism—although many art mandarins were in fact organizers and agitators—was temporarily put aside in favor of a directness and candor not divorced from ploys of anti-intellectualism and instinctuality, that is, gambits imitative of the strategies favored by up-front black militants throughout the 1960s whose successful tactics were adopted in varying degrees by women, Indians, Chicanos, the poor, the gay, the old, the ecologists, and so forth.

The Spring Offensive in the Arts in 1970 verged on the anarchic—although the arena remained small. For a few weeks the atmosphere was galvanizing but by the summer's end, the illusion of potency had faded. The heroes of the cultural insurgency were charged by their peers with revisionism; they came to be viewed as 'class traitors', poseurs, 'ego-trippers', and hollow rhetoricians. The art world shrank from its idealistic bout with politics abandoning its insurgency to the kamikaze radical of short-term views. The Revolution had turned upon itself while the real enemy remained untouched. Flame and agitation were replaced by dissatisfaction, jealousy and spleen. Without having changed the fabric of American life, a certain detached low profile private view emerged in the art world from this debâcle: to have little and desire less; to be scarcely visible, and ignored; to despise, ever more strongly, the rank consumerism and petty values of the rigid right and the doctrinaire left. For a while, it was felt that the production of any kind of art—conventional easel painting especially—was in itself an achievement. Ambitions, apart from mere activity, were the designs of rank adventurers.

By degrees the art world resumed familiar patterns—concerts, auctions, exhibitions were organized in the name of peace and in support of hitherto disenfranchised quarters; but no political terrain was won. The episode represented a coming of age, a 'reality testing' that confirmed nothing more than that which had been self-evident: artists, acting in concert to remedy the political

climate in American life, fail because the core premise of capitalist democracy runs counter current to the nature of the loneliness of art. American prerogatives will not be shifted because of artist agitation, since it is an agitation that proselytizes only to the converted. The laboring and middle classes in America, if even remotely aware of artists, view them as precious and inane beings. To imagine that a worker would ever join artists is simply impractical utopianism; and more, to imagine that the artist himself is a 'worker' is delusionary and self-congratulatory.

12 October 1970. Last Tuesday a highly sympathetic *Artforum* lunch. Except for Philip and me, all were newcomers, very bright and attractive. Kasha Linville, who assists Klaus Kertess at Bykert Gallery [an historical gallery, defunct in 1976], is fine-boned and cameo-like with a knot of long hair pulled to the side. Kenneth Baker, young and bearded, who earns his keep in Boston writing for the *Monitor*, out of things but absorbedly quiet, picking it all up. [This was naive of me. Baker had been informed by the Harvard School of critics headed by Fried, then seconded by Rosalind Krauss, who had been one of Baker's instructors, and through whose good offices Baker came to the magazine.] Joe Masheck, a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia—very competent, who has already written commendably for *Studio International*—expert in turn-of-the-century issues (say, Samuel Bing) and with a cooler take on the situation.

Unbuttoned by our drinks we sat around like ribbon clerk commissars plotting after the Five-&-Dime shut-down for the day. I brought up the general inertia and despair following the summer's exertions. Philip continues to see the radicalization as a positive force. He points to the artists' use of revolutionary acts—which Masheck and I disputed as revolutionary since they were accompanied by no transfer of power from one class to another. Philip refuses to admit that the artists who wish to amalgamate into groups or communities in the manner of separatist blacks are in fact opting away from American life. He sees such actions positively while I feel that such communities, were they even feasible, if ever proving any threat to mainstream Americanism, would be pressured or liquidated out of existence. Masheck agreed. Philip held that the primary aim of such a 'withdrawal' or secession, would be for artists to gain understanding of their work from fellow artists, the best possible thing an artist could hope for. Economics would be played down: an occasional sale to a fellow artist in order to survive; the reversion of work in cases of resale or death; no galleries, no dealers. Philip convinced that an artist concerned with money is doomed as he can no longer face up to the organic formal evolution of his work. His off-the-wall example: Frank Sinatra who had to hate Janis Joplin because his economics were threatened by hers. Joplin died a few days ago from an overdose of drugs.

A curious moral dilemma. A transcript of a long monologue by Ad Reinhardt was published in the October issue. In his transcript Reinhardt refers to Greenberg, characterizing him as a dealer and a promoter, critical achievements

notwithstanding. The claim has a certain basis; after all Greenberg once was an 'artistic advisor' to French and Company Gallery in 1960. Reinhardt nonetheless must have felt bitter toward the critic, since Greenberg, in noting Field Painting's early exponents, emphasizes the primary roles of Newman, Still and Rothko. Certainly Greenberg's neglect of Reinhardt's contemporaneous and similar point of view must have been provocative. *Passons*; the upshot is that Greenberg has threatened *Artforum* with a lawsuit. Philip's position is difficult. For some time he has spoiled for a fight with Greenberg; at least that's what Michael Fried thinks. Greenberg's lawyers have asked for a prominently displayed retraction. Reinhardt is dead; morally, the revisions are only those that Reinhardt could make. Philip refuses to write a "posthumous" retraction. More important, he refuses to admit that this issue, of pertinence to the art community, can be solved in a "pig court" which dishonors all parties.

Damage has been done. The Greenberg votaries have been urged to break friendly relations; this includes such poker-playing buddies as Kenneth Noland, Tony Caro, perhaps Larry Poons, not to mention critics whose viewpoints are formed on the urgings of Greenberg, such as Kenworth Moffet, now writing on such meagre figures as Robert Goodnough (*Art International*, April 1970). Of the people dearest to Phil who maintain close relations with Greenberg, Michael Fried feels that the retraction is due on the grounds of Greenberg's insights into modern art history alone; like his mentor, Fried also sees Reinhardt as a little man. Frank Stella, by contrast, feels that Phil's intractability in this matter is politically justifiable. It all seems teacup tempestuous. Perhaps Phil is using this conflict as a lever to pry himself free from the magazine. His mind has been firmly made up on that score for some time.

17 January 1971. Charlie Cowles wants to have lunch with me on Tuesday to discuss Phil's going, nominally for a year's sabbatical—I think for good—to fill me in on John Coplans who, it seems, is going to replace Phil.

20 January 1971. Luncheon with Charles; Mme. Romaine's omelettes stuffed with caviar. He is questioning me on Phil's departure, and plays with the idea that I might be a buffer between him and Coplans of whom he is wary. "If it doesn't work out after a year, I'll kill *Artforum*." He is frustrated by Phil's going/not going vacillation. Charlie thinks that *Artforum* is really more important to Phil than he admits, and imagines that he will come back after a year's leave. Unlikely. Puzzled by the imminence of his thirtieth birthday, Charlie feels he ought to mobilize himself more seriously. Charlie's identity is now built into the magazine as its publisher, his train of life is so much a contingency of its expenditures—rent, automobile, secretarial services—so much the source of his social perquisites, that I cannot imagine him "killing" the magazine even though he would "rather end at the top than watch the magazine die a slow death."

Phil questioned me about my lunch with Charlie. I told him how little

feeling he had for individuals as individuals; how he relates rather to people as representatives of an economic class. For Phil it comes down to an enemy exploiter or a comrade ally, the embodiment of all virtue. Still, considering that Charlie underwrote *Artforum* as a kind of Stanford University undergraduate lark (as befits a Cowles Communications scion), he has grown enormously. But Coplans is an enemy whom Charlie cannot count on, an unreliable enemy. Will I see him that way too?

13 February 1971. The *Artforum* lunch—John Elderfield, Kasha Linville, Phil, me. I think the real reason for Phil's leaving is his conviction that it is no longer feasible to argue the moral viability of even a very good art magazine. The artists Phil most admires (and likes as people) press him to stay: Stella, Smithson, Serra—the three Ss, so to speak—and Heizer.

9 April 1971. The *Artforum* luncheon with Phil, Kasha—she'll be phased out soon—Joe Masheck, John Elderfield and me. Long hassle on the impossibility of writing reviews on politicized black art manifestations. The arguments drag into a second hour. I realized that Phil was loath to go. He broke into a kind of "go out there and win" pep talk prompted by a desire not to see the magazine fall into a petty "what's new" format. He dredged up pet theories—'synthetic articles' going back over the territory opened by the journal, the inability of art history ever to 'secure' an artist's work, art history as capitalist production. . . .

28 April 1971. The last *Artforum* luncheon with Phil. John Coplans there to be introduced. Jerrold Lanes, John Elderfield, Phyllis Tuchman, Kasha Linville, Kenneth Baker, Sarah Black, who will be editorial secretary, and me. Coplans came on nice, giving no impression that he wanted to fill Phil's shoes—permanently. Another type of person entirely, expansive, gregarious, Artworldly. Ed Fry's firing by Thomas Messer at the Guggenheim over the Hans Haacke show gave the lunch its theoretical cover. Lanes, around since the golden age of *Arts* (out of whose disarray [James Ackston's acquisition of *Arts* killed it during the '60s] Philip was able to assemble his writers) under Hilton Kramer with Annette Michelson and Sidney Tillim, gave a demonstration of academic castration: would want to see the question opened to public debate, but would not sign a telegram protesting the dismissal in the name of the whole *Artforum* staff. Individual but not communal acts of conscience. At the end, I tore up the rough missive and flung it like confetti into the air.

12 July 1971. Coplans' first day as editor.

15 July 1971. John seems pelleted with cotton balls, nervous and unsure, physically and mentally tired, unable to make firm decisions. He wants approval, is fearful of being abrasive to Cowles. All in all I'm not sure; is it better to remain

anonymously alphabetized among the contributing editors? [I had had a masthead change to Associate Editor.] There is nothing there except a nominal prestige. Annette is in the office putting together a special issue on film for September. I found her warm and bright and intellectually attractive in a way that I haven't for a long time.

20 July 1971. Coplans does not make things easier. He vacillates between hail-fellow-well-met and an edgy paternalism, about how *he* founded *Artforum*, wrote *this* or *that* piece and *when*, knew *so* or *so* and *when*.

1 September 1971. John has asked me to chair the first critics' luncheon sometime in early October. Considering that there have never been any formalities attached to the meeting, I don't see any special format to follow.

18 September 1971. Fell into drinking with Coplans. Experienced his charm for the first time. He's 51, troubled by the string of failures (or so he imagines) of his life, wants to make something extraordinary of *Artforum*, revealed a profound resentment for the introverted nature of Phil, and has now begun to verbalize more clearly his new regime. Unsettling ambivalence: "You know, Robert, you can't go on much longer at *Artforum*," immediately followed by how together *we* were going to bring the magazine to new heights. Am I to be washed out in the scrubbing away of the vestiges of Phil's time? By contrast to Phil, he plans with me. Each step is pondered. John wants to begin planning the tenth anniversary issue. Max and Barbara will be at the meeting as he is striving to bring them back into the fold.

John's desire to break with Phil's direction, spurred on by Barbara, provokes hostile memories. Phil's worst feature was, perhaps humorously, to play on the unconscious emotional masochism of his colleagues. Apparently John went through several years of slavishness towards Phil, and we agree how painful and manipulating Phil's especial devotion to Michael Fried and Frank Stella was.

20 September 1971. A bummer. Last night the Contributing Editors' meeting at John Coplans' to discuss the tenth anniversary issue. John, Barbara Rose, Rosalind Krauss, Max Kozloff, Lawrence Alloway, me. Annette still in Europe. People doing quick change numbers, fast costume switches, restating history and facts to cast themselves into more favorable lights. Barbara wilfully rejecting contemporary art as unworthy of her esteem—like Clement Greenberg not being interested in Duchamp or Pop—begrudging the fact that someone might be doing interesting work today, work that she is out of. Krauss admitting how tough it was working under Fried's thumb all these years. Barbara and Max dumping on Phil. Max more orotund and vacillating, trying to find the Right Humanist Tone; no feeling at all for new art. As politically naive as ever—artists are good (his version of artists anyway), society bad; artists change society. He was irked by my

cynicism. Ros talking high nonsense about new art historical method; but no more or less so than what I had thought about Michael Fried and art history. Coplans at this point became blustering and repetitive. "This is what I'm doing about this"—seeking approval, kow-towing to Barbara. The whole scene repugnant. I just can't think in those grandiose terms that they say they think in, and I simply was not there for them. A certain hatred of Phil seems to energize so much of their cant.

28 November 1971. Apparently the critics' luncheons have gone by the board. The pressures of the magazine and John's generalized confusion have made them almost impossible. Lizzie Borden will work out as a reviewer.

2 January 1972. John Coplans complimentary over publication of the Eva Hesse article. The Nauman article came out from the drawer, revised from my first summer of enthusiasm—Serra, Sonnier, Nauman written in 1969. John cordial with me, always planning; his nerves are ragged and he scarcely sleeps. I read sections of the journal to him, about the art revolution last May. He was very curious and in his insomnia plans to draw up an anonymous chronology of revolutionary art agitation of the last few years, going to ask among others Max, Lawrence Alloway, Philip for their views as to what the important events were. [This project never materialized.]

19 March 1972. Kenworth Moffet, now curator of modern art at the Boston Museum, has learned perhaps that two-bit formalism is dying. Opening his tenure with an exhibition of Jack Bush (a joke), to be followed by a color painting survey of twelve American painters (guess who?), he has at last realized that maybe all of this is moribund and that the Boston art students could care less. He contacted me to arrange an exhibition of post-minimalist works, a list of works, essay, lecture. [The exhibition, really a sop, was half-heartedly supported and I declined to collaborate.]

26 March 1972. Friday, editorial lunch at *Étoile.* John Coplans, Lawrence Alloway, Annette Michelson (we watched her last night discuss *Potemkin* on Channel 13), Joe Masheck (who has passed his Ph.D. orals), Kenneth Baker, Lizzie Borden, me, Sarah Black, Carter Ratcliff, and for the first time, Charlie Cowles. We must give up our special tones—me 'art deco', Joe Masheck putting down early 20th century masters, Jerrold Lanes the dull précis of 19th century American figures and the like. New York reviews will be replaced by reviews from anywhere. Charlie anxious about their fate. They won't be scrapped, since all agree that it's an important section. Still, Cowles wants to lunch with me tomorrow to head off such a move on Coplans' part. The hardest hit was Kenneth Baker, who always situates his reviews in a mechanistic and inherited vision of history that slows everything down and after all isn't true. [This is hypocritical of me: we all do the same—only Baker's is tougher to get through.]

15 July 1972. John strangely depressed, detached. We both are still commited to the idea of the new, of vanguard excellence, but the struggle is all uphill. Despite a belief in the virtue of new art, it is unlikely that should it come to that, John and I would be that upset were the magazine to fold.

18 August 1972. Lunch yesterday with Max Kozloff. We had just seen de Antonio's new movie *Painters Painting*. De Antonio better when his enemy is known—Nixon, Joseph McCarthy. Here de Antonio has swallowed whole the myth of the sixties—with a cast headed by Greenberg. Phil's voice introduces the picture contentiously—"We began to paint Indians when we started to kill them"—but beyond this there are no interesting questions. It is a 'how-to' movie asked of the likes of Olitski, de Kooning, Poons, Stella, Warhol, Johns, Rauschenberg. Olitski and Poons especially dreary and heavy-mouthed.

23 September 1972. Tenth anniversary of *Artforum* provoked a measure of curiosity in the press. Hilton Kramer did a 'quotable quotes' column in the *Times*, and Doug Davis in *Newsweek*. Phil, to whom the issue was dedicated, sent a card: "Sirs: Dedicating an issue like that to me is like dedicating the Aswan Dam to Golda Meir. There must be some mistake."

30 September 1972. Last Sunday night an *Artforum* editorial meeting. John, Lawrence, Max, Annette, myself, Angela Reeves (*i.e.* Angela Westwater) who has taken over managing and secretarial chores from Sarah Black, who left to have a baby. [Sarah, whom I liked, is now the managing editor of the *Art Journal.*] Only Annette interesting in a contentious way. She insisted that since she is 'film editor' she be responsible for every word about film that goes into the magazine. The whole tone sounded vaguely Right-Think and especially improbable in the face of Max's and Lawrence's strong interest in popular movies—and their loathing of Annette's prose.

9 December 1972. On December 5, Artforum writer's meeting. 'Younger' staff writers: Joe Masheck, Bruce Boice, April Kingsley, Lizzie Borden, Carter Ratcliff, Angela, me. [Details of the in-house organization: at the time John took over the editorship, I became the lone Associate Editor in a sea of Contributors. Practically, what this meant was that I had editorial responsibility for the staff of reviewers. In the fall of 1972, two more Associates were added: Annette for film and Max for books.] Everyone seemed smug, content that no pockets or corners were being missed, no arguments left to be argued out, formalism defeated, and the like. The very equanimity seemed to me to be a source of despair. Personally, for the moment, I've said much of what I wanted to say, supported the artists I wanted to support, promoted the aesthetic I wanted to promote. I'm tired by the critical scene and critical apparatus and enjoy editing. I liked the group thoroughly and for the first time felt that there was a new team emerging with an independent head,

though there is a question of financial bankruptcy and the magazine lasting only for three more issues.

14 July 1973. A hard week, mostly at work on other people's manuscripts. Lizzie's—on the alteration of the conception of the art object to conform to *a priori* notions of museum installation—particularly knotty and trying. Little work on my own stuff. Listened to Lawrence Alloway's address at the first N.Y.U. Critics' Symposium. He surveys the field of art criticism and through asides insinuatingly decimates the competition. At length only he remains, but without his ever having said it. He declares in favor of Max, but Kozloff too will be struck down. He opts for no-threat journalism—the kids at *Art-Rite,* who published a profile on him in the first issue—and for mid-cult populists like John Perrault. In all, a demagogic display, wildly received by an uninformed audience who heard their prejudices confirmed and their anxieties assuaged. . . .

21 July 1973. Robert Smithson was killed in an air crash somewhere in Texas while inspecting a new, just staked-out work. A pilot and photographer lost too. Nancy Holt, his wife, and Carl Andre leave to claim remains. A service will be held on Tuesday. Smithson was Mel Bochner's second friend in New York, Eva his first. Both gone. Richard Serra said, "Now we won't have him to talk to."

26 July 1973. Yesterday was the high requiem mass at St. Jean Baptiste Cathedral and the burial. Extraordinary density of art world figures. Among the pallbearers were friends and sworn enemies, the most startling being Sol LeWitt stationed between Philip Leider and John Coplans. Others included Alloway, Bochner, Serra, Andre, and Robert Fiore.

The mass celebrated in Latin. Joe Masheck was the only one of the rare celebrants from 'our world' who came forward to receive communion. The old priest, hearing the deceased was an artist, delivered a set of stupid admonitions about Christian art, how saints' pictures and religious calendars change a child's life. Philip Leider eulogized Smithson, describing Smithson's choice between Rome and Passaic. In "Mirror Travels in the Yucatan," Smithson wrote a long description of a plane ride very much like the one in which he perished. Phil quoted from this, a rather painful ordeal to listen to. Leider read from Smithson's favorite poem, Eliot's "Ash Wednesday," the passage beginning with "Lady of Silences." He then spoke of Smithson's longing for the authority of the church that was obviated by "the monuments of Passaic," his replacement for Rome as the eternal city. From the pulpit Philip said that Smithson was the only artist to have had an original vision of nature since Cézanne. Smithson was buried in Rutherford, New Jersey. Mel called it his last earthwork—the burial site had been chosen shortly before for his father whose death preceded his by only six weeks. The site is apparently a vast view over the Jersey flats with a direct sight-line from the plot to a drive-in movie!

12 August 1973. Have pondered Mel's observation that my attitude toward criticism is really a surrogate form of the artist's life. It's being an artist, really. I suppose he's right, but should that mean that I am to be put down for it?

John worked very hard with me on getting the "Duchamp, Johns, and Conceptual Theater" article into shape. He's a gifted editor . . . John gave me his lush Ellsworth Kelly study with a touching dedication. He may be crazy, but he is affecting, and at moments I am fond of him.

18 August 1973. I worked hard with James Collins to sharpen his Baldessari piece. I suggested a cover—Baldessari's work called *Not to Be Looked At,* which reproduces a Frank Stella cover of *Artforum,* thereby doubling the irony and transforming it that much more into a Baldessari.

11 September 1973. Lawrence Alloway's vitriol spewed at me in the current issue of *Nation* (September 3, 1973). What to do? Retaliate? Ignore it? Let it rankle? Kick up a fuss? Inquire after a promised change in the masthead, isolating me further from Alloway?

23 October 1973. A senior editors' meeting at Annette Michelson's 'book depot', her apartment/library. What's the point of these meetings? Max quiet. Lawrence absent. John turns to Max in frustration and asks the same question, "What's the point of these meetings?" Annette pressing for a new special film issue. Sensing John's, Max's, and Lawrence's resistence to this project, Annette asks for frank views on her last film issue, but is then fretful and defensive about our candor.

22 December 1973. A young writers' meeting at *Artforum.* Roberta Smith, Frances Naumann, José Matos, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. Rulof Loew, a South African artist John asked along at the last instant, quietly suggested that the criticism at *Artforum* had reached a point so far in advance of, and possibly superior to, the level of work capable of being made by younger artists, that their sense of competitive inferiority had the adverse effect of worsening an already heavy emotional load. A recent letter from Peter Plagens suggested this critical sur-expertise as well. . . .

23 May 1974. Yesterday senior editorial staff meeting: John, Lawrence, Annette, Ros, Joseph, Angela, me. Lawrence pugnacious and thorny. Annette has handed in a piece on Hilton Kramer. I noted that I thought 'apodicticity' a not especially felicitous word. Lawrence: "And I wonder what it means? . . ." Annette, about to explain, is cut short by Lawrence's continuing sentence, ". . . but don't tell me what it means. I'm just wondering about it, that's all." Annette and I exchange glances. The staff sniffs blood. John tells them about plans for an *Artforum* Press for book publishing. Despite all efforts to keep economic balance, the present inflation annihilates profits with the result that low fees for articles cannot be

raised. Book publishing is an alternative to the present struggle to keep one's head above water. However, the autonomous book publishing company and its relationship to the parent body is far from worked out. A cooperative system is even possible. The interesting point of all this was to note with what alacrity the editors were willing to entertain the possibility of becoming publishers.

10 August 1974. Real crisis. John cracking. Europe, problems, guilt, middle age, loneliness, sheer mental and physical exhaustion, confrontations at each turn. On Friday he threw in the sponge after a renewed conflict with Ros Krauss who is to him as Barbara Rose was to Philip Leider. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe showed up with some 9,000 words on Brice Marden. John wanted it simplified and opened up. Ros edited, but challenged John with regard to his censorship. Conflicted, at length immobilized, he went home and I carried tranquilizers up to his new coop. But he doesn't see that the insistence on defining substantive issues is not the same as merely provocative confrontation. It grows clearer to me: we had been given a kind of moral sop—we were "editors together" in an "editors' magazine"—that is, so long as we really didn't challenge or disturb in a radical way the essentially conventional cast of our publisher-editor-writer triangle.

17 August 1974. Lawrence Alloway furious over my Boice piece. "First we invent the critic and then the painter," he shouts as he learns of the article. "Corruption, tactlessness . . ." he goes on. We "invented" neither the critic nor the painter. Where else should a talented critic be premiered than with us? And where else should a talented painter be written of than with us. Alloway refuses to see it that way and claims the right to recognize collusion. In turn, I claim the same right to support new talent that I believe in.

All through the week there's much wrangling over the Boice piece. 3,000 words cut to 1,500. Phrases like "epistemic aperçu" gone, perhaps deservedly.

18 August 1974. Anti-climactic *Artforum* meeting: John, me, Lawrence, Max, Ros, Joe, Angela, Charles Cowles, young Alan Moore, a student aide from California. No confrontation. A move to do an investigative issue about dubious practices in the art world, corruption in publishing, advertising, *etc* . . . Lawrence in a less reactive mood. After he used the word 'palinodious', I said "Palinodious equals apodictic." He smiled.

15 September 1974. The first steps in a crisis confrontation. I have arranged to talk to John on Tuesday. My energies have been directed to keeping the review levels high, yet I earn less than $10 a week for doing this, a ridiculous sum made more irksome in the face of continuing pressure against me, my ideas and attitudes. The sense of having been exploited, of having been ripped off, just hit me *en bloc*, all of a sudden. . . . During the young writers' meeting on Friday (John, Angela, James Collins, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Roberta Smith, Susan Heineman, Alan

Moore), as I was trying to hype up a highly institutionalized system, I realized how foolish I must have seemed and how self-demeaning I've been all these years . . . and I crashed . . . John literally had no idea how remarkable the young reviewers' work had been—no notion whatever.

17 September 1974. The confrontation was appalling. John had asked Charles along, all for the good I suppose. I scatter-shot my argument: how I acted from the belief that we have always regarded contemporary criticism as the primary end of the magazine; how the editorial content was free of taint and connections to advertising; how I worked to maintain the level of reviewing; how reviewing had even been rendered 'honorable', with reviews signed and writers' names placed on the contents page. John's reaction: I "confronted" him, "head-fucked" him on the weekend when I knew how "sacred" that time was to him. "Outraged" and "incensed," he shrieked only about his name, his needs, his health, him, him. I was a teacher and an academic—in short, I was to him a "housewife" with a wage-earning husband. Were I dissatisfied, he would take over the reviewing chore. The unfairness of my fee was never considered; his salary is well in excess of $30,000 a year, and Charlie's over $40,000.

16 October 1974. Last night a forum on *Artforum*, a buck-a-head benefit for Artist's Space. Fearing the audience, sadly, the worst came from ourselves. John by turns truculent and condescending. Lawrence Alloway characterized me as wheedling and power-broking, and did an imitation of what he thought my conversations with Lizzie Borden were like. Ros defended me; I, Annette. At that moment the *décomfiture* was complete, and who was on what side. I should have said at the outset that I had stepped down from the New York reviews Editorship a few moments before in Max's new loft (bought with the proceeds from his sale of an Agnes Martin painting) where we all had assembled to go to the meeting together. What an irony. The last *Artforum* critics 'luncheon' was really a social event, an artist's evening, a public spectacle, an overt dissolution. A new set of relationships had crystallized.*

* It's not that *October's* wheels grind fine, it's that they grind slow. These journal entries were originally assembled in essay form during the summer of 1976. Their final editing in preparation for being set into galleys occurred in December, 1976 coincidental with a somewhat changed art world situation: at the year's end it was learned that John Coplans's contract was not renewed; more, that Max Kozloff, whose contract was to run through June of 1977, had resigned his position at *Artforum* in sympathy with Coplans (Lawrence Alloway's name already had been removed from the masthead during the course of the bicentennial autumn). Coplans and Kozloff were not without champions; an open petition of protest was circulated. Joseph Mashek has been appointed editor-in-chief.

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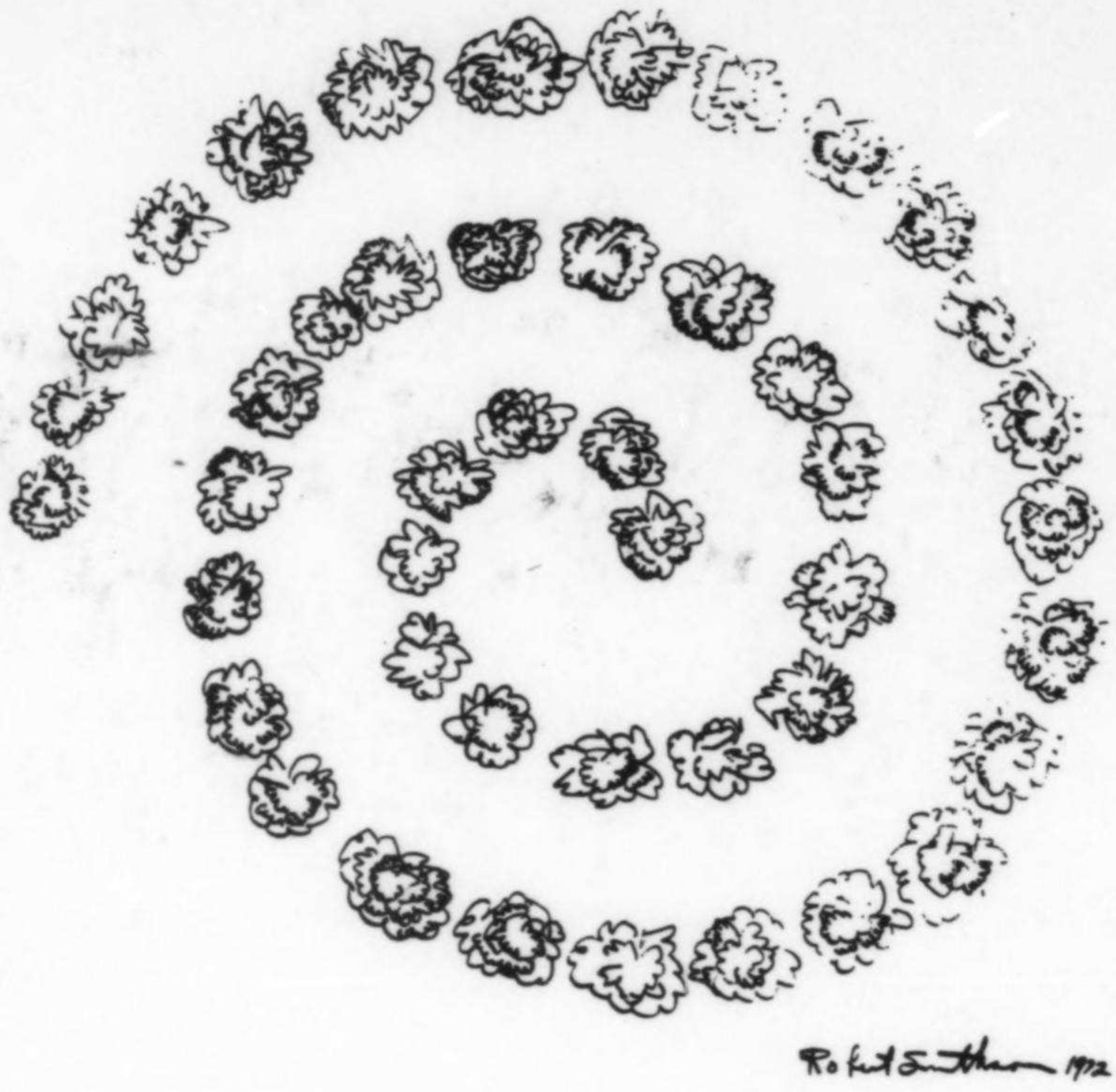
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